Midleton to Youghal Greenway

EIA Screening

Cork County Council

Project Number: 60521152

24th August 2018
Quality information

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Revision History

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<tr>
<td>V2</td>
<td>11/06/2018</td>
<td>Final Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>V3</td>
<td>22/08/18</td>
<td>Final Report Amended</td>
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Executive Summary

Introduction

AECOM was commissioned by Cork County Council and has completed this Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report to inform a Part VIII application for the proposed Greenway from Midleton to Youghal. The purpose of this Screening for Environmental Impact Assessment is to determine whether an EIA Report is required as part of the EIA Directive (2014/52/EU) for the greenway, hereafter referred to as the “proposed development”.

The findings of the EIA screening assessment are presented in this report.

Proposed Development

The proposed development provides for the construction of a linear greenway amenity between Midleton and Youghal County Cork including all ancillary works.

The proposed development consists of the following:

- Clearing the existing site of overgrown vegetation and extant railway apparatus along the route from Youghal to Midleton. Where the route profile has been defeated by vegetation it is assumed that the pathway will be restored to an appropriate level;
- Localised repair or, where necessary, replacement of bridges and culverts associated with the railway;
- Constructing approximately 22.75km of new 3-4m wide pedestrian and cycle pathway on the footprint of the disused railway;
- Road crossings will be provided in accordance with standards and signage and ancillary amenity facilities will be installed along the route; and,
- Additional works will include the provision of accommodation measures where required (e.g. fencing and agricultural crossings).

Methodology

This screening has been undertaken having regard to the following documents:

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development (EPA, 2003);
- Environmental Impact Assessment of National Road Schemes – A Practical Guide (Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), formerly NRA, 2008); and,

Screening Conclusions

The proposed development does not meet the thresholds for which the preparation of an EIA Report is a mandatory requirement (Refer to Table 2.1 and Table 2.2).

The criteria under which the project must be considered are outlined within Article 27 of the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1989, as amended. The screening criteria categories include:
1. Characteristics of the Proposed Development;
2. Location of the Proposed Development; and,

No significant impact is anticipated to air and climate as traffic levels are not predicted to increase significantly due to the proposed development. An increase in noise and vibration levels is expected during the construction stage but the impact is likely to be temporary in nature.

An ecological report was prepared for the proposed greenway and this was accompanied by a Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report. The AA states it is considered that the proposed works do not require progression to a second stage Appropriate Assessment.

The key findings of the ecological report were that although the proposed greenway does run through Ballvergan Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA), no direct habitat loss outside the old disused railway line i.e. within Ballyvergan Marsh, is predicted and no alternation to drainage is proposed. The proposed greenway through the pNHA is to be located on a raised boardwalk. No other NHA / pNHA will be impacted by the proposed development.

It is anticipated that there will be no impact to hydrology or water quality during the operational phase. A flood risk assessment was carried out on the proposed greenway. The proposed greenway is defined as a ‘Water-Compatible Development’ in accordance with ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning’ and therefore its construction within Flood Zone ‘A’ is acceptable.

In terms of landscape, the nature of the proposed greenway being principally on the former disused railway track is unlikely to have any significant impact on the landscape of the area. The proposed development will be developed sympathetically with the existing environment and landscape planting incorporated where necessary as outlined in a Landscape Masterplan.

The proposed development will be largely within the former disused railway track corridor and as such there are no direct impacts to any other sites of archaeological value. The proposed development and the provision of new cycling and pedestrian facilities will not directly impact on any archaeological sites, nor significantly affect their setting, after mitigation.

It is considered that the proposed development is not likely to have significant adverse effects on the environment and therefore an EIA is not required.
1 Description of the Proposed Development

1.1 Overview

The Midleton to Youghal Greenway route runs from the east of Midleton train station, in Midleton town, continues within the line of the disused railway embankments and within cuttings. The route runs through agricultural lands and small villages, including Mogeely and Knockeagh, terminating at the disused Youghal train station.

The proposed development provides for the construction of a linear greenway amenity between Midleton and Youghal and all ancillary works.

The proposed development consists of the following:

- Clearing the existing site of overgrown vegetation and extant railway apparatus along the route from Youghal to Midleton. Where the route profile has been defeated by vegetation it is assumed that the pathway will be restored to an appropriate level;
- Localised repair or, where necessary, replacement of bridges and culverts associated with the railway;
- Constructing approximately 22.75km of new 3-4m wide pedestrian and cycle pathway on the footprint of the disused railway;
- Road crossings will be provided in accordance with standards and signage and ancillary amenity facilities will be installed along the route; and,
- Additional works will include the provision of accommodation measures where required (e.g. fencing and agricultural crossings).

The site of the proposed scheme is located on the disused railway line which can be generally subdivided into three sub-sections for the purposes of description:

- Midleton Train Station and environs to the disused Mogeely Station;
- The disused Mogeely Station to the disused Killeagh Station; and,
- The disused Killeagh Station to the disused Youghal Station.

1.2 Greenway Section Proposals

1.2.1 Midleton to Mogeely Section

This section of the disused railway corridor is approximately 8.3km in length and extends from Midleton Train Station to the disused Mogeely Station.

The proposed development site commences on Council owned lands contiguous to the northern entrance to Midleton Train Station. In the vicinity of the Midleton Train Station complex, the proposed development site is adjoined to the north and south by residential development and, in the eastern portion of the railway complex, the Midleton Rugby Football Club adjoins the railway property to the south. The proposed greenway corridor will be located outside the operational area of the railway on lands that are currently overgrown or under scrub vegetation within the northern portion of the railway property. The proposed greenway connects to the original railway alignment on the western approach to Broomfield Bridge. To the west of Broomfield Bridge, the Irish Distillers complex is located to the south of the original railway corridor.

A number of established operational agricultural crossings are evident along the length of this section of the railway corridor.

Eastward from Midleton, land use adjoining the railway corridor is predominantly agricultural with a mixture of agricultural activities present. A number of established operational agricultural crossings are evident along the length of this section of the railway corridor.
A farmhouse and associated yard adjoins the railway property on the approach to Mogeely. At Mogeely, the disused railway complex is overgrown in parts. The railway station building remains as does the level crossing at the junction with the public road. No works to these structures are proposed as part of the scheme. An industrial land use adjoins the disused railway complex to the south.

The disused railway corridor is largely overgrown throughout the section between Midleton and Mogeely and the project will entail site clearance to accommodate the proposed linear greenway amenity. Existing planted boundaries and hedgerow will be retained where possible.

Existing road crossings will be maintained and proposals are shown in the Part 8 Planning Drawings. Existing established agricultural crossings will be developed in accordance with current standards. A small car park is proposed to the north of the existing northern entrance to Midleton Train Station and a second car park is proposed to the east of the existing northern station car park, access to which will be via the existing station car park. Car parking is also proposed adjoining the former station at Mogeely.

1.2.2 Mogeely to Killeagh Section

This section of the proposed route extends from the disused Mogeely Station to the disused Killeagh Station, a distance of approximately 4.6 km.

In Mogeely, to the east of the L-3805 Road, a residential property and co-op store adjoin the railway corridor to the south with a church and playing fields located immediately to the north. Between Mogeely and Killeagh, the railway corridor is substantially overgrown. Within this section, the lands immediately adjoining the railway corridor are typically in agricultural use with a number of existing agricultural crossings in place and occasional farmyards, farmhouses, and residential properties in the vicinity.

Between Mogeely and Killeagh, vegetation clearance will be required to accommodate the proposed development however the objective will be to retain boundary planting where possible. The scheme includes the provision of a shared use path for walkers and cyclists as well as related user amenities such as seating and signage.

Existing road crossings will be retained as detailed in the Part 8 Planning Drawings and proposals for the accommodation of existing agricultural crossings will be developed in accordance with current standards.

1.2.3 Killeagh to Youghal Section

This section extends from the disused station at Killeagh to the disused station in Youghal, a distance of approximately 10.1km.

The railway corridor between Killeagh and Youghal is generally overgrown. Occasional farmyards, farmhouses and residential properties are located adjacent to the railway corridor within this section. The landscape and agricultural character of this area changes on the approach to Ballyvergan where there is some forestry and more marginal wetland or marsh land adjoining the line.

On the approach to Youghal, the railway is adjoined to the north by Seafield Caravan Park and to the south by a private residential property and Claycastle Pitch and Putt Club. An existing public car park adjoins the disused train station area to the south and the original railway turntable remains in situ but is overgrown.

Between Killeagh and Youghal the proposed shared use path for walkers and cyclists will be accommodated on the disused railway line following clearance. Approximately 2.5km of the existing track in the vicinity of Ballyvergan will be accommodated on boardwalk. The remainder of the path from the Railway Bridge to Youghal Station will have a sealed surface finish.

As shown in the Part 8 Planning Drawings, existing road crossings will be retained throughout. Existing established operational agricultural crossings will be maintained. Access to the existing residential property to the north of the railway line at Claycastle will be maintained.
1.3 Design Features of the Proposed Greenway

1.3.1 Site Clearance and Preparation

Clearance will be undertaken to remove existing vegetation and organic material but vegetation clearance will be kept to a minimum during the construction phase. Hedgerows and tree lines will be maintained where possible however the removal of overgrown and encroaching vegetation on the disused railway will be necessary for site access and construction on all sections of the greenway.

It is proposed that the remaining track will be lifted and both track and sleepers will be salvaged where possible. The existing track would not be suitable for future reuse as railway track. The existing ballast will remain in position to act as part of the foundation layer for the proposed path.

1.3.2 Proposed Path

The proposed path will largely be formed using a sealed bituminous surface with the exception of an approximately 2.5km section in the vicinity of Ballyvergan on the approach to Youghal.

1.3.3 Sealed Surface Path

The railway corridor was constructed to accommodate a single track. The track line is generally located in the centre of the corridor but does shift in position on approaches to bends. It is proposed to generally position the proposed path on top of the existing track line.

The proposed path is to have a desirable maximum width of up to 4m and a minimum width of 3m, made up of 40mm bituminous surface laid on 150mm of crushed stone sub-base. Localised exceptions to this may arise, for example, at existing bridges or in similar situations.

As stated, the proposed path will be generally constructed on the existing line and the existing ballast will be retained to form part of the foundation layer. An indicative section detail for the proposed path is provided in the Part 8 Planning Drawings. The full details for the path construction will be specified at detailed design stage. Where the proposed path is located on an embankment, additional fencing may be used to confine users to the path. There will be a cross fall of 3% on the surface of the finished path.

1.3.4 Boardwalk

Between Chainage 1200 and Chainage 3800 as shown in the Part 8 Planning Drawings, the proposed path will be constructed as a boardwalk. The boardwalk will be constructed of either a raft foundation or similar system which will be specified at detailed design stage. The boardwalk deck will be constructed of either timber or composite material, subject to specification at detailed design stage. As the boardwalk will be elevated above the surrounding ground levels, railings will be provided on the boardwalk edges to 1.4m in height. This section of the proposed path will follow the alignment of the railway line and will be up to 4m in effective width, subject to full specification at detailed design stage.

1.3.5 Bridges

A number of existing railway bridges over local roads and/or watercourses will require retrofitting to accommodate the proposed path. The bridges are in varying states of repair with some bridge decks and/or parapets in poor condition.

Works to upgrade or repair bridges will include remedial works or the provision of a new concrete deck. No earthworks, remedial works, construction or in-stream works outside the existing railway corridor are required as part of the proposal. Railings will be installed on over-bridges to provide 1.4m high protection for users.
1.3.6 Culverts

Works to upgrade or repair culverts will include remedial works or the provision of a new concrete box culvert. No earthworks, remedial works, construction or in stream works outside the existing railway corridor are required as part of the proposal. Railings may be installed on culverts where required to provide 1.4m high protection for users.

1.3.7 Drainage

The existing drainage paths and culverts which are located along the railway are to be retained.

Drainage ditches will be maintained in their present condition. As the runoff from the proposed path will be limited, the existing drainage ditches will be more than capable of providing sufficient drainage capacity for the proposed greenway path.

A Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared and is contained under separate cover within the Planning Document.

1.3.8 Car Parking, Access Points and Lighting

The Part 8 Planning Drawings show indicative layouts for proposed car parking arrangements which will be further developed at detailed design stage. Ducting and public lighting at the car parks will be provided however the greenway is not proposed to be lit.

Access points to car parking facilities are shown in the scheme drawings. Vegetation and tree removal will be required to facilitate access and sight lines. Vehicular access to the greenway at car parks and road crossings shall be permitted for maintenance and emergency use only.

1.3.9 Road Crossings

A number of at-grade road crossings exist along the existing railway corridor which will be retained as part of the scheme but may require some works to provide a safe crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists and in the interests of the safety of road users. Proposed works at these locations may include additional road markings, signage and other traffic calming measures on the local road.

Signage and access controls will also be required on the greenway to alert walkers and cyclists of approaching road crossings.

1.3.10 Agricultural Crossings

The accommodation of existing established agricultural crossings will be provided for as part of the scheme and will generally take the form of a level at-grade crossing with agricultural gates on either side of the corridor providing the individual landowner with access. A concrete pad will be provided between the agricultural gates and existing agricultural services (e.g. water and/or electricity) will be maintained.

The accommodation works at the crossing point will be agreed in consultation between Cork County Council and the landowner at detailed design stage, however it will typically consist of a gated arrangement, as described, which will separate the greenway path from the farm. When the land owner wishes to use the crossing point, gates will be utilised to temporarily close the greenway path until the farmer completes his/her crossing. Surface water runoff from the greenway path will be piped to a drain to prevent water accessing lands via the crossing point. Equally water will not run off crossing points to the greenway path surface. Advance signage will be put in place on the approach to at-grade agricultural crossings to alert path users of potential agricultural activity on the path.

In exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to the provision of a cattle under/over pass. The provision of a cattle under/over pass will only apply in a limited number of situations where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that the individual landowner has an existing, contiguous and substantial landholding on both sides of the railway corridor and that the land owner is
currently engaged in a dairy farming operation on these contiguous lands that necessitates the movement of animals across the existing railway corridor via an established crossing on a regular basis. It is envisaged that a maximum of one single cattle under/overpass will apply per individual landowner. In such applicable circumstances, consideration will be given to the provision of an individual cattle under/overpass at or in the vicinity of an existing establishment agricultural crossing, the details of which will be subject to full assessment and to the site specific circumstances and conditions as well as consultation with the individual landowner at detailed design stage.

1.3.11 Boundary Treatment

Boundary Treatment with Agricultural Property

Existing vegetation and robust natural boundaries within the railway corridor will be retained where possible. Prior to the commencement of development, an assessment of existing boundaries will be undertaken with a view to developing and implementing a Landscape Masterplan and maintenance regime.

Where there is no boundary, it is proposed to re-establish the original boundary. The type of boundary will be agreed with the adjoining landowner and will take the form of either a concrete post-and-wire fence with planting or stock proof fencing with planting. Existing drainage and/or ducting will be maintained.

In general terms, it is proposed that Cork County Council will provide fencing to protect farmer’s vulnerable livestock. It is proposed that the fence will be erected on the farmer’s holding. Arrangements for the provision of the fence will be agreed with the farmer. It is proposed that the Council will take responsibility for the materials and the erection of the fence and that the farmer will be responsible for its maintenance.

Boundary with Residential Properties

A number of residential properties are located adjacent to the existing railway corridor. Screening may be required in certain areas to protect the privacy of residents however the method of screening may vary dependent on factors including proximity of the dwelling, existing boundary planting, ground levels and ground conditions etc. Consultation with landowners will be undertaken at the detailed design stage of the project to agree site specific proposals.

As a general principle, the following provisions will apply to the provision of boundary treatment at the residential curtilage of a dwelling, subject to need, site-specific considerations including ground levels and conditions and agreement with the relevant landowner:

- Dwelling within 10m of Railway

Where a dwelling is within 10m of the boundary of the railway corridor and the curtilage of the dwelling directly adjoins the railway corridor, up to a maximum 2m high woven and lap boarded panel fence will be constructed and supplemented where possible on the scheme side with a natural hedgerow to future proof the fencing. In exceptional circumstances, a capped and rendered concrete block wall may be erected (to a maximum 2m height). Full details of boundary screening will be developed where required at detailed design stage. Such details will be dependent on site-specific considerations, including existing boundary planting, ground levels and conditions, and reflect consultations with the individual land owner.

- Dwelling within 50m of Railway

Where a dwelling is within 50m of the boundary of the railway corridor and where the existing boundary is not sufficient to protect the privacy of the land owner, up to a maximum 2m high woven and lap boarded panel fence will be constructed and supplemented where possible on the scheme side with a natural hedgerow to future proof the fencing. Full specifications for boundary treatment in such circumstances will be developed where required at detailed design stage. Such details will be dependent on site-specific considerations, existing boundary planting, ground levels and conditions and consultations with the individual land owner.
As an exception to the above provisions, it should be noted that the existing disused railway corridor adjoins a number of residential properties at the Front Strand area in Youghal. These individual properties are Protected Structures and are located within an Architectural Conservation Area (Youghal Town Development 2009 - 2015). These dwellings are separated from the railway property by an existing wall. No additional boundary works are proposed at this location.

Boundary with Commercial or Other Property
Where the railway corridor directly adjoins an existing commercial, industrial or other land use, consideration of options for boundary treatment where required will be developed at detailed design stage to reflect the nature of the adjoining land use, existing boundary treatment, ground levels and conditions, site-specific considerations and consultation with the relevant land owner.

1.3.12 Ducting
Ducting will be provided along the route to allow for the potential to run services such as e fibre, telecoms or similar future services.

1.3.13 Construction Access and Temporary Construction Compounds
Access for construction purposes will make use of existing public roads and land. It is envisaged that an area of the proposed car park locations will serve as a temporary construction compound during the construction phase. Access for construction purposes will be also be primarily via the proposed car park locations. Construction machinery (e.g. excavators, dumpers and pavers) will be used in the construction of the proposed greenway path.

1.3.14 Signage
Signage will incorporate visitor information, way-finding information, heritage information and advisory/regulatory information in proximity to road/agricultural crossings. All signage will be subject to full specification at detailed design in project in accordance with national technical standards and guidance.

1.3.15 Landscaping and Ancillary Facilities
Existing boundary hedgerow will be retained where possible although overgrown and encroaching vegetation will need to be removed to facilitate the proposed scheme. A Landscape Masterplan will be developed for the overall scheme at detailed design stage. The Landscape Masterplan will identify opportunities for enhancement and include proposals for rest areas consisting of seating and cycle stands, for example. The Landscape Masterplan will be required to reflect the ecology of the area, the local environment, local history and the railway heritage in the materials, planting and other details.

1.3.16 Railway Buildings
A number of existing disused railway buildings are located along the route of the proposed linear greenway park however the current Part 8 Planning proposals does not include proposals for any works to these structures. It is acknowledged that these structures may have potential for appropriate reuse at a future date, for example for tourism related purposes or for visitor facilities. Any proposed works in the future would be subject to the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2001 (as amended).
2 EIA Screening Process

2.1 Introduction

This EIA Screening Report has been prepared by AECOM on behalf of Cork County Council with the aim of documenting the significant environmental effects which the proposed development is likely to have on the receiving environment.

Furthermore, this report has been prepared having regard to the following documents:

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development (EPA, 2003);
- Environmental Impact Assessment of National Road Schemes – A Practical Guide (TII, 2008); and
- The European Commission Guidelines on EIA Screening (June 2017).

The Guidelines on EIA Screening (European Commission, 2017) provide a flow diagram of the screening process and this is the process generally followed in this Screening Report.

2.1.1 Legislative Requirements


Guidance for this EIA Screening Report is taken from Section 50 of the Roads Act 1993, as amended, and in Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. A full list of relevant legislation used to carry out this EIA Screening Report is outlined below:

- Roads Act 1993, the Roads Regulations 1994 and the EIA (Amendment) Regulations 1999. This Act is directly relevant as is Section 68 in which cycling is referred to in detail;
- The Planning and Development Act 2000, the Planning and Development (Strategic infrastructure) Act 2006 and the Roads Act 2007;
- Environmental Protection Agency (2002) Guidelines On the Information To be Contained In Environmental Impact Statements; and,

2.2 Methodology

EIA Screening is the process of deciding whether a development requires an EIA.

A detailed desktop study of environmental, archaeological, visual and cultural receptors within the vicinity of the proposed development was carried out. The EIA screening exercise initially assesses the development for Mandatory EIA using classifications defined in the appropriate legislation. Where no mandatory requirement is concluded, screening advances to Sub-Threshold Development Assessment, where the competent authority evaluates whether the project is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, with reference to its scale, nature, location and context.

In the case of this proposed development it has been determined as sub-threshold and will be determined on a case-by-case basis, outlined below in Table 2.2.
2.3 Mandatory EIA

The screening matrix for mandatory EIA is shown below in Table 2.1. This is based on Table 1 of the TII Guidance document on Environmental Impact Assessment of National Road Schemes – A Practical Guide, November 2008.

The legislative requirements which deem whether an EIA is mandatory for a project are 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 this proposed development are provided in Table 2.1.

**Conclusion:** The proposed development is not considered to have a mandatory requirement for an EIA and is consequently to be assessed as a sub-threshold development.

**Reasoning:** The proposed development does not fall within the categories listed below as described within Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. The proposed development is not a motorway, busway or service area development. The other major consideration is the likelihood to have a significant effect on environmental site or designation.

**Table 2.1 Mandatory EIA Screening Matrix**

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<th>Mandatory Threshold</th>
<th>Regulatory Reference</th>
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<td>Prescribed type of proposed road development.</td>
<td>Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994 (Road development prescribed for the purposes of S. 50(1)a) of the Roads Act, 1993</td>
<td>The proposed development does not involve the provision of four or more lanes. Mandatory Threshold Trigger not reached.</td>
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<td>The construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500 metres or more in length in an urban area. The construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length.</td>
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2.4 Sub-Threshold Development (Discretionary) EIA Screening

In considering whether the proposed development is likely to have significant environmental effects, the Planning Authority, under Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, must have regard to the criteria set out in Article 27 of the European Communities (EIA) Regulations, 1999. This
article refers to the criteria for determining whether works would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment set out in Annex III to the EIA Directive, as amended.

The Article 27 screening criteria are grouped into three categories:

1. Characteristics of the Proposed Development;
2. Location of the Proposed Development; and,

The DoEHLG Guidance Document Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development states that "those responsible for making the decision must exercise their best professional judgment, taking account of considerations such as the nature and size of the proposed development, the environmental sensitivity of the area and the nature of the potential effects of the development. In general, it is not intended that special studies or technical evaluations will be necessary for the purpose of making a decision".

The 1997 amending Directive (97/11/EC) introduced guidance for Member States in terms of deciding whether or not a development is likely to have 'significant effects on the environment'. The criteria have been transposed in full into Irish legislation, in the Third Schedule to the EC EIA (Amendment) Regulations 1999 (S.I. No. 93 of 1999) and in Schedule 7 to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001).

The criteria associated with each category (i.e. the criteria that must be taken into account when making screening decisions on a case by case basis) are presented in Table 2.2. These criteria have been considered in the context of the proposed development and a description of the aspects of the environment with potential to be significantly affected by the project are outlined in Section 3.

**Table 2.2 Article 27 Screening Criteria for Determining Likely Significant Effects**

<table>
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<td>- The size of the proposed development;</td>
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<td>- The cumulation with other proposed development;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The use of natural resources;</td>
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<td>- The production of waste;</td>
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<td>- Pollution and nuisances; and,</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used.</td>
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### Location of Proposed Development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, having regard in particular to:

- The existing land use;
- The relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area; and,
- The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:
  - (a) wetlands,
  - (b) coastal zones,
  - (c) mountain and forest areas,
  - (d) nature reserves and parks,
  - (e) areas classified or protected under legislation, including special protection areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC,
  - (f) areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the EU have already been exceeded,
  - (g) densely populated areas,
  - (h) landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

### Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The potential significant effects of the proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and having regard in particular to:

- The extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population);
- The transfrontier nature of the impact;
- The magnitude and complexity of the impact;
- The probability of the impact; and,
- The duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.

Additionally, the EIA screening process can be aided using the checklists contained within the European Commission publication Guidance on EIA Screening (2017), in particular the “Screening Checklist” and the “Checklist of Criteria for Evaluating the Significance of Environmental Effects”. The Screening Checklist was completed to inform the Article 27 screening process and is included in Appendix 1 of this report.

### 3 Sub-Threshold Development (Discretionary) EIA Screening Assessment

#### 3.1 Study Area

The Sub-Threshold Assessment will be focused on a 500m study area (unless otherwise stated) (Figure 1) encompassing the proposed greenway improvements. Receptors such as ecological, archaeological, landscape and noise are outlined in detail in Section 3 of this Screening Report.
3.1.1 Nature Conservation Designations

The closest nature conservation designation to the proposed development is Blackwater River Special Area of Conservation (SAC) at Youghal which is located 240 m from the proposed development. All other European designations lie outside 500m.

To the south west of Midleton, Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA) is located 1.1km from the proposed development. At Killeagh and to the south, Ballymacoda SAC and Ballymacoda Bay SPA is located 1.6 km from the proposed greenway according to the NPWS and the Midleton to Youghal AA. At Youghal, the Blackwater Estuary SPA is 1.7km from the proposed greenway.

In terms of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Great Island Channel SAC is located approximately 1.1 km to the south of the proposed development at Midleton.

**Blackwater River SAC (Cork, Waterford)**

This site is of high conservation value owing to the occurrence of a number of fauna species which are listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site also supports good examples of dry heath, a habitat that is listed on Annex I of this Directive.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive:

- Dry Heath;
- Kerry Slug (Geomalacus maculosus);
- Freshwater Pearl Mussel (Margaritifera margaritifera);
- Atlantic Salmon (Salmo salar);
- Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros); and,
- Otter (Lutra lutra).

**Blackwater Estuary SPA**

The Blackwater Estuary SPA is an internationally important wetland site on account of the population of Black-tailed Godwit it supports. It is also of high importance in a national context, with seven species having populations which exceed the thresholds for national importance. The occurrence of Little Egret, Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit is of particular note as these species are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. The Blackwater Estuary is also a Ramsar Convention site (NPWS, 2018).

**Cork Harbour SPA**

The Cork Harbour designated area supports over 20,000 numbers of wintering waterfowl, internationally important populations of Redshank and fifteen species of National Importance. The designated area also supports populations of five species listed on Annex 1 of the EC Birds Directive. The site also supports Black-tailed Godwit while a further 20 non-breeding waterbird species occur in numbers of national importance. The Annex I species Common Tern has a breeding population at the site (NPWS, 2018).

**Great Island SAC**

Great Island SAC (1.1km) and pNHA is important for wintering waterfowl. The site is an integral part of Cork Harbour which is a wetland of international importance for the birds it supports. The site is extremely important for wintering waterfowl and according to NPWS is considered to contain three of the top five areas within Cork Harbour, namely North Channel, Harper's Island and Belvelly-Marino Point (NPWS, 2018).
Ballymacoda SAC (Clonpriest and Pillmore) and Ballymacoda Bay SPA

Ballymacoda SAC is a fine example of an estuarine complex and this coastal site stretches north-east from Ballymacoda to within about 6 km of Youghal, County Cork. It is also listed as an internationally important wetland Ramsar site. The site is of high conservation importance because several of the habitats present are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Though moderate in size, it has a good diversity of coastal habitats, including estuaries, tidal mudflats and sandflats, Salicornia Mud, Atlantic Salt Meadows and Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi).

Ballymacoda SAC is one of the most important bird sites in the country and supports a higher number of waders than any other County Cork estuary of its size. It also contains important numbers of Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit, two E.U. Birds Directive Annex I species, an internationally important population of Black-tailed Godwit, and nationally important numbers of a further 13 bird species.

Ballymacoda Bay SPA is one of the most important sites in the country for wintering waterfowl. It qualifies for international importance on the basis of regularly exceeding 20,000 wintering birds but also for its Golden Plover and Black-tailed Godwit populations (NPWS, 2018).

Other Ecological Designations

There are two pNHAs which lie within 500m of the proposed development. On the approach to Youghal, the proposed development and existing former railway track traverses through Ballyvergan Marsh pNHA which is an area defined by its rich coastal marshy features.

Also significant is Ballyquirke Pond, south west of Killeagh which is located within 0-10m of the proposed development. There are no other pNHAs within 500m although there are a further 5 within 2km. This includes Great Island pNHA which is extensive in size and ties in with the European designation features of the Great Island SAC.

3.1.2 Cultural Heritage

There are approximately 59 combined heritage sites within 100m of the proposed development listed under the National Monuments Service (NMS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH). The Record of Monument and Places (RMPs) in the Cork County Council Development Plan 2014 also show several Recorded Structures within 200m of the proposed development – all of which are not directly impacted by the proposed development. These include Cathermone Castle (in ruins) and the Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

3.1.3 Landscape

The proposed development lies within three separate Landscape Character Type Areas. To the west at Midleton lies the Cork City Harbour and Estuary Landscape Character Type Area. As the Proposed Development moves eastward it enters the Broad Fertile Lowland Valleys which encompasses the majority of the proposed development. Finally towards Youghal the proposed development enters Broad Bay Coast Landscape Character Type Area. The area at Midleton in the west and at Youghal in the east is also defined as having a Very High Landscape Value, a Very High Sensitivity (extra vulnerable landscapes for example, seascape area with national importance – likely to be fragile and susceptible to change) and is listed as a nationally important Landscape.

The Cork City Harbour and Estuary Landscape Character Type Area can be characterised:

“by having a mix of urban and rural areas with a large expansive harbour. To the south of the city, the western side of the harbour supports major industrial development, while on higher ground telecommunication masts or water storage towers punctuate the skyline. The harbour includes large islands, which, along with much of the harbour shore, comprises landscape of fertile farmland which slopes gently to the sea. It comprises a mosaic of fertile fields of mixed use on brown podzols. The rural areas around much of the greater harbour area are now characterised by a prevalence of infrastructure such as roads, bridges and electricity power lines and some urban sprawl. The narrow
harbour mouth is defined by two hilltops with old military fortifications on their summits” (Cork Draft Landscape Strategy, 2007).

The Broad Fertile Lowland Valleys Landscape Character Type Area can be characterised as:

“Comprising mostly brown podzolic soils, these landscapes are highly fertile, especially along the alluvial floodplain. Landcover comprises a mosaic of regularly shaped fields typically of medium size. The fields throughout this landscape are bounded mostly by mature broadleaf hedgerows but also by post and wire fencing.

The agricultural use of this landscape primarily involves intensive dairying as well as tillage. The latter provides seasonal colour variation. Farmsteads comprise houses as well as metal sheds (with older barrel vaulted or modern Aframe roofs) and traditional out buildings, most of which are relatively well screened by the hedgerows. Some of the larger settlements include Castlemartyr, Killeagh and Cloyne. Views are curtailed by the prevalence of hedgerows in flatter areas” (Cork Draft Landscape Strategy, 2007).

The Broad Bay Coast Landscape Character Type Area can be characterised as:

“This landscape stretches along the coast from the mouth of Cork Harbour in the west to the eastern boundary of County Cork at Youghal. The coastline here sweeps in broad bays flanked by low promontories, having come under the influence of differential wave action between these projections and recessions of landform. The latter typically rise and fall in rolling barrel form, terminating abruptly along the shore with low cliffs which give way to rocky shores on less exposed faces and then to beaches in bays, such as Ballycotton Bay and Youghal Bay.

Inland, low broadleaf hedgerows define a mosaic of moderately sized fields. The fields are fertile, comprising mostly acid brown earths and brown podzolics. They are used mostly for dairy pasture but also some tillage. Isolated cottages, two-storey houses and farmsteads are scattered across the landscape, some on hilltops but mostly at lower altitudes between hills and around the bay areas. Towns and villages include Youghal, Shanagarry, Ballycotton and Garryvoe” (Cork Draft Landscape Strategy, 2007).

3.1.4 Key Community Facilities

The key community facilities located within 500m of the proposed development are outlined below in Table 3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Community Facilities</th>
<th>Distance to Proposed Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West to East</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midleton Rugby Club</td>
<td>0-10m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midleton Cricket Club</td>
<td>200m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killeagh GAA Club</td>
<td>227m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Fergal's National School, Killeagh</td>
<td>190m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seafield Caravan Park, Youghal</td>
<td>10-20m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claycastle Pitch and Putt Club, Youghal</td>
<td>10-15m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youghal and District Nursing Home</td>
<td>410m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aura Youghal Leisure Centre, Youghal</td>
<td>225m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perks Entertainment Centre, Youghal</td>
<td>477m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Youghal</td>
<td>410m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youghal Tennis Club</td>
<td>436m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youghal Greyhound Stadium</td>
<td>240m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key Community Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West to East</th>
<th>Distance to Proposed Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summerfield Holiday Park, Youghal</td>
<td>210m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seafield Caravan Park, Youghal</td>
<td>10-20m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

#### 3.2.1 Size of the Project

The proposed development travels through mainly rural areas and through the environs of Midleton, Mogeely, Killeagh and Youghal. The mandatory threshold for prescribed types of road development in an urban area is 500m of four or more lanes (dual carriageway). The proposed development is more than 500m in length (total). Although this area is greater than the mandatory threshold which triggers an EIA, the proposed development will not have four or more lanes of road network, is not a motorway and includes the facilitation of walking and cycling on former railway tracks.

#### 3.2.2 Cumulation with Other Projects

An initial review of plans and projects that may have the potential to result in cumulative impacts has been undertaken. This section considers plans and projects in County Cork that were considered. Data sources included the following.

- Cork County Council website;
- An Bord Pleanála (ABP) website (planning searches);
- Web search for major infrastructure projects in County Cork;
- Cork County Council Development Plan 2014; and,

The following projects have been found within 500m of the proposed development. Major road schemes which fall outside 500m have been included due to their cumulative importance. Planning applications which are directly relevant and fall within 100m of the proposed development within the past five years have been included within this search.

**Major Road Schemes**

The following major road schemes have been identified and are directly relevant to the proposed development.

- Dunkettle Interchange Improvement Motorway Scheme (Outside 500m);
- Cork Northern Ring Road (Outside 500m);
- M20 Cork to Limerick (Outside 500m);
- M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy Motorway Scheme (Outside 500m);
- Carrigtwohill - Midleton Interchange Scheme (Outside 500m); and,
- N25 - Youghal Road Upgrades.

The existing Dunkettle Interchange is located approximately 6km to the east of Cork City, where the M8/N8 road from Dublin to Cork intersects with the N25 road from Waterford to Cork, via the existing interchange, just north of the Jack Lynch Tunnel. The existing Dunkettle Interchange is a strategically important intersection of a number of key national routes, with the main links described as follows;
The Dunkettle Interchange will be transformed (work beginning in 2019) into a free flowing interchange in so far as practicable, i.e. an interchange whereby traffic movements aren't conflicted by opposing traffic movements either by yielding or stopping at traffic signals, as is the case with the existing interchange.

The preferred option not only caters for the main arteries comprising the N8/M8, the N25 and the N40 via the Jack Lynch Tunnel, but also accommodates the other more local movements which were facilitated. The Dunkettle Interchange will also cater for local traffic movements between Glonthaune and Little Island as well as the proposed development. As a result, no-in combination impacts between the proposed development and Dunkettle Interchange are expected.

The proposed Cork Northern Ring Road is located approximately 1.2km north west of the nearest road improvement at the Brook Inn Junction. The Preferred Route has been chosen but there are no current plans to proceed with the scheme as of 2017. Similarly, the M20 Limerick to Cork Motorway is a major infrastructure scheme that has been proposed since 2007 although the current status is also on hold.

The M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy Motorway Scheme lies approximately 3.5km south west of the nearest proposed development. Cork County Council (CCC), propose to upgrade approximately 12.5km of the N28 National Primary Route, from the N28/N40 South Ring Road Bloomfield Interchange to the Port of Cork in Ringaskiddy. As of November 2017, the scheme has been submitted to ABP for consideration.

The construction of the N25 Carrigtohill – Midleton Road Improvement Scheme (9km east of the proposed network improvements) is seen as an important strategic infrastructural requirement to improve the road network in the vicinity of Carrigtohill and Midleton. The scheme is currently on hold.

The proposed Cork Northern Ring Road, M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy Motorway Scheme, the N25 Carrigtohill – Midleton Road Improvement Scheme are all on hold but their overall cumulative effects will be to allow greater flow of traffic around Cork and the wider Cork area as well as improving pedestrian and cyclist links.

**Key Walking and Cycling Proposals**

The following walking and cycling proposals within 500m of the proposed development are outlined below:

- The Cork Network Cycle Plan 2017 has proposed a greenway (M-GW3) with the Water Rock area of Midleton. The Plan also proposes several other primary, secondary and feeder walking and cycling routes in and around Midleton; and
- There are currently walking and cycling schemes proposed within County Cork for Glanmire, Blarney, Whitegate, Bandon, Macroom, Mallow, Carrignavar, Carrigtwohill, and Avondhu.

The proposed development will only add to walking and cycling schemes proposed above by improving connectivity in the wider Cork area and promoting healthy sustainable transport networks for locals and tourists alike.

**Proposed Planning Developments**

The following proposed planning developments have been identified within 100m of the proposed development and are included in Table 3.2 below:
Table 3.2 Showing Relevant Planning Applications within 100m

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Distance to Proposed Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>167031</td>
<td>To construct new cheese production facility and a significant upgrade of the existing Dairygold Food Ingredients Facility.</td>
<td>0 – 10m to existing Dairygold Factory Site, 85m to proposed redline boundary of planning application, Located at Mogeely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176327</td>
<td>Residential development of 22 no. townhouses and 22 no. detached dwelling houses and associated site works and services- Extension of Duration to permission granted under Planning Reg No.. 06/13579 and extended under Pl. Reg. No.1 2/4611</td>
<td>0 – 10m, Located east of Mogeely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1458007</td>
<td>Permission for the demolition of the hotel and construction of a mixed use development consisting of four 3 to 4 storey blocks at the former Hilltop Hotel, Dysart, Youghal, County Cork. The proposed mixed use development consists of a total of 47 no apartments.</td>
<td>0 – 10m, Located west of Youghal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>174693</td>
<td>Restoration and alterations to existing dwelling, which is a protected structure. Works include minor elevational changes to front and rear of dwelling, the demolition of an outbuilding, shed and flat roof extension, new single storey extension and all ancillary site works as necessary</td>
<td>0 – 10m, Located west of Youghal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Cork Municipal Plan</td>
<td>2,500 residential units proposed at Waterock, Midleton</td>
<td>Over 200m west at Midleton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proposed cheese production factory at Mogeely (167031) has been considered by An Bord Pleanála with the Inspector’s Planning Report noting the following with regard to the proposed development:

“It is noted in the appeal that since planning was originally submitted in December 2016 that it has been announced that the old railway line between Midleton and Youghal is going to be a Green Route linking both areas. In this regard I refer to the East Cork Local Area Plan 2017 and Objective DB-03 therein that states that it is an objective to safeguard the existing rail line and associated rail infrastructure from inappropriate development that could compromise its use either as a rail facility or as part of a greenway linking Midleton and Youghal in the future.

While I do not consider that the proposed scheme will interfere with Objective DB-03 I agree with the comments of the County Architect the proposed scheme should take account of this and make provision for the enhancement of a pedestrian urban connection to the former railway line”.

It is clear the planning application has taken account of the proposed development and the plans and polices relating to the proposed greenway.

National and Local Area Plans

As part of the Cork County Council Development Plan 2014 and the East Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017, the town of Midleton and Youghal have been identified as key populated centres where growth should occur primarily to provide much needed new residential developments combined with better employment opportunities and improved public transport. The Cork County Council Development Plan 2014 outlines in Chapter 8 Tourism that a network of greenways are currently being considered along the abandoned rail lines of South and West Cork. The Plan outlines a specific Policy TO 7-1 Walking/Cycling and Greenways to:
“Promote the development of walking and cycling routes throughout the county as an activity for both international visitors and local tourists in a manner that compatible with nature conservation and other environmental policies”.

The East Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017 incorporates greenways into proposed local policies for Midleton, Mogeely, Killeagh and Youghal. The Plan states the following with regards to the proposed development within each of these areas:

“While the Council has a long term strategic objective to reopen the rail route linking Cork and Midleton to Youghal there is an opportunity to yield a use from the disused railway line in the interim. The development of the disused railway line as a greenway would have the advantage of protecting the integrity of the route for the future while creating jobs and opportunities locally for the benefit of local towns, villages and communities in terms of amenities and tourism. The development of a greenway would safeguard the route for its potential future reopening as an operational railway”.

The proposed development is within the Mogeely Development Boundary as outlined in the East Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017 Policy DB - 03. Other areas phased include open space areas and locations phased for industry.

No zoned areas are directly impacted by the proposed development as identified in the East Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017.

Having considered the likely cumulative effect of these developments in combination with the proposed transport network upgrades, it is anticipated the cumulative effect is likely to result in long-term positive effects on future planning and land use patterns in the area, local populations and in particular local tourism. The proposed development ties in with both the national and local policy requirements for East Cork.

3.2.3 Use of Natural Resources

There are minor areas of agricultural land which are directly affected by the proposed development. The area between Midleton and Youghal is largely agricultural in terms of land use. The Part 8 Site Layout Drawings show a 2m wide grass margin along the proposed development and natural screening to be retained where possible. Agricultural crossings are provided along the entire length of the proposed development.

The construction of the proposed development will involve the use of raw materials. It is proposed that construction material is sourced locally, where possible, and where possible cut/fill will be balanced so the impact is not likely to be significant.

The Midleton to Youghal Greenway Flood Risk Assessment states there are springs and groundwater discharges recorded in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development, but no recorded flood risk.

3.2.4 Production of Waste

There may be waste produced during the construction phase of the proposed development especially although only minor land take may be required at the proposed car park locations. Production of any construction waste is expected to be mitigated for within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) – therefore impacts would be insignificant.

3.2.5 Pollution and Nuisances

The closest nature conservation designation to the proposed development is Blackwater River Special SAC at Youghal to the north east of the proposed development.

During construction, polluting material has the potential to cause environmental effects, however the likelihood and severity of these effects will be minimised through compliance with the TII

The proposed development is expected to drive tourism potential in the Midleton, Mogeely, Killeagh and Youghal areas.

3.2.6 Risk of Accidents

Providing best construction practices are followed, the risk of accidents which are significant in scale is considered low. The risk of accidents associated with the construction and operational phases of the proposed development is considered to be not significant. No novel or potentially significantly hazardous substance technologies will be utilised during the scheme.

3.3 Location of Proposed Development

3.3.1 Existing Land Use

The East Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017 defines the local existing land in the vicinity of Midleton as the following:

“Midleton is the largest town in East Cork and is located within the area defined as ‘Metropolitan Cork’ or the ‘Cork Gateway’. The planning strategy for the Cork Gateway seeks to achieve significant future growth in population, employment and services, supported by high levels of community facilities, amenities and integrated public transport connections, ensuring the Gateway can be the location of choice for most people, especially those with an urban employment focus.

In recent years, whilst retaining its self-sufficient market town character, Midleton has become a popular residential location for commuters working in or near Cork City. The town benefits from a 30 minute peak hour rail service to Cork City with a journey time of 23 minutes. The town offers a strong supply of land for housing, employment and other uses and in this context significant growth is planned in the area in line with the Core Strategy of the Cork County Development Plan 2014.”

The East Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017 defines the local existing land in the vicinity of Youghal as the following:

“The current Local Area Plan for Youghal supports the continued development of the town as a residential, employment, tourist and service location in a coastal setting with special recreational, heritage and marine tourism functions. Youghal is designated as a Ring Town within the CASP Ring Strategic Planning Area and is located on Cork’s eastern boundary with County Waterford. It is an important Ring Town which serves a large hinterland in both counties. Youghal is also an important tourist centre which has benefited from the completion of the Youghal by-pass.

Youghal is situated on the N25 National Primary Route which forms part of the Atlantic Corridor linking the gateway cities of Cork and Waterford. Development and improvement of the transport infrastructure within the region will not only greatly benefit the Cork and Waterford Gateways, but it will also benefit the other settlements within the corridor.

The disused railway line is also an asset for the town and has the potential to fulfill an important role within the railway corridor linking Youghal with Midleton and Cork City as part of a modern transportation system or it could also be developed as leisure infrastructure linking the towns of Midleton and Youghal.”

The proposed development between Midleton and Youghal is largely rural in nature with scattered dwellings and local roads serving the towns and villages of Mogeely and Killeagh. The existing disused
railway once served these rural settlements, defining their nature and economic activities in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

3.3.2 Abundance, Quality and Regenerative Capacity of Natural Resources

Construction material will be required for the construction of the proposed development, some of which will be sourced from excavated materials on the site; however other materials, including steel for the gates, concrete for the agricultural crossing points, geotextile and bitumen will be required to be imported to complete the development. Wood for the boardwalk at Ballyvergan may also need to be imported.

3.3.3 The Absorption Capacity of the Natural Environment

Wetlands and Watercourses

The River Blackwater SAC, River Blackwater Estuary SPA, Cork Harbour SPA, and Great Island SAC are European protected sites and require appropriate ecological mitigation.

Ballyvergan Marsh pNHA is an important wetland site as stated in the AA and ecology report.

As part of the proposed development, a boardwalk is proposed at Ballyvergan on the approach to Youghal. This area is defined by its marshy characteristics as described in the AA and as shown on the Part 8 Planning Drawings for the proposed development.

Watercourses can be sensitive to pollution, particularly to the potential increased levels of suspended solids during the construction stage. Suspended solids (silt) affect aquatic life particularly larger animals such as fish, most critically when it settles in spawning areas. Other impacts include:

- Physical obstructions to upstream and downstream migration both during and after construction;
- Disturbance of spawning beds during construction - timing of works is critical; and,
- Point source pollution incidents during construction.

The proposed development is located within the South West River Basin District. The groundwater classification for this region is classified as Good by the Water Framework Directive (EPA Map Viewer, 2018). The proposed development is situated in Flood Zone A as stated in the Midleton to Youghal Flood Risk Assessment. Flood Zone A is defined as 'Where the probability of flooding from watercourses is the highest (greater than 1% or 1 in 100 year for watercourse flooding or 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding).

The proposed greenway is defined as a ‘Water-Compatible Development’ in accordance with ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning’ and therefore its construction within Flood Zone ‘A’ is acceptable. It is expected that the pathway may be inundated in part during a flood event. This is acceptable providing pathway design takes this into consideration and the risks are adequately mitigated.

As the River Blackwater SAC, River Blackwater Estuary SPA, Cork Harbour SPA, and Great Island SAC are all important wetland sites site specific mitigation measures as part of the CEMP must be adhered to. During the construction phase due to potential pollution incidences, these measures must be put in place to protect affected water bodies and to maintain or improve the water quality status.

Coastal Zones

The coastal waters within the vicinity of the proposed development are part of River Blackwater SAC and River Blackwater Estuary SPA and include the intertidal mud flats as the mouth of the River Blackwater as it enters the sea.

During the construction phase due to potential pollution incidences, measures must be put in place to protect all coastal water areas particularly those connected to the River Blackwater SAC and River Blackwater Estuary SPA
Mountain and Forest Areas

There are no mountain ranges within 500m. There are pockets of woodland within 500m of the proposed development but none within 100m. Dense woodland is located to the west and east of Killeagh and on the approach to Ballyvergan Marsh pNHA.

Nature Reserves and Parks

There are no nature reserves within the study area which are affected by the proposed development.

Nationally Designated Sites

The following are a list of nationally designated sites in proximity to the proposed development:

Under 5km:

- Ballyvergan Marsh pNHA - 0m;
- Ballyquirk Pond pNHA - 0-10m south;
- Blackwater River and Estuary pNHA - 260m east;
- Lough Aderry and Ballybutler pNHA - 1.1km south;
- Great Island Channel pNHA - 1.1km south west;
- Carrighshane Hill pNHA adjacent - 1.6km south;
- Ballymacoda pNHA - 1.6km south;
- Clasharinka Pond pNHA - 1.7km south;
- Ballymacoda Bay SPA - 1.6km south;
- Ballymacoda SAC - 1.6km south;
- Blackwater Estuary SPA - 1.8km east;
- Ballycotton Bay SPA - 8.7km south;
- Ardmore Head SAC - 9km east; and,
- Leamlara Wood - 4.3km north west.

The closest is the pNHA Ballyvergan Marsh and Ballyquirk Pond pNHA.

European Sites

The following are a list of European designated sites in proximity to the proposed development. Distance is from the nearest point of proposed development:

Within 15km:

- Blackwater River SAC (Cork, Waterford) - 260m north east;
- Great Island Channel SAC - 1.1km south;
- Cork Harbour SPA - 1.1km south west;
- Ballymacoda SAC - 1.6km south;
- Blackwater Estuary SPA - 1.8km east;
- Ballycotton Bay SPA - 8.7km south;
- Ardmore Head SAC - 9km east; and,
- Helvick Head to Ballyquin SPA - 11.9 km east.

Environmental Quality Standards

From the information available at this stage of the process there are no known areas in which the environmental quality standards have already been exceeded.
Densley Populated Areas

The proposed development is within 500m of the densely populated residential areas of Midleton in the west and Youghal in the east. These areas will benefit from improved tourism infrastructure created by the proposed development. A safe linkage between these two populated areas will be created which can be used by all recreational users.

Landscapes of Historical, Cultural or Archaeological Significance

The following heritage assets of significance were identified within a 100m buffer of the proposed network improvements, through the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage and the Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht Historic Environment Viewer.

The search shows there are 65 individual records listed on the Heritage Council’s Sites and Monuments Records database (Archaeological and Architectural combined) within 100m.

These sites are scattered throughout the proposed greenway route (within 100m). The closest archaeological and architectural records include Mogeely Railway Station. The records are listed below. Distance is from the linear centrepoint of the existing railway track to the respective features as measured on the Historic Environment Viewer. Record of Protected Structures are denoted with RPS:

Archaeological (West to East)

- Burnt Mound (CO076-134) – 83m;
- Country House (CO076 – 029) – 91m;
- Souterrain (CO076-118) – 100m;
- Enclosure (CO066-060) - 79m;*
- Graveyard (CO066 - 041001) - 80m;*
- Ecclesiastical Site (CO066-041002) - 85m;*
- Church (CO066-041003) - 88m; and,*
- Icehouse (CO067 - 024001) - 82m;

*Archaeological site outside study area but with Zone of Notification extending into study area.

Architectural (West to East)

- Midleton Railway Station (20907610 - 50m
- Bridge (20906632) – On railway track;
- Mogeely Rail Station (20906635) – On railway track;
- Station Master's House (20906636) – 40m;
- Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (20906638) (RPS - 00399) - 40m;
- Level crossing (20906639) – On railway track;
- Station Master's House (20829021) – 26m;
- Railway Station (20829022) – 34m;
- Store/Warehouse (20829023) – 27m;
- Signal box (20829024) – 25m;
- House (20823282) (RPS - 3028) – 74m;
- House (20823281) (RPS – 3027) – 74m;
- House (20823280) (RPS – 3026) – 67m;
- House (20823280) (RPS – 3026) – 70m;
- House (20823279) (RPS - 3025) - 32m;
- House (20823279) (RPS - 3025) - 58m;
- House (20823278) (RPS - 3024) - 51m;
- House (20823278) (RPS - 3024) - 29m;
- House (20823277) (RPS - 3023) - 44m;
- House (20823276) (RPS - 3022) - 44m;
- House (20823275) (RPS - 3021) - 43m;
- House (20823274) (RPS - 3020) - 43m;
- House (20823273) (RPS - 3019) - 30m;
- House (20823272) (RPS - 3018) - 30m;
- House (20823271) (RPS - 3017) - 30m;
- House (20823270) (RPS - 3016) - 30m;
- House (RPS - 3015) - 30m;
- House (RPS - 3014) - 30m;
- House (20823267) (RPS - 3013) - 30m;
- House (20823266) (RPS - 3012) - 30m;
- House (20823265) (RPS - 3011) - 10m;
- House (20823265) (RPS - 3011) - 25m
- House (20823264) (RPS - 3010) - 10m;
- House (20823264) (RPS - 3010) - 25m;
- House (20823263) (RPS - 3009) - 30m;
- House (20823262) (RPS - 3008) - 30m;
- House (20823261) (RPS - 3007) - 30m;
- House (20823260) (RPS - 3006) - 30m;
- House (20823259) (RPS - 3005) - 30m;
- Railway Station / Signal Box (20823258) (RPS - 3004) - 30m;
- Railway Station (20823257) (RPS - 3003) - 7m;
- Station Master's House (RPS - 3002) - 30m;
- Railway Turntable (RPS - 3036) - 30m;
- House (20823283) - 46m;
- House (20823284) - 80m;
- House (20823285) - 80m;
- Post Office Box (20823240) (RPS - 2822) - 33m;
- House (20823250) (RPS - 2910) - 95m;
- House (20823241) (RPS - 2901) - 61m;
- House (20823242) (RPS - 2902) - 63m;
- House (20823243) (RPS - 2903) - 71m;
- House (20823244) - 70m
- House (20823245) - 70m;
- House (20823246) - 72m;
• Former Theatre (RPS – 3001);
• House (20823247) (RPS 2907) – 98m; and
• House (20823248) (RPS 2908) – 96m;

In addition, the Cork County Council Development Plan 2014 lists three Records of Protected Structures within 100m. These include Cathermone Castle (in ruins), Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Church of Ireland at Mogeely.

The Youghal Town Council Plan 2009 – 2015 also shows a number of residential properties at the Front Strand area in Youghal. These individual properties are Protected Structures and are located within an Architectural Conservation Area. These dwellings are separated from the railway property by an existing wall.

The qualities of archaeological and architectural interest are not mutually exclusive and certain structures can have both qualities and be protected by both the National Monuments Act and the Planning Acts.

These constraints have been identified within the study area and will be taken into consideration. During the design development, liaison will be undertaken with the National Monuments Service and other groups with interest in historical, cultural and archaeological resources in the area.

**Designated Focal Points/ Views**

The following Scenic Routes have been identified within the Cork County Council Development Plan 2014 within the study area:

• Scenic Route 46
  – N25 National Primary Route between Coolaha and the County Bounds. Intermittant views of Youghal Bay, distant mountain views and views of the Tourig and Blackwater River.

Scenic Route 46 begins at Ballyhobert / Coolaha and continues north east along the N25 until just after the N25 / R634 Roundabout.

There is not expected to be any disruption to Scenic Route 46 during construction as it is online along the N25 only. Any unforeseen temporary impacts can be mitigated by using sympathetic design and making use of existing screening as outlined in the Part 8 Planning Drawings.

**3.4 Characteristics of Potential Impacts**

**3.4.1 Extent of the Impact**

The proposed development will involve a proposed greenway from Midleton to Youghal in County Cork. The development will largely be on former disused railway tracks with additional land take required for the proposed car park locations at Mogeely, Killeagh and Youghal as shown on the Part 8 Planning Drawings.

**3.4.2 Transfrontier Nature of the Impact**

There are no transfrontier impacts associated with the proposed development.
3.4.3 Magnitude and Complexity of the Project

Air and Climate

No significant impact is anticipated to air and climate as traffic levels are not predicted to increase significantly due to the proposed development.

There are no known existing issues with the air quality of this area and the expected levels of traffic are not expected to be significant. Therefore the new proposed development will not result in any likely significant effects.

The objective of the project is to provide upgraded and improved transportation routes including pedestrian and cyclist routes thus having no significant operational impact on air quality and climate. During construction, polluting material has the potential to cause environmental effects, however the likelihood and severity of these effects will be minimised through compliance with the Transport Infrastructure Ireland Environmental and Construction Guidelines and the employment of construction management best practice as outlined within the CEMP. The proposed development is expected to facilitate access and movement between the settlements of Midleton, Killeagh, Youghal and the wider Cork area. Appropriate consultation with the relevant local authority and statutory agencies should be carried out as part of the detailed design.

Noise and Vibration

An increase in noise and vibration levels is expected during the construction stage but the impact is likely to be temporary in nature.

The proposed development will largely be active in daytime hours only. At operation, an increase in the number of cyclists or pedestrians will have negligible impact on noise or vibration in the local environment. It is also considered that the level of construction traffic and construction operations required for a project of this scale will be short term and will not result in the creation of any significant levels of noise or vibration. Furthermore works will be carried out in compliance with BS5228: Part 1 and the European Communities (Noise Emission by Equipment for Use Outdoors) Regulations, 2001 which will ensure a controlled level of noise during construction phase. Appropriate consultation with the relevant local authority and statutory agencies should be carried out.

Human Beings

During construction, temporary negative impacts are predicted due to noise, dust and visual impacts along sections of the proposed greenway which are located close to the settlements of Midleton, Mogeely, Killeagh and Youghal. Adequate mitigation will be required to minimise noise and vibration impacts at these locations.

These impacts are not considered significant. Community severance will be kept to a minimum and access to the existing key routes will generally be maintained during construction. Construction of the proposed agricultural crossings and the proposed car parks as shown on the Part 8 Planning Drawings may add to the temporary community severance during construction.

During the operational stage, the proposed development should have no negligible adverse effects on human beings living along the route and will provide a high quality amenity for the local residents, commuters and tourists. Any disruption from noise and vibration effects during construction will be mitigated through construction best practice guidelines and through adherence to the CEMP.

During operation, a positive impact is expected due to a key pedestrian and cyclist greenway being built in line with the Cork Area Plans and the Cork Network Cycle Plan 2017. Additionally, tourism and transport objectives will be met through improving connectivity in the wider Cork area. Appropriate consultation with the relevant local authority and statutory agencies should be carried out.
Ecology

The proposed development is not located within any Natura 2000 sites (SACs / SPAs).

The closest Natura 2000 site to the proposed development is Blackwater River SAC (Cork, Waterford) at Youghal which is located 240m from the proposed development. All other European designations lie outside 500m.

An ecological report was prepared for the proposed greenway and this was accompanied by a Stage 1 AA Screening Report. The screening report for AA is based on the best available scientific information and demonstrates that construction and operation of the proposed Greenway between Midleton and Youghal, County Cork, poses no risk of likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites (e.g. Great Island Channels SAC, Cork Harbour SPA, Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC or Ballymacoda Bay SPA).

It is considered that the proposed works do not require progression to second stage Appropriate Assessment.

The key findings of the ecological report were that although the proposed greenway does run through Ballyvergan pNHA, no direct habitat loss outside the old disused railway line i.e. within Ballyvergan Marsh, is predicted and no alteration to drainage is proposed. The proposed greenway through the pNHA is to be located on a raised boardwalk. No other NHAs / pNHAs will be impacted by the proposed development.

The ecological report states that existing vegetation and robust natural boundaries within the railway corridor will be retained where possible and that prior to the commencement of development, an assessment of existing boundaries will be undertaken with a view to developing and implementing a Landscape Masterplan and maintenance regime. In terms of the vegetation lost within the railway corridor, this will range in value from low to high local value. The ecological report advises that the advice of an ecologist is to be sought in order to maximise biodiversity gain with the Landscape Masterplan; including in particular protection and expansion of areas of WN2 oak-ash-hazel woodland and GS1 calcareous grassland.

No instream works are proposed. Strict adherence to best practice as outlined in the ecological report should prevent negative impacts to aquatic ecology or water quality in watercourses along the proposed development.

The Landscape Masterplan will also set out to maintain vegetation along the proposed development in order to maintain its function as a corridor through which species such as bats can move through the landscape. The proposed greenway is not proposed to be lit. Protection of such habitats (notably along embankments) will also act to minimise habitat loss for animals and birds using the railway corridor; especially for nesting birds.

In terms of mitigation, pre construction surveys are proposed as outlined in the ecological report. These pre construction surveys should include surveys for badgers, invasive species, bat surveys and otter surveys at locations where watercourses are crossed for evidence of holts.

All other mitigation and monitoring recommendations proposed as part of the ecological report and AA should be full implemented and outlined within the final CEMP.

The TII Environmental Assessment and Construction Guidelines will be followed to avoid and minimise impacts where possible and specific mitigation measures will be adhered to during the development of the proposed development in order to reduce the impacts on all ecological receptors. Appropriate consultation with the Council and NPWS will be carried out.

Soils and Geology

The proposed development is largely with the existing railway boundary. There may be some slight impacts to areas which are required for land take (as a result of excavation) such as the proposed new car park locations. Likely significant effects to the soils and geology are not expected to be significant.
Appropriate mitigation and consultation with the relevant local authority and statutory agencies should be carried out. Ground investigations will be completed prior to construction. With the implementation of standard mitigation measures, there will no likely significant effects.

**Water**

The proposed greenway crosses several water channels between Youghal and Midleton, namely the River Dissour, Kiltha, Dungourney and their tributaries. The river channels flow from north to south east, draining the higher lands and discharging into the sea. The former rail corridor bridges all of the aforementioned rivers but is mostly intersected by agricultural drains.

Drainage details are summarised in Section 1.3 of this report. The principal potential impacts to surface water are associated with discharges to receiving watercourses. There are to be no instream works. Direct impacts to watercourses are not anticipated.

It is proposed to use over-the-edge drainage; soakways and the existing network of drains. Apart from occasional operational and maintenance vehicles and emergency vehicle access there will be no vehicular traffic on the proposed greenway; pollutants such as hydrocarbons normally associated with road traffic are therefore not a risk factor.

It is anticipated that there will be no impact to hydrology or water quality during the operational phase. During construction there is the potential for pollution of existing drains and rivers from sediment loading and associated anthropogenic polluting substances as a result of surface water run-off or spills on site.

Best practice standards including SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems), environmental guidelines, the CEMP and mitigation measures will be adhered to in order to avoid impacts on water quality. It is considered that the enforcement of industry best practice pollution prevention measures will prevent the occurrence of a pollution event (for example CIRIA Guideline Document C532 Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites and C648 Control of water pollution from linear construction projects).

A flood risk assessment was carried out on the proposed development. The proposed development is defined as a ‘Water-Compatible Development’ in accordance with ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning’ and therefore its construction within Flood Zone ‘A’ is acceptable. It is expected that the pathway may be inundated in part during a flood event. This is acceptable providing pathway design takes this into consideration and the risks are adequately mitigated.

**Hydrogeology**

Hydro-geological assessment addresses the potential impact of the proposed development on groundwater features and groundwater flow regime. As the proposed development will largely be on the existing railway tracks there will be limited requirement for any significant cut or fill. It is considered that there will be no significant impact on the groundwater regime during either construction or operation with mitigation.

**Landscape**

The area at Midleton and Youghal of the proposed development is within a Very High Value Landscape.

The proposed development lies within three separate Landscape Character Type Areas. To the west at Midleton lies the Cork City Harbour and Estuary Landscape Character Type Area. As the Proposed Development moves eastward it enters the Broad Fertile Lowland Valleys which encompasses the majority of the proposed development. Finally towards Youghal the proposed development enters Broad Bay Coast Landscape Character Type Area.

The nature of the proposed greenway being principally on the former disused railway track is unlikely to have any significant impact on the landscape of the area. The existence of the old railway allows the
incorporation of the proposed greenway into an already altered environment. In addition at operation the proposed greenway will not detract from existing views or views to or from any heritage features present. In fact the project has the potential to have a positive landscape and visual impact through the provision of additional views and interpretation of the area and its heritage.

The proposed greenway is adjacent to residential properties at particularly at Midleton, Mogeely, Killeagh and Youghal. This may have visual effects on the adjacent properties. However, with appropriate landscape planting mitigation (within the Landscape Masterplan), there will be no likely significant effects in terms of landscape or visual effects.

Impacts to Views from Scenic Route 46 will be not significant with appropriate mitigation and the use of existing and proposed tree planting.

During construction the presence of plant and machinery will detract from certain views. However this is considered to be a slight impact which is short term in nature and which is easily offset by the benefits accrued at the operational stage.

The proposed development will be developed sympathetically with the existing environment and landscape planting incorporated where necessary. Adherence to ‘A Guide to Landscape Treatments for National Road Schemes’ (TII, 2006) should be fully observed. Appropriate consultation with the relevant local authority and statutory agencies should be carried out.

Archaeology, Architecture and Cultural Heritage

There are 65 records listed on the Sites and Monuments database which are located within 100m of the proposed development. There are also several Records of Protected Structures and key architectural buildings. In addition, the Youghal Town Council Plan 2009 – 2015 also shows a number of residential properties at the Front Strand area in Youghal. These individual properties are Protected Structures and are located within an Architectural Conservation Area. These dwellings are separated from the railway property by an existing wall.

As outlined in Section 1.3, some refurbishment work will be required for bridges and culverts along the proposed greenway. Consultation should be carried out with the National Monuments Service and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to identify any listed or protected bridges which are due for upgrade work as required.

The proposed development will be largely within the former disused railway track corridor and as such there are no direct impacts to any other sites of archaeological value. The proposed development and the provision of new cycling and pedestrian facilities will not directly impact on any archaeological sites, nor significantly affect their setting. Views from and to any listed building sites including the existing buildings on the Front Strand in Youghal will be screened by planting of the proposed development as outlined in the proposed Landscape Masterplan and as part of the detailed design stage.

If deemed to be required, mitigation measures such as, archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping along the proposed greenway will be undertaken.

Socio-economic

The objective of any socio-economic assessment is to examine the potential impact of the construction and operation of the proposed development on the local community and business activities in the local area.

Proposed agricultural crossings will ensure agricultural businesses will have limited severance during both construction operation.

The proposed development will have beneficial impacts as the proposed greenway will have positive impacts for locals and tourists alike and the provision of new cycling and pedestrian facilities will improve links with nearby cycling and greenway proposals. The proposed development will attract people to the area both providing uplift in the local economy for hotels, guesthouse, restaurants etc.
Resource and Waste Management

The key phase with regard to resource and waste management is the construction phase. As the proposed development is largely on the former disused railway tracks, there will be no requirement for any significant cut or fill. Some land take will be required to accommodate the new car parking proposals along the proposed development. It is therefore considered that there will not be a significant amount of waste generated from the construction of the scheme. Efforts will be made to reuse material on site where possible.

Interactions

Interaction will occur between the water environment and ecological receptors. However, the likely impacts on these environmental aspects are minimal and will not result in significant environmental effects with mitigation and adherence to the CEMP.
4 Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Introduction

This screening report has been carried out in accordance with a methodology that is based on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development (EPA, 2017), Environmental Impact Assessment of National Road Schemes – A Practical Guide (TII, 2008) and The European Commission Guidelines on EIA Screening (June 2017).

4.2 Mandatory EIA

The proposed development does not exceed any of the thresholds outlined in the Roads Act 1993-2007 that would trigger a mandatory requirement to prepare an EIA Report.

4.3 Sub-Threshold EIA

The proposed development is sub-threshold and therefore is assessed in accordance with Article 27 of the European Communities (EIA) Regulations, 1989.

4.4 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

The proposed development involves clearing the existing former railway site of vegetation, localised repair of bridges where appropriate, construction of a new pedestrian / cyclist greenway, road crossings and additional accommodation works. The proposed development travels through both rural and semi-urban areas. The mandatory threshold for prescribed types of road development in an urban area is 500m of four or more lanes (dual carriageway). The proposed development is more than 500m in length (total) but is not greater than the mandatory threshold which triggers an EIA. The proposed development will not have four or more lanes, is not a motorway.

4.5 Location of the Proposed Development

The Midleton to Youghal Greenway route runs from the east of Midleton train station, in Midleton town, continues within the line of the disused railway embankments and within cuttings. The route runs through agricultural lands and small villages, including Mogeely and Knockeagh, terminating at the disused Youghal train station.

The proposed development provides for the construction of a linear greenway amenity between Midleton and Youghal and all ancillary works.

4.6 Characteristics of the Potential Impacts

No significant impact is anticipated to air and climate as traffic levels are not predicted to increase significantly due to the proposed development.

An increase in noise and vibration levels is expected during the construction stage but the impact is likely to be temporary in nature. The proposed greenway will largely be active in daytime hours only. At operation an increase in the number of cyclists or pedestrians will have negligible impact on noise or vibration in the local environment.

An ecological report was prepared for the proposed greenway and this was accompanied by a Stage 1 AA Screening Report. The AA states it is considered that the proposed works do not require progression to second stage Appropriate Assessment.

The key findings of the ecological report were that although the proposed greenway does run through Ballvergan pNHA, no direct habitat loss outside the old disused railway line i.e. within Ballyvergan Marsh, is predicted and no alternation to drainage is proposed. The proposed greenway through the
pNHA is to be located on a raised boardwalk. No other NHAs / pNHAs will be impacted by the proposed development.

In terms of ecological mitigation, pre construction surveys are proposed as outlined in the ecological report. These pre construction surveys should include surveys for badgers, invasive species, bat surveys and otter surveys at locations where watercourses are crossed for evidence of holts.

It is anticipated that there will be no impact to hydrology or water quality during the operational phase. A flood risk assessment was carried out on the proposed greenway. The proposed greenway is defined as a ‘Water-Compatible Development’ in accordance with ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning’ and therefore its construction within Flood Zone A is acceptable.

In terms of landscape, the nature of the proposed greenway being principally on the former disused railway track is unlikely to have any significant impact on the landscape of the area. The proposed development will be developed sympathetically with the existing environment and landscape planting incorporated where necessary.

The proposed development will be largely within the former disused railway track corridor and as such there are no direct impacts to any other sites of archaeological value. The proposed development and the provision of new cycling and pedestrian facilities will not directly impact on any archaeological sites, nor significantly affect their setting after mitigation.

4.7 Likely Significant Effects

The likely significant effects of the proposed development after mitigation are limited to land take as a result of the proposed new car parks and short term construction effects including noise and vibration effects.

4.8 Conclusions and Recommendations

AECOM were commissioned by Cork County Council to undertake this Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report to inform a Part 8 application for the proposed Midleton to Youghal Greenway.

The proposed development Under Section 50 (1) (c) of the Roads Act 1997-2007 and the guidance contained in Section 1 and 2 of the Screening Report is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.

This EIA Screening Report concludes that an EIA for the proposed development is not required.

This EIA Screening Report will help to inform the proposed development with respect to its Part 8 Planning Application.
5 References


Figure 1 Proposed Development Study Area and Key Environmental Constraints
APPENDIX 1
EIA Screening Checklist
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions to be Considered</th>
<th>Yes / No / ? Briefly Describe</th>
<th>Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the Project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc.)?</td>
<td><strong>Yes.</strong> Development will involve provision of new cycling and pedestrian provisions as well as bridge and culvert upgrades where appropriate.</td>
<td><strong>No.</strong> No significant effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Will construction or operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?</td>
<td><strong>No.</strong> The development is largely along existing railway tracks. There may be some land take required to accommodate the provision of the new car park locations at Mogeely, Killeagh and Youghal.</td>
<td><strong>No.</strong> The construction of the proposed development will involve the use of raw materials. It is proposed that construction material is sourced locally, where possible, and where possible cut/fill will be balanced so the impact is not likely to be significant. There is expected to be no potential for impacts to groundwater or watercourses after mitigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?</td>
<td><strong>Yes.</strong> Concrete, bitumen, oils, etc. will be used during construction.</td>
<td><strong>No.</strong> Construction best practice and guidance will be followed in the construction of the proposed road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?</td>
<td><strong>Yes.</strong> Unsuitable material will be excavated during construction.</td>
<td><strong>No.</strong> Construction best practice and guidance will be followed in the construction of the proposed road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Will the Project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?</td>
<td><strong>Yes.</strong> Both the construction and operation phases will produce air pollutants.</td>
<td><strong>No.</strong> Construction traffic levels are not anticipated to create air pollution that will exceed permitted thresholds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions to be Considered</td>
<td>Yes / No / ? Briefly Describe</td>
<td>Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>(6) Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?</td>
<td>Yes. Both the construction and operation phases will create noise and vibration effects during construction.</td>
<td>No. Traffic levels are not anticipated to create noise and vibration levels that will exceed permitted thresholds. Mitigation will ensure that any areas of high noise and vibration will be reduced to permitted levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(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 wasters or the sea?</td>
<td>Yes. Both the construction and operation phases will have risk of pollutants entering surface and groundwaters.</td>
<td>The proposed road development will be designed and constructed in accordance with the TII Environmental Construction Guidelines and other best practice guidelines including SuDS elements. A CEMP will also be fully adhered to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project which could affect human health or the environment?</td>
<td>Yes. Both the construction and operation phases will have risk of accidents leading to pollutants entering surface and groundwaters.</td>
<td>No. Best practice guidelines will ensure accidents are avoided and/or minimised during construction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Will the Project result in social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?</td>
<td>Yes. The provision of new pedestrian and cyclist routes will add to new recreational routes creating a positive effect for both locals and tourists.</td>
<td>Yes. The provision of new pedestrian and cyclist routes will add to new recreational routes creating a positive effect for both locals and tourists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) Are there any other factors which should be considered such as consequential development which could lead to environmental effects or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?</td>
<td>Yes. There is the potential for consequential development due to the proposed developments as identified in Table 3.2 i.e. the proposed Dairygold Factory and residential developments.</td>
<td>No. The developments outlined in Table 3.2 will not directly impact the proposed development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the project?</td>
<td>Yes. The proposed development is not located within any Natura 2000 sites (SACs / SPAs).</td>
<td>No. Ecological mitigation (as outlined within the ecological report) will ensure impacts are kept to a minimum with further ecological surveys carried out before construction. A CEMP will contain detailed ecological mitigation measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions to be Considered</td>
<td>Yes / No / ? Briefly Describe</td>
<td>Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?</td>
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<td>(12) Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the project?</td>
<td>Yes. One of key findings of the ecological report was that although the proposed greenway does run through Ballvergan pNHA, no direct habitat loss outside the old disused railway line i.e. within Ballvergan Marsh, is predicted and no alternation to drainage is proposed.</td>
<td>No. Ecological mitigation will ensure impacts are kept to a minimum with further ecological surveys carried out before construction. A CEMP will contain detailed ecological mitigation measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13) Are there any areas on or around the location which 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?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>No. Ecological mitigation will ensure impacts are kept to a minimum with further ecological surveys carried out before construction. A CEMP will contain detailed ecological mitigation measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(14) Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project?</td>
<td>No. It is anticipated that there will be no impact to hydrology or water quality during the operational phase.</td>
<td>No. All rivers, existing culverts and ecologically designated areas will be mitigated from construction works by specific mitigation and CEMP requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(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?</td>
<td>Yes. The proposed greenway area is an area of Very High Landscape Value.</td>
<td>No. The upgrades are largely on the existing railways. New pedestrian and cyclist facilities including the bridge will improve views further.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(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?</td>
<td>No. There is a lack of existing walking and cycling routes in the study area.</td>
<td>No. Community severance should be kept to a minimum and all TII environmental planning guidance should be adhered to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions to be Considered</td>
<td>Yes / No / ?</td>
<td>Is this likely to result in a significant effect?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Briefly Describe</td>
<td>Yes/No/? – Why?</td>
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<td>(17) Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?</td>
<td>No. Although Dunkettle Interchange (over 5km) is due for upgrade in 2019. An EIS (now called an EIA Report) was completed in 2012.</td>
<td>No. Traffic levels during construction are not anticipated to create air pollution that will exceed permitted thresholds. Traffic levels are not anticipated to create noise and vibration levels that will exceed permitted thresholds. Mitigation will ensure that any areas of high noise and vibration will be reduced to permitted levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18) Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?</td>
<td>Yes. The proposed development runs through rural and close to urban areas.</td>
<td>No. A Landscape Masterplan will be developed to ensure views are not disturbed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19) Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?</td>
<td>No. There are archaeological and architectural listed features within 100m of the proposed development. Existing bridges may be upgraded along the proposed greenway.</td>
<td>No. Upgrade / refurbishment works on existing bridges will be sympathetically designed. Construction best practice guidelines and consultation with National Monuments Service and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht should be undertaken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20) Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?</td>
<td>No. The site is a former disused railway.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(21) Are there existing land uses on 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 which could be affected by the project?</td>
<td>No. The proposed development is largely located within the existing former railway track corridor. Some minor land take of agricultural / scrub land may be required for proposed car parks. The provisions of cycling and pedestrian routes are located within areas already zoned for walkways and recreation by the East Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017 and Cork Cycle Network Plan 2017.</td>
<td>No. Construction best practice guidelines and consultation with local authorities should be carried out. The CEMP should outline these requirements specific to the proposed development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions to be Considered</td>
<td>Yes / No / ? Briefly Describe</td>
<td>Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?</td>
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<td>(22) Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(23) Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the project?</td>
<td>Yes. The proposed development will improve transportation and recreational connectivity with adjoining residential and commercial areas.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(24) Are there any areas on or around the locations which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities, which could be affected by the project?</td>
<td>Yes. Upgrading the existing road network and improving cycling and walking routes will ensure those community facilities listed in Table 3.1 reduce community severance and improve healthy communities.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25) Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(26) Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(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?</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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