

EIA Screening Determination for Part 8 Development Proposed Environmental Improvement Works in Rathangan Town Centre, Co. Kildare.

Introduction: This report assesses the requirement for an EIAR for the proposed Part 8 environmental improvement works in Rathangan Town Centre, Co. Kildare, in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, (as amended), and the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended).

Development:

The development will comprise of:

- footpath widening and resurfacing,
- upgrade of street furniture and street lighting,
- replacement of existing trees with new trees and additional trees (5 existing trees removed; 16 trees proposed to replace)
- Formalisation of car parking spaces and resurfacing, including additional disabled parking bays
- Sensitive restoration of water pump NIAH No. 11810056
- Re-design of 'William A Byrne memorial garden
- Welcome signage at approach to town
- Gateway feature artworks on approach to town
- New street lighting columns and pedestrian feature lighting to replace existing

Location: Rathangan Town Centre, Co. Kildare.

Legislative Context:

The proposed development is not within the prescribed classes of development/thresholds set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, for the purposes of Section 176 of the Planning Act.

It is noted that Article 120(1) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) requires;

- (a) *where a local authority proposes to carry out an EIA sub-threshold development, the authority shall carry out a preliminary examination of, at least, the nature, size or location of the development.*
- (b) *Where the local authority concludes, based on such preliminary examination, that-*
 - (1) *there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall conclude that an EIA is not required.*

Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) sets out information to be provided for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development, i.e.

1. *A description of the proposed development, including in particular—
 - (a) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works, and
 - (b) a description of the location of the proposed development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.*
2. *A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.*
3. *A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the proposed development on the environment resulting from—
 - (a) the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant, and
 - (b) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.*
4. *The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7.*

Preliminary Examination:

The proposed scheme involves environmental improvement works to Rathangan Town Centre to create a high quality, flexible, pedestrian-orientated space that is safer for all users.

The proposed design of the Market Square redresses the balance from what is currently a vehicular dominated location to a civic space that puts people and pedestrians first, creating a flexible space capable of accommodating a range of community events and activities. This involves an adjustment to the road network, removing informal and illegal car parking spaces and formalising the overall parking arrangement. Footpath widening and footpath surface upgrade is proposed, using high quality natural stone that will improve pedestrian connectivity and pedestrian experience within this central area.

The scheme proposes the rationalisation of vehicular infrastructure throughout the Part 8 site, including the removal of informal parking spaces. The sweeping road junction between the R414 and R401 will be decreased to allow for an increase pavement space. This rationalisation of roads infrastructure, coupled with the removal of the car parking spaces will allow the Part 8 site to be given back to community use and pedestrians, as would have historically been the case. The quantity of disabled car parking bays has been increased from one space to two and a dedicated loading bay has also been designed into the scheme.

The geographical area affected does not have significant environmental sensitivities. Supporting studies have been conducted including an Archaeological assessment, Conservation report, Traffic Impact Assessment, Storm Drainage, Utilities and Flood Assessment and conclude the proposed works have no significant environmental impact.

The Archaeological Assessment determines that no structures or features were identified as having the potential to be impacted, directly or indirectly, by the proposed works however the development area lies within the Zone of Archaeological Protection for Rathangan deserted medieval settlement and engages with and is proximal to several areas of archaeological, architectural and industrial heritage significance. The proposed development area can therefore be considered to be an area of archaeological potential. Although the proposed public realm project is largely restricted to shallow resurfacing works and the insertion of services, any groundworks on the site have the potential to disturb subsurface archaeological deposits, features, burials or structures, should they exist in the area.

The Conservation report states that no historic surfacing materials appear to survive in the Part 8 site, although it is possible that some evidence of previous historic finishes may be uncovered during the implementation stage. The Flood Assessment states that the predicted flood levels for the 0.1% Annual Exceedance Percentage (AEP) event are below the levels within the existing public realm area and the proposed design. On this basis there is no works relating to flooding designed to be incorporated within this scheme.

Construction works are moderate in nature and building waste will be disposed of in accordance with a construction and waste management plan approved by Kildare County Council. The proposed development is not a type which produces waste, residue or emissions of note, nor is it the type of development which uses natural resources to give rise to any significant effects on the environment. Therefore, subject to normal construction and waste disposal practices, no aspects of the environment are likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared for the proposed development and it concludes that the development is unlikely to significantly affect the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of European Sites. A Natura Impact Statement therefore is not required.

Screening Determination

Having regard to the scale and nature of the works proposed, the intended use of the site, and the nature of surrounding development, it is not considered that the proposed development will give rise to any significant effects on the environment and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not required.