



**ENVIROPLAN CONSULTING  
LIMITED**

July '25

## **Title**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT**

## **Development Description**

*"Permission for an Active Travel Link between the Crescent Junction and Coosan Point Road/Southern Station Road, Athlone Town, Co. Westmeath. The development will consist of an Active Travel Link Road with segregated cycling facility joining the Crescent Junction (R915) to Coosan Point Road/Southern Station Road Junction. New two-way segregated facility on Southern Station Road (West side), a three meter wide shared surface from the Crescent Junction linking to the Athlone Train/Bus Station. The proposed development will also include an extension to the existing Athlone town center bus depot yard, boundary treatments, signage, drainage and all associated ancillary works to be completed. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be submitted with this application."*

## **Location**

*Athlone Town, Co. Westmeath*

## **Applicants**

*Westmeath County Council*

## **Prepared by:**

*Edel Hardiman (B.Sc) in consultation with  
James O' Donnell (BA, MRUP, Dip APM)*

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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This Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report has been prepared on behalf of the Westmeath County Council who propose; *“The development will consist of an Active Travel Link Road with segregated cycling facility joining the Crescent Junction (R915) to Coosan Point Road/Southern Station Road Junction. New two-way segregated facility on Southern Station Road (West side), a three meter wide shared surface from the Crescent Junction linking to the Athlone Train/Bus Station. The proposed development will also include an extension to the existing Athlone town center bus depot yard, boundary treatments, signage, drainage and all associated ancillary works to be completed. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be submit with this application.”*

This document was prepared in consultation with the following documents accompanying the application;

- A Natura Impact Statement Report prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd,
- An Ecological Impact Assessment Report prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd,
- A Civil Works Design Report and Drawings prepared by Punch Consulting Engineers,
- A Preliminary Construction Environmental Management Plan prepared by Punch Consulting Engineers,
- Proposed “Horizontal Illuminance (Lux)” Layout prepared by Electric Skyline.

This Screening Report comprises a desktop EIA screening exercise based on relevant legislation (inc. Schedules 5, 7 and 7A of the Planning & Development Regulations, as amended).

This Screening Report has been prepared by Edel Hardiman (BSc) in consultation with James O'Donnell, Planning Consultant (BA, MRUP, Dip APM). Edel is a qualified ecologist and has obtained a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science (BSc Hons) at the University of Galway. Edel has completed Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports, Natura Impact Statements, Ecological Impact Assessments, Bat Survey Reports and Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Reports for a wide range of public and private sector projects. She has conducted Bird Surveys and Bat Surveys in the Republic of Ireland. She is a registered member of CIEEM.

James O' Donnell is a qualified Town Planner and Project Manager with over 25 years planning experience in both the public and private sector in the west of Ireland, including 6 years' experience as a local authority planning officer. James has extensive experience in the project management and delivery of a wide range of complex planning applications requiring environmental and ecological assessment, in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and EIA Directives. James has particular experience with EIA Screening Reports for a wide range of public and private projects in the Republic of Ireland.

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF SCREENING REPORT

The EIA Directive aims to ensure a high level of protection for the environment and human health. The purpose of this Screening Report is to determine if an Environmental Impact Assessment report (EIAR) is required for the proposed development as set out in the relevant provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (the 'Act'), and Schedules 5, 7 and 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2021 (as amended) (the 'Regulations').

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

This EIA Screening Report conforms to the provisions of Article 103 and Schedule 7A of the Regulations. This EIA Screening Report has been prepared with regard to the following documents (where relevant and/or applicable):

- Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended);
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2021 (as amended);
- Directive 2011/92/EU<sup>1</sup> as amended by 2014/52/EU<sup>2</sup>;
- EPA (2015) Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements – Draft September 2015
- EPA (2017) Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports – Draft August 2017;
- EPA (2021) Good Practice Guidance on Cumulative Effects Assessment in Strategic Environmental Assessment;
- European Commission (1999) Guidelines for the Assessment of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts as well as Impact Interactions;
- European Commission (2017) Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects – Guidance on Screening;
- DoEHLG (2003) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) - Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development; and
- DoHPLG (2018) Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment – August 2018.
- Office of the Planning Regulator (June, 2021) "*OPR Practice Note PN02 – Environmental impact Assessment Screening.*"

This Screening Report comprises a desktop EIA screening exercise based on relevant legislation (inc. Schedules 7 and 7A of the Regulations), the best practice guidance and the Screening Checklist provided in the European Commission (2017) Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects – Guidance on Screening.

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment

<sup>2</sup> Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

### 1.3 OVERVIEW

As further described in Section 6 of this Screening Report, this project consists of the proposed “Active Travel Link Road with segregated cycling facility joining the Crescent Junction (R915) to Coosan Point Road/Southern Station Road Junction. New two-way segregated facility on Southern Station Road (West side), a three meter wide shared surface from the Crescent Junction linking to the Athlone Train/Bus Station. The proposed development will also include an extension to the existing Athlone town center bus depot yard, boundary treatments, signage, drainage and all associated ancillary works to be completed. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be submitted with this application”.

As it pertains to the proposed development, the requirement to complete an EIA as per Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU is transposed into Irish legislation primarily via the:

- Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (the ‘Act’); and
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) (the ‘Regulations’).

Therefore, both the EIA Directive and Irish Legislation set out in detail the entire EIA process. The Planning Authority’s first duty is to consider whether they need to carry out an EIA, and whether the applicant needs to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) as part of this process. This EIA Screening report is prepared to assist with this determination. Relevant legislation is discussed further in Section 3 of this report.

## 2 THE SUBJECT SITE

### 2.1 SITE LOCATION & CONTEXT

The subject site is located within the urban area of Athlone Town centre, within a built-up environment. The subject site includes the Athlone Bus Depot to the east and is bounded by housing estates of the Manse to the southwest and St Francis Terrace to the southeast. There are several residential and commercial properties in the wider vicinity of the site. The proposed link road will transverse the site from the Crescent Junction (R915) to Coosan Point Road/Southern Station Road Junction.

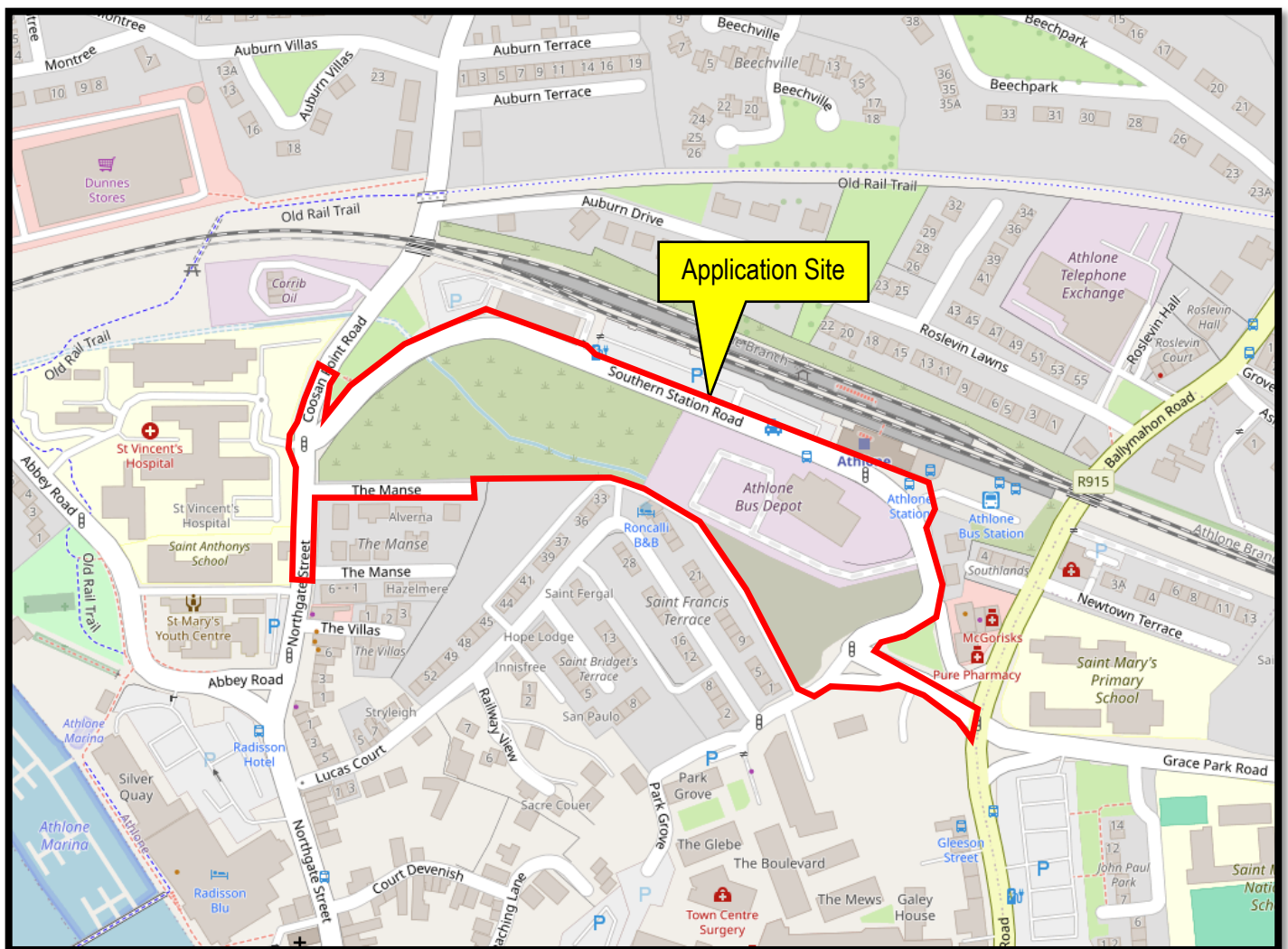


Figure 2.1: Indicative extent of the proposed application site outlined in red.

## **2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITIES OF THE SITE**

### **2.2.1 Soils**

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) website was consulted for available geological / hydrological information. Due to the existing development on site and in the area, topsoil on site is classed as Urban. Subsoils on site is manmade.

The groundwater vulnerability within the site is rated as High. Vulnerability is a term used to represent the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological characteristics that determine the ease at which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities.

### **2.2.2 Hydrology**

The closest major water feature in the area is the Shannon (upper)\_110 River Waterbody, which is located c. 188 metres from the application site to the south (straight line measurement). The EPA has rated the value of the river as 'Poor' for the Ecological Status or Potential under the SW 2016 \_2021 and has a medium confidence value.

The application site is located on the Inny Groundwater waterbody. The EPA has rated the overall groundwater status (2016-2021) as 'Good'.

### **2.2.3 Aquifer**

The GSI Bedrock Aquifer code is LI which is a Locally Important Aquifer in which the bedrock is moderately productive only in local zones. The groundwater vulnerability within the site is rated as High. Vulnerability is a term used to represent the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological characteristics that determine the ease at which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities.

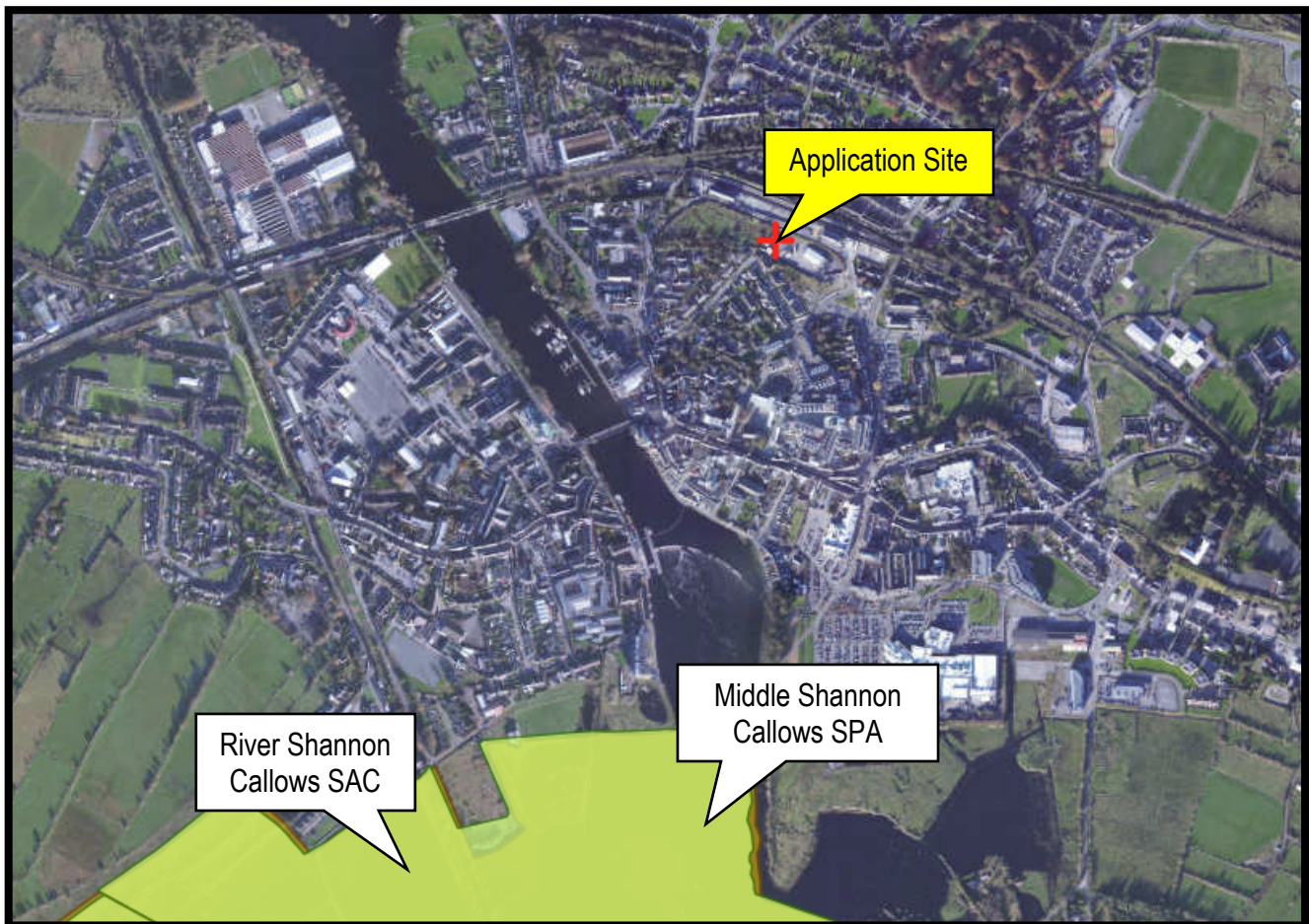
### **2.2.4 Air Quality**

The Air Quality Index Regions indicate that Air Quality Index is 1 – \_Good (updated Thurs 08-May-2025). The Area is listed as ZoneC, Other Cities and Large Towns.

### **2.2.5 Natura 2000 Network**

The site for the proposed development lies approximately 0.9 km from the River Shannon Callows SAC and Middle Shannon Callows SPA. The Lough Ree SPA is located approximately 1.2 km to the northwest of the application site. As per the several ecological assessments and surveys reviewed within the Natura Impact Statement and the Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd, with the proposed mitigation measures no indirect impacts are predicted on any Natura 2000 site for this proposed development.





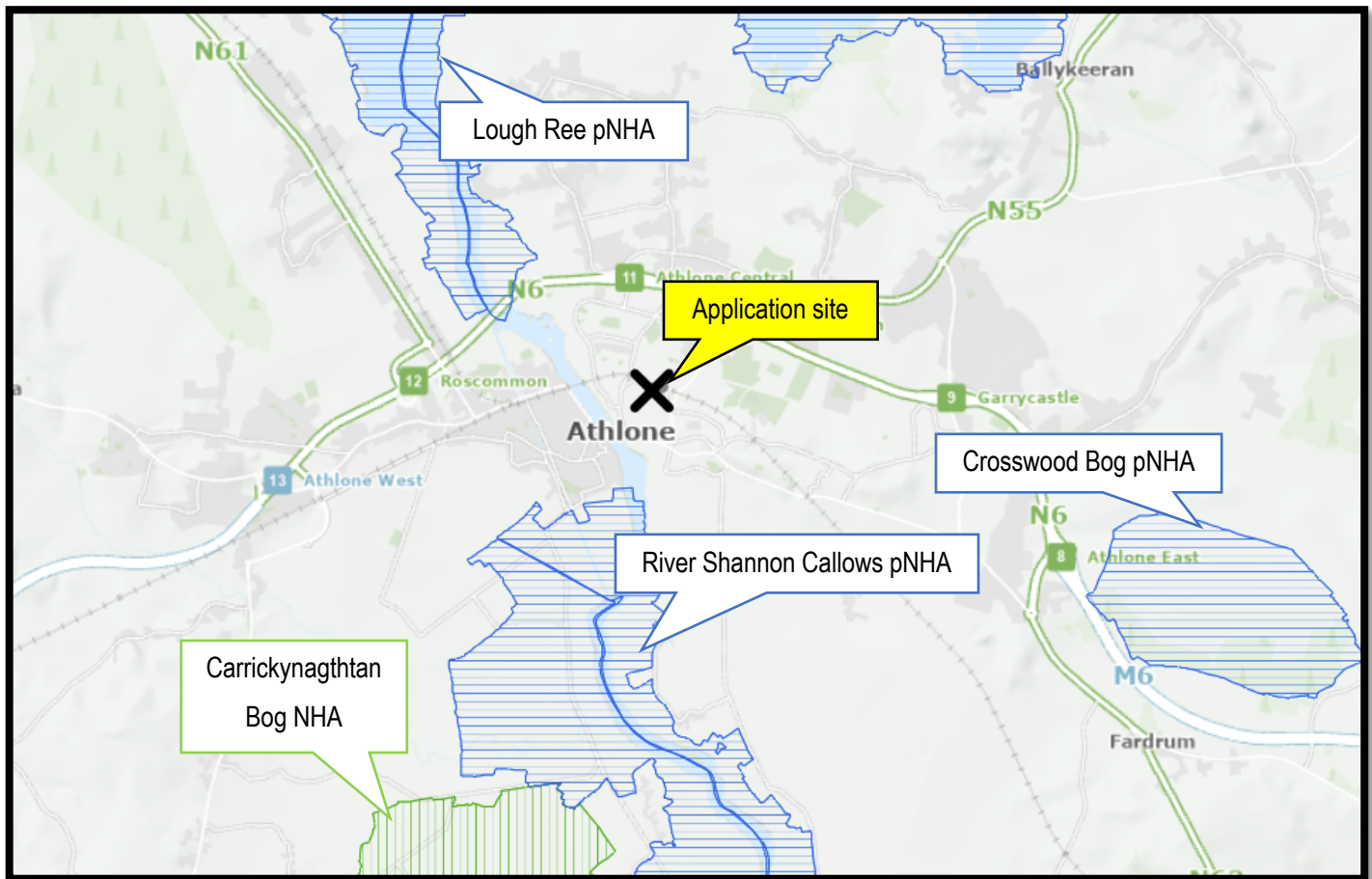
**Figure 3:** Application site in relation to the River Shannon Callows SAC and Middle Shannon Callows SPA.

As per the “*Natura Impact Statement Report*” prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd, this report concluded that “*With the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in Sections 6.2 to Section 6.5, the Proposed Development poses no significant risk of affecting the conservation objectives, or the favourable conservation condition, of the qualifying interests of Shannon Callows SAC, Middle Shannon SPA, and Lough Ree SPA and there are therefore, no residual direct or indirect impacts associated with the Proposed Development that could adversely affect the integrity those European sites.*”

### 2.2.6 Natural Heritage Areas

There are no Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's) or proposed NHA's (pNHA's) within in the vicinity of the proposed development. The nearest NHA to the proposed development is Carrickynaghtan Bog NHA which is located approximately 3.2 km to the south of the application site. The nearest pNHA to the proposed development is the River Shannon Callows pNHA which is located approximately 0.9 km to the south.





**Figure 4:** Site location in relation to NHA and pNHA's in the wider area.

## 2.2.7 Ecology

This report has been read in conjunction with the Natura Impact Statement and the Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd. Several habitats were recorded on site. As the subject site has anthropogenic activity existing in the area the subject site is not ecologically sensitive. Landscaping and replacement hedgerow planting is proposed throughout the site to mitigate the loss of any vegetation that is required to be removed. The Ecological Impact Assessment concluded that the overall ecological impact to the local area will be minor and proposed landscaping will mitigate any short-term losses. In addition, as per the EclA and the CEMP, in advance to enabling works, the EcOW will complete pre construction confirmatory surveys for protected species.

As per the Ecological Impact Assessment Report prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd, this report concluded that *"Based upon the information supplied regarding the site layout, construction methodology and drainage; and provided that the development is constructed in accordance with the mitigation measures outlined above, no significant impact is anticipated in combination with other projects and plans, as result of the development and associated works, on the ecology of the area or on any nature conservation sites within its vicinity."*

## 2.2.8 Built Heritage

No recorded archaeological monuments exist on or adjacent to the subject site. No Protected Structure (RPS) exists on site and the subject site is not located within the curtilage of a Protected Structure. There are two structures as listed

*Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report for proposed Athlone link road Phase 2, Athlone Town, Co. Westmeath* under the NIAH directory located on the subject site. These include the Athlone Railway Station which has a Regional Rating. The subject site is not located within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA).

The closest recorded Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) include the Athlone Town Wall Defences located to approximately 0.17 km to the south of the site.

### 2.2.9 Development Plan Provisions

In terms of zoning, under the provisions of the former Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020 (ATDP), the subject site was zoned “Commercial”. However, this Plan has since expired. In these circumstances, the policies and objectives of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 are applicable in this case.

## 3. RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

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Section 172 of the Act (as amended) states:

*(1) An environmental impact assessment shall be carried out by the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, in respect of an application for consent for proposed development where either —*

*(a) the proposed development would be of a class specified in —*

*(i) Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, and either —*

*(I) such development would equal or exceed, as the case may be, any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, or*

*(II) no quantity, area or other limit is specified in that Part in respect of the development concerned,*

*or*

*(ii) Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 and either —*

*(I) such development would equal or exceed, as the case may be, any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, or*

*(II) no quantity, area or other limit is specified in that Part in respect of the development concerned,*

*or*

*(b) (i) the proposed development would be of a class specified in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 but does not equal or exceed, as the case may be, the relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, and*

*(ii) it is concluded, determined or decided, as the case may be, —*

*by a planning authority, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by this Act or the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001),*

*(I) by the Board, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by this Act or those regulations,*

*(II) by a local authority in exercise of the powers conferred on it by regulation 120 of those regulations,*

*(III) by a State authority, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by regulation 123A of those regulations,*

*(IV) in accordance with section 13A of the Foreshore Act, by the appropriate Minister (within the meaning of that Act), or*

*(V) by the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, in exercise of the powers conferred on him or her by section 8A of the Minerals Development Act 1940, that the proposed development is likely to have a significant*

## 4. MANDATORY EIA THRESHOLD SCREENING

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As per Step 1(b) of the OPR Guidance, an assessment as to whether a Mandatory EIA is required, needs to be carried out.

Schedule 5 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (As amended) prescribes the classes and scale of development which require EIA.

There is no class set out under Part 1 of Schedule 5 in relation to the provision of "Roads".

However, Part 2 class 10 (dd) refers to;

*"All private roads which would exceed 2000 metres in length."*

In response, the proposed development includes a proposed public road of circa 350 meters. Therefore, this threshold does not apply and is not exceeded in any event.

Under Part 2 of Schedule 5, Class 10 (b) (iv) refers as follows:

*"10. Infrastructure projects*

*"(b) (iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere. (In this paragraph, "business district" means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)"*

In response, it is noted that the overall site area outlined in red extends to 3.6ha. However, it is important to note that the net area of the proposed works amounts to 1.69ha (as indicated in purple shading on the Site Layout Plan, see Figure 5 below). As such the proposed development is under 2 hectares and does not exceed the threshold in any event.

Moreover, it is important to note that the 2 hectare threshold refers to a *"business district"* which is defined as a district within a town *"in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use."* In response, the predominant land use on site consists of public transport oriented development, rather than commercial/retail use. As such, the proposed development site does not fall within the definition of a *"business district"*. In addition, given that the subject site is surrounded by residential development, it would be inaccurate to categorise the area as a *"business district"* in this case. Accordingly, it can be concluded that this 2ha *"business district"* threshold does not apply in this case.

Having regard to the above, the project is not of a class of development in Schedule 5, Parts 1 and 2. Accordingly, there is no mandatory requirement for EIA in this case.

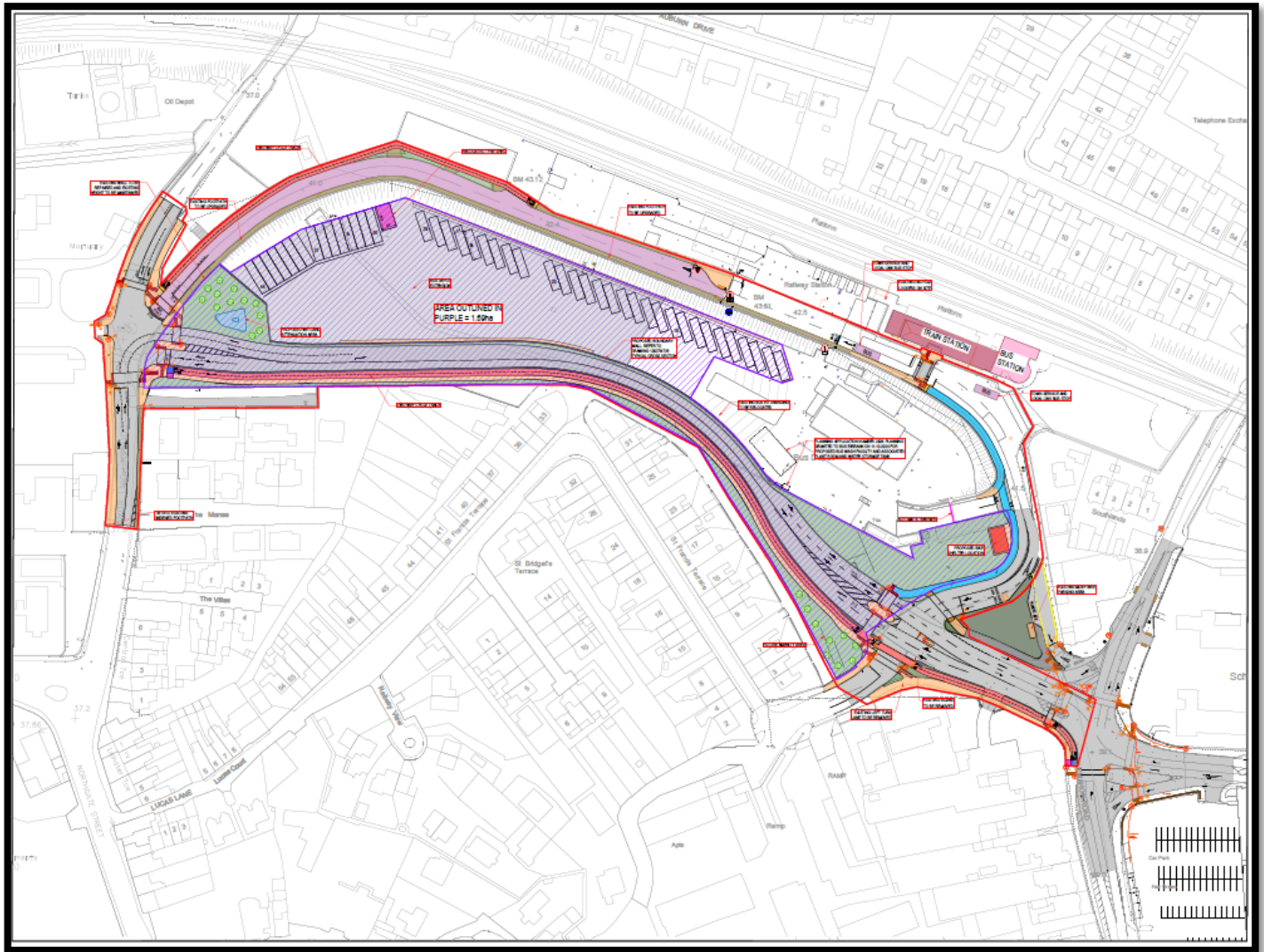


Figure 5: Extract from Site Layout Plan indicating Net area of proposed works (1.69ha) shaded purple



## 5. SUB-THRESHOLD EIA SCREENING

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Article 103(1) of the Regulations states:

*103(1) (a) Where a planning application for sub-threshold development is not accompanied by an EIAR, the planning authority shall carry out a preliminary examination of, at the least, the nature, size or location of the development.*

*(b) Where the planning authority concludes, based on such preliminary examination, that—*

*(i) 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,*

*(ii) there is significant and realistic doubt in regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall, by notice in writing served on the applicant, require the applicant to submit to the authority the information specified in Schedule 7A for the purposes of a screening determination unless the applicant has already provided such information, or*

*(iii) there is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall—*

*(I) conclude that the development would be likely to have such effects, and*

*(II) by notice in writing served on the applicant, require the applicant to submit to the authority an EIAR and to comply with the requirements of article 105.*

In accordance with Article 103(1)(a)(ii), the provision of “*information specified in Schedule 7A for the purposes of a screening determination*” has been prepared in the interest of due diligence.

In this regard it should be noted that the DoEHLG Guidance<sup>3</sup> with respect to EIA Sub Threshold Screening states that “*...it is not intended that special studies or technical evaluations will be necessary for the purpose of making a decision.*”

In this context, this screening exercise relies on available information.

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<sup>3</sup> DoEHLG (2003) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) - Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development.

## 6. SCREENING EXERCISE

### 6.1. SCHEDULE 7A

Schedule 7A of the Regulations also requires that the following information is provided:

*“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.”*

Where relevant and in accordance with Article 103 (1A)(b) of Regulations<sup>4</sup>, the information provided below may be accompanied by a *“description of the features, if any, of the proposed development and the measures, if any, envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment of the development”*.

### 6.2. EIA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

The checklist for EIA Screening Assessment is set out in Table 1 below. This is adapted from OPR EIA Screening Guidance<sup>5</sup>. This checklist is designed to address the requirements of Schedules 7 and 7A of the Regulations and to inform the Planning Authority’s EIA determination in this case.

<sup>4</sup> As inserted by SI 296 of 2018 *European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018*

<sup>5</sup> OPR Practice Not PN02 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

**Table 1: Checklist for EIA Screening Assessment**

Screening Determination		
Planning Register Reference:	N/A	
Development Summary:	<p><i>"Westmeath County Council intend to apply for permission for an Active Travel Link between the Crescent Junction and Coosan Point Road/Southern Station Road, Athlone Town, Co. Westmeath.</i></p> <p><i>The development will consist of an Active Travel Link Road with segregated cycling facility joining the Crescent Junction (R915) to Coosan Point Road/Southern Station Road Junction. New two-way segregated facility on Southern Station Road (West side), a three meter wide shared surface from the Crescent Junction linking to the Athlone Train/Bus Station. The proposed development will also include an extension to the existing Athlone town center bus depot yard, boundary treatments, signage, drainage and all associated ancillary works to be completed. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be submitted with this application".</i></p>	
	Yes/No/N/A:	Comment (If Relevant):
Does the application include information specified in Schedule 7A?	Yes	In accordance with Article 103(1)(a)(ii), the provision of "information specified in Schedule 7A for the purposes of a screening determination" has been prepared in the interest of due diligence.
Other relevant information submitted:	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Natura Impact Statement Report prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd,</li> <li>• An Ecological Impact Assessment Report prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd,</li> <li>• Civil Works Design Report and Drawings prepared by Punch Consulting Engineers,</li> <li>• Preliminary Construction Environmental Management Plan prepared by Punch Consulting Engineers,</li> <li>• Proposed "Horizontal Illuminance (Lux)" Layout prepared by Electric Skyline.</li> </ul>
Does the application include a NIS and/or other reports to enable AA screening?	Yes	<p>A Natura Impact Statement Report prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd,</p> <p>An Ecological Impact Assessment Report prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd,</p> <p>A Preliminary Construction Environmental Management Plan prepared by Punch Consulting Engineers.</p>
Is an IED/IPC/Waste Licence or Waste Water Discharge Authorisation (or review of licence/ authorisation) required from the EPA for the subject development?	No	N/A
If YES has the EPA been consulted?		N/A
Have any other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment been carried out		As per the "Natura Impact Statement Report" prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd, this report concluded that "With the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in Sections

pursuant to other relevant Directives –for example SEA or AA?		<p>6.2 to Section 6.5, the Proposed Development poses no significant risk of affecting the conservation objectives, or the favourable conservation condition, of the qualifying interests of Shannon Callows SAC, Middle Shannon SPA, and Lough Ree SPA and there are therefore, no residual direct or indirect impacts associated with the Proposed Development that could adversely affect the integrity those European sites."</p> <p>As per the Ecological Impact Assessment Report prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd, this report concluded that "Based upon the information supplied regarding the site layout, construction methodology and drainage; and provided that the development is constructed in accordance with the mitigation measures outlined above, no significant impact is anticipated in combination with other projects and plans, as result of the development and associated works, on the ecology of the area or on any nature conservation sites within its vicinity."</p>
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## B. Examination

### 1. Characteristics of proposed development- (Including demolition, construction, operation, or decommissioning):

	If relevant, briefly describe the characteristics of the development (i.e. the nature and extent):
a) The size and design of the whole of the proposed development (including any demolition works):	<p>"Westmeath County Council intend to apply for permission for an Active Travel Link road between the Crescent Junction and Coosan Point Road/Southern Station Road, Athlone Town, Co. Westmeath.</p> <p>The development will consist of an Active Travel Link Road with segregated cycling facility joining the Crescent Junction (R915) to Coosan Point Road/Southern Station Road Junction. New two-way segregated facility on Southern Station Road (West side), a three meter wide shared surface from the Crescent Junction linking to the Athlone Train/Bus Station. The proposed development will also include an extension to the existing Athlone town center bus depot yard, boundary treatments, signage, drainage and all associated ancillary works to be completed. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be submitted with this application".</p> <p>The subject site is located within the urban area of Athlone Town centre, within a built-up environment. The subject site includes the Athlone Bus Depot to the east and is bounded by housing estates of the Manse to the southwest and St Francis Terrace to the southeast. There are several residential and commercial properties in the wider vicinity of the site. The proposed link road will transverse the site from the Crescent Junction (R915) to Coosan Point Road/Southern Station Road Junction.</p> <p>No demolition works are proposed as part of the proposed development.</p>

<p>(b) Other existing or permitted projects (including under other legislation that is subject to EIA) that could give rise to cumulative effects:</p>	<p>A search was carried out on Westmeath County Council's online planning query system. It was ascertained that the following local planning applications have been granted within a 300m radius of the site in the past 5 years.</p> <p><b>PI ref:</b> 2428 - <i>construction of a free standing single storey bus wash facility, c.162.6m2, plant room c.2m2, water storage tank c.4.37m2 together with associated siteworks</i></p> <p><b>PI ref:</b> 2360311 - <i>alterations and single-storey extension within enclosed yard to provide enhanced staff welfare facilities, improved public toilets including a new 'Changing Places' facility for the disabled, additional fire safety measures and better means of escape at Athlone Railway Station which is a protected structure, RPS ref. 147</i></p> <p><b>PI ref:</b> 21241– <i>Demolition of existing garage and construction of a two-storey extension to existing house together with associated link and alterations to existing house and site finishes and drainage</i></p> <p><b>PI ref:</b> 207037 – <i>Planning permission to carry out the following works to our existing dwelling: 1) Demolish existing rear extension 2) Construct a side extension 3) Alterations to existing front elevation and Permission to Retain converted attic space to one-bedroom granny flat and all associated site works</i></p> <p><b>PI ref:</b> 207074 - <i>Widening of the existing vehicular entrance. The application will also include alterations to the boundary wall, erection of gates, and all associated landscaping works</i></p> <p><b>PI ref:</b> 21113 – <i>Demolition of existing back kitchen and front porch and construction of a new porch to front elevation and an extension to the side &amp; rear of existing dwelling house at ground &amp; first floor level with changes to layout of existing internal ground &amp; first floor areas and garage to rear garden and all associated site works</i></p> <p>No cumulative impacts have been identified for this proposed development. No impacts are predicted on the environment in this regard.</p>
<p>(c) Use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity: Will construction or the operation of the proposal use natural resources such as land, soil, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or are in short supply?</p>	<p>Removal of vegetation on site will be minimal where possible, therefore, no impacts/effects are predicted in this regard. Landscaping and additional planting are proposed throughout the application site.</p> <p>Water and fuel will be required during the construction phase of the development. This is not predicted to cause significant impacts.</p>
<p>(d) Production of waste: Will the proposal produce solid wastes during construction, operation, or decommissioning?</p>	<p>A Preliminary Construction Environmental Management Plan has been prepared by Punch Consulting Engineers. Topsoil and limited C&amp;D waste will be disposed of in accordance with the "Preliminary Construction Environmental Management Plan" (pCEMP), which is a standard feature of a development proposal. In accordance with best practice, any waste from the proposed development will be recycled or reused where possible. If recycling or reuse is not possible waste should be disposed of by an authorized waste facility.</p>



<p>(e) Pollution and nuisances: Will the proposal release pollutants to ground or surface water, or air (including noise and vibrations) or water, or lead to exceeding environmental standards set out in other Directives?</p>	<p>There are no demolition works as part of the proposed project and therefore, no pollution or nuisances in this regard.</p> <p>As with any similar development, there is potential for dust and noise pollution during construction. Construction related traffic is also anticipated. No deep excavations are required; therefore, no significant noise impacts are anticipated. However, the construction phase is likely to be short term and owing to the location scale of the proposed development, together with the construction stage stormwater management proposals outlined in the “<i>Drainage Design Report</i>”, and industrial norms for noise mitigation (as set out in the CEMP), no significant impacts are predicted in this regard.</p> <p>During the operational phase, the storm network will discharge via underground attenuation tanks. The surface water drainage strategy has been prepared in accordance with the general design principles set out below and in general compliance with TII standard DN-DNG-03066 ‘Design of Earthworks, Drainage, Network Drainage, Attenuation &amp; Pollution Control’ and also the Irish Water document ‘Code of Practice for Wastewater Infrastructure’. Therefore, no impacts are predicted in this regard.</p>
<p>(f) Major accidents and disasters: In accordance with scientific knowledge, is there a risk of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project, including those caused by climate change?</p>	<p>None. No COMAH or Seveso sites are located within the vicinity.</p> <p>Due to the relatively small-scale of the project and the recognised risks associated with the construction phase of development including operation of heavy machinery and excavations, the risk of major accidents and disasters are low. Provided standard health and safety procedures are followed on site during the risk of major accidents and disasters will be low during the construction phase of development.</p>
<p>(g) Risks to human health, for example due to water contamination or air pollution:</p>	<p>There is no demolition as part of the proposed development and therefore, no associated risks including potential air pollution are expected in this regard.</p> <p>During the construction phase of development, there may be the potential for noise, dust, construction, and haulage traffic. However, this is expected to be short-term in duration and effective control measures are set out in the CEMP. No adverse impacts/effects are predicted in this regard.</p> <p>At the operational stage, the proposed development could give rise to increased noise and increased lighting. In relation to noise, given the existing infill characteristics of the site within a built-up environment, no adverse impacts are predicted in this regard. In relation to lighting as per the proposed horizontal illuminance layout prepared by Electric Skyline, no adverse impacts are predicted in this regard.</p> <p>Having regard to the nature and extent of the proposed development at this location, no significant risks to human health are identified.</p>
<p><b>2. Location of proposed development:</b></p>	
<p>The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development: If relevant, briefly describe the characteristics of the location (with particular regard to the (a) existing and approved land use, (b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources, and (c) the absorption capacity of the environment):</p>	
<p>(a) Generally, describe the location of the site and its surroundings:</p>	<p>The subject site is located within the urban area of Athlone Town centre, within a built-up environment. The subject site includes the Athlone Bus Depot to the east and is bounded by housing estates of the Manse to the southwest and St Francis</p>

	<p>Terrace to the southeast. There are several residential and commercial properties in the wider vicinity of the site. The proposed link road will transverse the site from the Crescent Junction (R915) to Coosan Point Road/Southern Station Road Junction.</p> <p>No demolition works are proposed as part of the proposed development.</p>
<p>(b) Is the project located within, close to or has it the potential to impact on any site specified in Article 103(3)(a)(v) of the Regulations: — European site — NHA/pNHA — Designated Nature Reserve — Designated refuge for flora or fauna — Place, site or feature of ecological interest, the preservation, conservation, protection of which is an objective of a development plan/ local area plan/ draft plan or variation of a plan.</p>	<p>The site for the proposed development lies approximately 0.9 km from the River Shannon Callows SAC and Middle Shannon Callows SPA.</p> <p>As per the several ecological assessments and surveys reviewed within the Natura Impact Statement and the Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd, with the proposed mitigation measures no indirect impacts are predicted on any Natura 2000 site for this proposed development.</p> <p>There are no Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's) or proposed NHA's (pNHA's) within in the vicinity of the proposed development. The nearest NHA to the proposed development is Carrickynaghtan Bog NHA which is located approximately 3.2 km to the south of the application site. The nearest pNHA to the proposed development is the River Shannon Callows pNHA which is located approximately 0.9 km to the south.</p>
<p>(c) Are there any other areas on or around the location that are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies (including riparian areas and river mouths), the coastal zone and the marine environment, mountains, forests or woodlands, that could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>(d) Is the proposal likely to be highly visible to many people? Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location, or are there any routes or facilities that are used by the public for recreation or other facilities which could be affected by the proposal?</p>	<p>No, given the existing anthropogenic activity and urban development in the area, the proposed development will not impact landscape or scenic value. The proposed link road will not hinder any recreation facilities for the public.</p>
<p>(e) Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location that could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>(f) Are there areas within or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, or occupied by sensitive land uses e.g., hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities that could be affected by the proposal?</p>	<p>Yes, the application site is located within Athlone town. There are several residential and commercial properties in the wider vicinity of the site, including a large Bus Depot. The proposed link road will transverse the site from the Crescent Junction (R915) to Coosan Point Road/Southern Station Road Junction.</p> <p>Given the established built up environment, it is considered that the surrounding land uses would not be significantly affected by the proposed development at this location due to the nature of the proposed development.</p>
<p>(g) Are there any areas within or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries,</p>	<p>No.</p>

tourism, minerals, that could be affected by the proposal?		
(h) Are there any areas within or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage, and where there has already been a failure in environmental standards that could be affected by the proposal e.g. the status of water bodies under the Water Framework Directive?	No. The WFD Inny groundwater quality status is 'Good.'	
(i) Is the site located in an area susceptible to subsidence, landslides, erosion, or flooding which could cause the proposal to present environmental problems?	No.	
(j) Are there any additional considerations that are specific to this location?	No.	
<b>3. Types and characteristics of potential impacts:</b>		
If relevant, briefly describe the characteristics of the potential impacts under the headings below. (Including where relevant the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (e.g., geographical areas and size of population likely to be affected), nature of impact, intensity and complexity of impact, probability of impact, and duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact):	If relevant, briefly describe any mitigation measures proposed to avoid or prevent a significant effect.	Is this likely to result in significant effects on the environment?
Population and human health:		
In the absence of standard construction phase control measures, there may be possible short-term nuisances to human beings in neighbouring properties from noise and dust during the construction phase. These are not likely to be at such a quantity or of such a significance that would warrant the completion of a sub-threshold EIAR. Noise and dust or pollution will be subject to standard mitigation measures as per typical construction projects.	Standard construction phase control measures.	No. The residual construction impacts are temporary and are not considered to be significant. The operation impacts are not likely to be significant due to the noise and increase in traffic.
Biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive: *		
Impacts on bird populations from loss/fragmentation of habitat, disturbance, displacement, or risk of collision are not likely to occur due to the proposed development, given the proposed mitigation measures outlined in the Natura Impact Statement.  No impacts are predicted on habitats/species associated with the River Shannon Callows SAC. See the Natura Impact Statement for further details.	N/A.	No. See the Natura Impact Statement for further details.

No species recorded on site are listed under the Habitats Directive and/or the Birds Directive.		
The removal of vegetation (although minimal) on site may result in short-term disturbance to local biodiversity, however, standard construction phase control measures and a landscaping plan will reduce potential impacts/effects.	Standard construction phase control measures.	No. The residual impact is not considered to be significant.
The removal of grassland and scrub on site will result in a minimal loss of vegetation within the overall site.	N/A	No. The residual impact is not considered to be significant
Land, soil, water, air and climate:		
The loss of grassland is not considered to be significant.	N/A	No
The flat nature of the land and ground conditions mean that there is no likelihood of soil erosion or impact on soil stability. Construction will be at near surface reducing the need for large scale excavation.	N/A	No
Potential risk to water quality of groundwater.	<p>At construction phase, Surface water runoff and sources of contaminants during construction will be managed in accordance with industry best practice.</p> <p>During the operational phase, the storm network will discharge via underground attenuation tanks. The surface water drainage strategy has been prepared in accordance with the general design principles set out below and in general compliance with TII standard DN-DNG-03066 'Design of Earthworks, Drainage, Network Drainage, Attenuation &amp; Pollution Control' and also the Irish Water document 'Code of Practice for Wastewater Infrastructure'. Therefore, no impacts are predicted in this regard.</p>	No. The residual risk is considered to be low once mitigation measures are implemented.
Material assets, cultural heritage, and the landscape: *		
In terms of material assets, the most relevant in this case is the existing road network. In this regard, the site is easily accessed from a straight stretch of the N55 Ballymahon Road, where the 50kmph urban speed limit applies.	No mitigation proposed.	No.
Cumulative Effects:		
No cumulative effects are identified.	N/A	No
Transboundary Effects:		
The site is remote from any transboundary location and the nature of the development is such that any impact would not effect a large geographical area.	N/A	No

4. Additional Considerations:		
Further relevant information, if any, relating to how the results of any other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment have been taken into account (e.g. SEA, AA screening, AA):	<p>As per the “Natura Impact Statement Report” prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd, this report concluded that “With the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in Sections 6.2 to Section 6.5, the Proposed Development poses no significant risk of affecting the conservation objectives, or the favourable conservation condition, of the qualifying interests of Shannon Callows SAC, Middle Shannon SPA, and Lough Ree SPA and there are therefore, no residual direct or indirect impacts associated with the Proposed Development that could adversely affect the integrity those European sites.”</p> <p>As per the Ecological Impact Assessment Report prepared by Coiscéim Consulting Ltd, this report concluded that “Based upon the information supplied regarding the site layout, construction methodology and drainage; and provided that the development is constructed in accordance with the mitigation measures outlined above, no significant impact is anticipated in combination with other projects and plans, as result of the development and associated works, on the ecology of the area or on any nature conservation sites within its vicinity.”</p>	
Other relevant information/ considerations of note:	No	
C. Determination:		
No real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	X	EIAR is not required
Real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.		EIAR is required
D. Main Reasons and Considerations:		
See Conclusions below		

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The proposed development consists of “an Active Travel Link Road with segregated cycling facility joining the Crescent Junction (R915) to Coosan Point Road/Southern Station Road Junction. New two-way segregated facility on Southern Station Road (West side), a three meter wide shared surface from the Crescent Junction linking to the Athlone Train/Bus Station. The proposed development will also include an extension to the existing Athlone town center bus depot yard, boundary treatments, signage, drainage and all associated ancillary works to be completed. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be submit with this application.” A Site Layout Plan for the proposed development is included as **Appendix A** to this report.

As noted in Section 3, owing to the nature and scale of the proposed development, there is no mandatory requirement for EIA to be completed under the relevant legislation in this case. In accordance with Article 103(1)(a)(ii), the provision of “information specified in Schedule 7A for the purposes of a screening determination” has been prepared in the interest of due diligence.

Given the scale and nature of the project and taking account of the documentation which accompanies the project, the overall probability of impacts on the receiving environment arising from the proposed development (during the construction or operational phases) is considered to be low.



This EIA Screening Assessment has determined that the characteristics of the proposed development are considered not significant due to the location, nature, and scale of the proposed development. The subject site is not located in an environmentally sensitive site given the built up urban location. In any event, the proposed development will implement best practice construction methodologies to avoid any significant impacts.

No significant environmental impacts are likely to occur once the proposals outlined in the application are implemented.

The information provided in this EIA Screening Report can be used by the competent authority, to conclude that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and that the preparation and submission of an environmental impact assessment report (EIAR) is not required in this case.

# APPENDIX A – SITE LAYOUT PLAN

