

EAST MEATH WATER SUPPLY SCHEME

Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main

EIA SCREENING REPORT



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1 INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report has been prepared by Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd., on behalf of Uisce Éireann (UÉ), in support of an application by Uisce Éireann for confirmation of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), titled '*Uisce Éireann Compulsory Purchase (Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main) Order, 2025*'. The CPO relates to the compulsory acquisition of rights/interest over lands in nine townlands in County Meath. The CPO application is made pursuant to the powers conferred on Uisce Éireann, which is designated as a water services authority, under the provisions of sections 32 and 93 of the Water Services Act 2007, (as amended). The nine townlands which are the subject of the CPO are Staleen, Cruicerath, Newtown, Clonlusk, Longford, Downestown, Commons, Garballagh and Deenes. The proposed development is the Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main Project in Co. Meath, as described in Section 2.

The purpose of this report is to identify whether there is a legal requirement or otherwise for an EIA to be conducted in respect of the proposed development.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Project Background and Need for Works

The proposed Staleen WTP to Duleek trunk main is being progressed by UÉ in order to meet the water demands required by East Meath Water Supply Zones (WSZ's), as part of the "*South Louth East Meath 25-Year Plan*".

The existing trunk main is nearing the end of its life and is prone to failure. Since 2008 the trunk main has failed 38 times, each failure causing prolonged water supply interruptions to over 26,000 people across East Meath, from Duleek to Ashbourne. Replacing the existing pipeline with new, modern pipes will improve pipeline capacity resilience and security of supply across the East Meath Water Supply Zones (WSZs).

In addition to being beyond its service life, the existing uPVC trunk mains (400mm) is currently delivering above its design flow capacity and will inhibit the water supply to further future developments in the East Meath WSZ. The new trunk main will ensure that the future demand for growth is met and the level of service is maintained for customers, while also improving overall network resilience. The proposed pipeline has a design flow capacity up to 2048.

Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 highlights the challenges faced by the County-at-large in providing sufficient capacity to serve planned future industrial, commercial, and residential growth, where certain urban centres in the south-east of the County were serviced by sources from Fingal County Council.

It is therefore deemed essential that this upgrade in the trunk main pipeline is installed between Staleen WTP, Duleek and Bolies Little Connection and to provide a safe, secure, and sustainable source of drinking water to this network and to avoid further disruptions and interruptions to water supply in the East Meath Water Supply Zone (WSZ).

2.2 Description of the Proposed Development

2.2.1 Location of the Proposed Works

The proposed development relates to a trunk main project involving the replacement and upsizing of the initial section of the existing DN400 uPVC Staleen WTP to Windmill Hill Reservoir trunk main, extending south from Staleen WTP to Bolies Little Connection, and is hereafter referred to as the 'Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main'. The subsequent section of the existing trunk main to connect to Windmill Hill Reservoir will be upgraded at a later phase.

The proposed trunk main will increase from an existing outer diameter (OD) 400mm trunk main to a proposed new OD 700/800mm trunk main, would be 8.4km in length and is located within Co. Meath. The route runs south from the existing Staleen Water Treatment Plant (WTP) ca. 900m south-west of Donore Village, continuing southwards through agricultural lands to the west of Duleek. The trunk main route would run along the western boundary of Duleek GAA Club/District Community Centre and continue southwards onto the Duleek Trunk main via the Bolies Little Connection.

The proposed trunk main pipeline route would be located to the west of the existing pipeline within a rural landscape consisting of mainly agricultural land and open fields. The subject lands are all zoned as '*Rural Areas*' under the current county development plan and are all located beyond the settlement and development boundaries of both Donore Village and Duleek, which are illustrated in Sheets 10a and 12a of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

It is submitted that the proposed trunk main upgrade project will not impact on the overall 'use' of the subject lands as the planned trunk main will be located below ground. The pipeline route has been designed to run along the edge of agricultural lands, including agricultural lands that have recently been developed for solar farm use. In addition, in relation to agricultural lands owned by quarry operators, it should be highlighted that their land certificate excluded the right for the minerals. Therefore, the route would not have any negative impact on the overall use of the lands in the long-term.

In the wider surrounding area are pockets of extractive land uses, e.g., two quarries (Keegan Quarries Ltd., Stoneyford Quarry and Irish Cement Ltd./CRH), an approved solar farm, community facility (Duleek GAA Club and Duleek Bellewstown District Community Facility), and an existing solar farm. The pipeline will be constructed in a private land corridor with reduced width crossings over existing local and national roads (L5609, 2 no. crossings and L5610 1 no. crossing). The planned pipeline route runs under three small streams, a gas pipeline, the Drybridge to Baltrasna 110Kv power line, and the railway line that serves Platin CRH (Irish Cement Ltd.), as part of the freight-only Drogheda to Navan railway line, which previously served Tara Mines.

The proposed trunk main will end at Bolies Little Connection on the north-western side of the L1610 approximately 200m north of the River Nanny.

2.2.2 Project Description

The project entails the construction of a new 800/700mm trunk main extending approximately 8.4km long, connecting the Staleen Water Treatment Plant (WTP) to the Duleek trunk main *via* the western environs of Duleek - see **Figure 2.1**. The existing 400mm uPVC trunk main will be decommissioned.

Error! Reference source not found. The planned 800/700mm trunk main will include a number of ancillary chambers, *e.g.*, scour valve, air valve, and sluice valve chambers, along the length of the trunk main to facilitate the operation and maintenance of the overall pipeline. All the works will be subsurface, including chambers, and there will be access covers at the surface of these chamber locations.

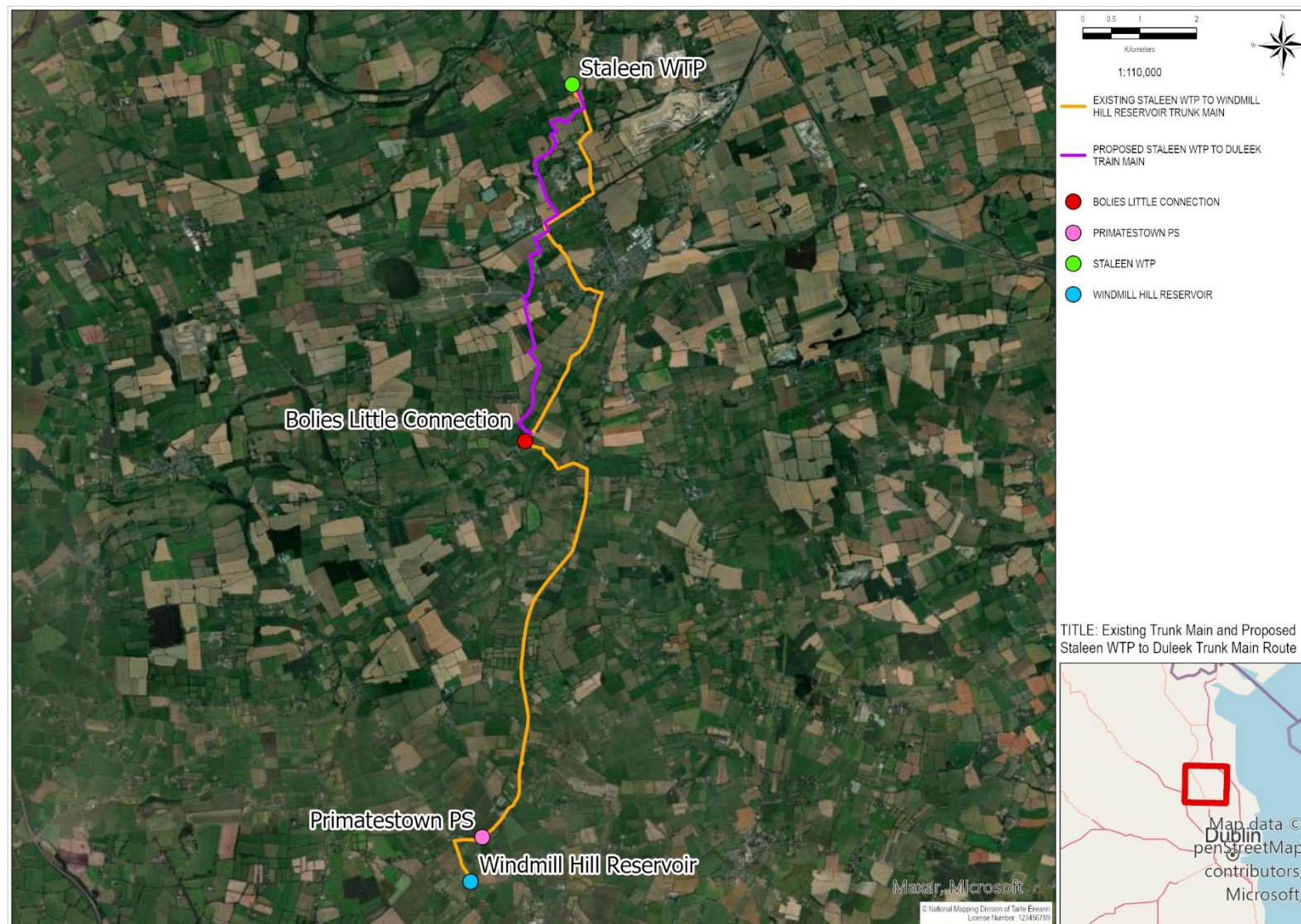


Figure 2.1. Existing Trunk Main and Proposed Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main Route.

2.2.3 Construction

All construction works will be undertaken in such a way as to ensure the continuity of the water supply to the network from the Staleen WTP.

For the construction of the section of trunk main in private lands, an overall working corridor width of up to 35m is required, consisting of a permanent wayleave width of 10m and a temporary working area of 25m. This working corridor is only for private lands, and it reduces in width crossing public roads. Depths of pipeline installation will vary, ensuring minimum cover of 1,200 mm in roads, and 900 mm in verge/fields. There are three stream crossings along the pipeline route, *i.e.*, Drumnan, Kellystown and Garballagh streams. The technical design of the proposed crossings will be determined after the site surveys are completed and will comprise open-cut construction. There is also a gas pipeline and railway crossing of the Drogheda to Navan railway line, which will be constructed using trenchless technology techniques.

The pipeline corridor requirements are the minimum distances, clearances and land use constraints necessary to ensure with reasonable confidence that the objective of protection of pipelines against damage is achieved and that adequate access and working space are available for pipeline construction, future inspection and repair. Significant local restrictions and obstacles inevitably determine the extent to which these requirements are achieved over the entire length of the route. At such locations, special construction and pipeline protection measures will be required. For example, one parcel of land owned by Irish Cement Ltd. (CPO Plot 015), will have a maximum working strip for the temporary area of 51m to facilitate the construction of the trenchless dual railway crossing.

The planned 800/700mm trunk main will include a number of ancillary chambers, *e.g.*, scour valve, air valve, and sluice valve chambers, along the length of the trunk main to facilitate the operation and maintenance of the overall pipeline. All the works will be subsurface, including chambers, and there will be access covers at the surface of these chamber locations. Typical trench depths are set out in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1. Typical Pipeline Depth of Underground Trenches

Location	Depth of Underground Trenches
Across Roads (<i>e.g.</i> , L5609 x 2, L5610 x 1)	1,200mm
In fields/private lands	900mm

There are no demolition works proposed as part of this project. Decommissioning of PVC trunk mains will involve leaving them in place and blanking them off.

There are 41 no. locations along the proposed route where the pipeline crosses hedgerows. In order to facilitate construction of the trunk main, 10m of hedgerow at each of those locations (*i.e.*, 410m in total) will need to be removed.

It will be a contractual obligation for the appointed Contractor to implement best practice construction environmental protection and control measures when undertaking construction works on behalf of UÉ. This includes implementing best practice measures to

ensure noise levels remain within acceptable limits and adhering to the guidance in British Standard (BS) 5228 "Noise Control on Construction and Open Sites".

Although every effort will be made to reuse waste on site, some waste may have to be disposed of off-site. The appointed Contractor will be required to prepare a Construction Waste Management Plan (CWMP). Any waste produced as part of the proposed development will be dealt with in accordance with all relevant waste management legislation and guidance. Reinstatement activities will be undertaken across the trunk main route including the spreading of previously removed and stockpiled topsoil across the works corridor. To minimise waste and reduce the project's carbon footprint, options for repurposing surplus excavated material on-site shall be considered, subject to agreement from the respective landowners. Additionally, the reuse of surplus excavated material at other construction sites will be evaluated. Any waste removed from the site will be collected by a contractor with a valid Waste Collection Permit and will be disposed of at a licenced facility.

The appointed Contractor will be required by contractual obligations to prepare and agree a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) with Uisce Éireann, in line with ISO 14001, to address all construction activities to be carried out as part of this infrastructure investment project in Co. Meath.

2.2.4 Indicative Construction Schedule and Programme

All construction activities will be limited to daytime hours, generally between the hours of 08h00 and 18h00.

It is intended that works will commence in October 2025. The anticipated duration of the construction period is 30 months.

2.3 Materials and External Finishes

All construction materials in contact with potable water will strictly adhere to the European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations, 2007 (S.I. No. 278 of 2007), and be listed in the latest "*List of Approved Products and Processes*" issued by the Drinking Water Inspectorate for England and Wales.

The trunk main will be constructed using spigot and socket Ductile Iron Class C30 pipes. Fittings and joints will be flanged Ductile Iron designed for working pressures up to PN 16.

Valves and water meters will be installed in chambers sized appropriately to accommodate the fittings and allow for inspection and regular maintenance. Chambers may be constructed of pre-cast concrete or high-density blockwork, complete with a base slab of dimensions specified for various chamber sizes and construction methods.

The reinstatement of trench surfaces on existing Public Roads must strictly adhere to the guidelines outlined in the relevant Local Authority Roads Department's Road Opening License, in alignment with the "*Guidelines for the Opening, Backfilling, and Reinstatement of Trenches in Public Roads*", 2nd Edition.

The character of the surrounding area and neighbouring structures were considered when designing the proposed development. The majority of the trunk main route has an

agricultural nature with a few sections have a potential for future low-density residential use. The proposed development emphasises colours and materials that blend with the natural environment and integrate the development into the existing landscape.

2.4 Development Operation

In the short term, the proposed trunk main will supply water from Staleen WTP to Windmill Hill reservoir *via* the proposed and existing trunk mains. It will connect the Duleek to Navan trunk main at the Bolies Little connection to supply water to the Cairn Hill Reservoir. The ground terrain enables gravity flow from Staleen WTP to the Bolies Little connection *via* the proposed trunk main. The existing trunk main gravitates flow from the Bolies Little connection to the Primetestown Pumping Station (PS), where water is pumped to the Windmill Hill Reservoir using the existing pumping station facilities.

In the long term, following the completion of the Water Supply Project (WSP), the entire trunk main length will operate solely by gravity and will facilitate a bi-directional flow from Staleen WTP and water supply from the Greater Dublin Area (GDA).

Valves and water meters will be installed along the entire trunk main length to facilitate Operation and Maintenance (O&M) activities. Sluice isolation valves equipped with hydrophone entry/exit will be strategically placed at intervals of 1000 meters points to facilitate cleaning and inspection. Air valves will be installed at high points and at intervals of 500 meters to release excess air and maintain optimal pressure through the pipework. Scouring valves will be located at low points to facilitate the cleansing of the trunk main, as part of periodic O&M activities.

The automated flow control within the pipework will be done utilising the existing actuated flow control valves installed at the Windmill Hill and Carn Hill Reservoir inlets. New water meters will be installed at the outlet of the Staleen WTP reservoir and the pipe connection along the trunk main, including the connection to the Duleek to Navan trunk main for further flow monitoring.

The valves and water meters will be housed in adequately sized chambers to ensure safe and easy access. Furthermore, consideration is given to the accessibility of the installed valves and water meters to facilitate their operation and maintenance.

To ensure the continuity of the water supply, the existing trunk main will be kept live until the final commissioning of the new trunk main. For this reason, the new trunk main will be tested and disinfected offline. Only when ready to be commissioned the connection to the Staleen WTP and Bolies Little connection will be finalised. Connecting to the existing trunk main at the Bolies Little connection may require shutdowns to the existing network and the shutdowns will be as short as possible and planned with other existing infrastructure (*i.e.*, Windmill Hill Reservoir and Primetestown PS).

3 EIA SCREENING PROCESS

3.1 EIA Screening Methodology

This EIA Screening Report has been prepared to document the screening of the proposed development to establish whether it requires an EIA.

The following guidance documentation has been used:

- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (June 2021) Practice Note PN02 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening;
- European Commission (2017) Environmental Impact Assessment of Project: Guidance on EIA Screening;
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (2022) Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports;
- European Commission (2015) Interpretation of definitions of project categories of Annex I and II of the EIA Directive; and
- Department of the Environment Community and Local Government (2013) Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment.

3.2 Legislative Context

The EIA Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effect of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended by EIA Directive 2014/52/EU, sets out the process by which the likely significant effects of a project on the environment are assessed. The planning code to give effect to the 2014 EIA Directive, i.e. S.I. No. 296 of 2018 *European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018*, has been made and took effect on 1st September 2018.

The provisions of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) identify the requirement of EIA for different project types:

- Part 1 of Schedule 5 identifies projects of a class that will always have the potential for significant environmental effects and therefore will always require an EIA.
- Part 2 of Schedule 5 identifies projects that may have an environmental impact and, therefore, thresholds or criteria have been set by Member States for the requirements of EIA.

A project can also be classed as a “*sub threshold development*” as defined in Article 92 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended):

‘sub-threshold development’ means development of a type set out in Schedule 5 which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development

If a project is of a type set out in Schedule 5, but does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development, then this project should undergo a “*sub threshold*” EIA Screening to determine whether the proposed development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment. Regard must be given to the project characteristics outlined in Annex III of

the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU and Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, when carrying out this screening exercise.

3.3 Requirements for EIA in Water Related Projects

Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2023 details the types and thresholds of development which require an EIA. Potentially relevant development types (in respect of water related Projects) have been extracted from Part 1 and Part 2 of Schedule 5 and are discussed below.

As mentioned in **Section 3.2** above, if a project is of a type set out in Schedule 5, but does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development, then this project should undergo a "*sub threshold*" EIA Screening to determine whether the proposed development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

3.3.1 Schedule 5 Part 1 Projects

Table 3.1 provides a screening assessment against relevant criteria (in terms of the proposed development) set out in Schedule 5 Part 1 and to determine whether the proposed development should be subject to a mandatory EIA.

3.3.2 Schedule 5 Part 2 Projects

Table 3.2 provides a screening assessment against the relevant criteria (in terms of the proposed development) set out in Schedule 5 Part 2 to determine whether the proposed development should be subject to a sub-threshold or discretionary EIA.

Table 3.1. Screening Matrix for EIA (Schedule 5 Part 1 Projects)

Class of Project	Statutory Reference	Screening conclusion
<i>Groundwater abstraction or artificial groundwater recharge schemes, here the annual volume of water abstracted or recharged is equivalent to or exceeds 10 million cubic metres.</i>	P&D Regs 2001, as amended Schedule 5 Part 1, Section 11	The proposed development does not involve any groundwater abstraction and therefore does not meet the description or criteria for this class of development. This aspect of the proposed development is therefore screened out for mandatory EIA.
<i>(a) Works for the transfer of water resources between river basins, where this transfer aims at preventing possible shortages of water and where the amount of water transferred exceeds 100 million cubic metres per year.</i> <i>(b) In all other cases, works for the transfer of water resources between river basins, where the multi-annual average flow of the basin of extraction exceeds 2,000 million cubic metres per year and where the amount of water transferred exceeds 5 per cent of this flow.</i>	P&D Regs 2001, as amended Schedule 5 Part 1, Section 12(a) (b)	The proposed development does not involve the transfer of water resources between river basins and therefore does not meet the description or criteria for this class of development. This aspect of the proposed development is therefore screened out for mandatory EIA.
<i>Dams and other installations designed for the holding back or permanent storage of water, where a new or additional amount of water held back or stored exceeds 10 million cubic metres.</i>	P&D Regs 2001, as amended Schedule 5 Part 1, Section 15	The proposed development does not involve the provision of new reservoirs only upgrade works to the trunk main from Staleen WTP to Duleek. This aspect of the proposed development is therefore screened out for mandatory EIA.

Table 3.2. Screening Matrix for EIA (Schedule 5 Part 2 Projects)

Class of Project	Statutory Reference	Screening conclusion
<i>Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.</i>	P&D Regs 2001, as amended Schedule 5, Part 2, Section 10 (b) (iv)	The proposed development is not classified as an 'urban development' in terms of the scope of the EIA Directive for this class of development. Urban development in the context of the Directive is related to developments in the built environment of a certain area, such type of development includes industrial estates, housing estates, car parks, and shopping centres. It is thus concluded that the proposed development does not meet the description or criteria for this class of development. This aspect of the proposed development is therefore screened out for mandatory EIA.
<i>Dams and other installations not included in Part 1 of this Schedule which are designed to hold water or store it on a long-term basis, where the new or extended area of water impounded would be 30 hectares or more.</i>	P&D Regs 2001, as amended Schedule 5, Part 2, Section 10 (g)	The proposed development does not involve the provision of new reservoirs only upgrade works to the trunk main from Staleen WTP to Duleek. This aspect of the proposed development is therefore screened out for mandatory EIA.
<i>Groundwater abstraction and artificial groundwater recharge schemes not included in Part 1 of this Schedule where the average annual volume of water abstracted or recharged would exceed 2 million cubic metres</i>	P&D Regs 2001, as amended Schedule 5, Part 2, Section 10 (l)	The proposed development does not involve any groundwater abstraction and therefore does not meet the description or criteria for this class of development. This aspect of the proposed development is therefore screened out for mandatory EIA.
<i>Works for the transfer of water resources between river basins not included in Part 1 of this Schedule where the annual volume of</i>	P&D Regs 2001, as amended Schedule 5, Part 2, Section 10 (m)	The proposed development does not involve the transfer of water resources between river basins and therefore

<i>water abstracted or recharged would exceed 2 million cubic metres.</i>		does not meet the description or criteria for this class of development. This aspect of the proposed development is therefore screened out for mandatory EIA.
<i>(a) Any change or extension of development already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed (not being a change or extension referred to in Part 1) which would:-</i> <i>(i) result in the development being of a class listed in Part 1 or paragraphs 1 to 12 of Part 2 of this Schedule, and</i> <i>(ii) result in an increase in size greater than:</i> - 25 per cent, or - an amount equal to 50 per cent of the appropriate threshold, whichever is the greater.	P&D Regs 2001, as amended Schedule 5, Part 2, Section 13	The proposed upgrade works involve upgrade works to the operational Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk main. However, these works in themselves will not result in the development being of an additional Class listed in Part 1 or of a Class listed in Part 2 over and above the aspects of the proposed development that have already been identified as Part 2 (Class 1 (a)). The proposed development, therefore, does not meet the description or criteria for this class of development. This aspect of the proposed development is therefore screened out for mandatory EIA.
<i>Works of demolition carried out in order to facilitate a project listed in Part 1 or Part 2 of this Schedule where such works would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.</i>	P&D Regs 2001, as amended Schedule 5, Part 2, Section 14	There are no demolition works proposed as part of this project. Decommissioning of PVC trunk mains will involve leaving them in place and blanking them off. This aspect of the proposed development is therefore screened out for mandatory EIA.
<i>Any project listed in this Part (Part 2) which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant class of development but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.</i>	P&D Regs 2001, as amended Schedule 5, Part 2, Section 15	As addressed above, the proposed development is of Class 1 (a), but below the threshold. With implementation of best construction practices, the proposed development is not likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore is not considered to be of Class 15. This is further addressed in Section 4 of this EIA Screening Report.

<i>Projects for the restructuring of rural land holdings, undertaken as part of a wider proposed development, and not as an agricultural activity that must comply with the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture) Regulations 2011, where the length of field boundary to be removed is above 4 kilometres, or where re-contouring is above 5 hectares, or where the area of lands to be restructured by removal of field boundaries is above 50 hectares.</i>	P&D Regs 2001, as amended Schedule 5, Part 2, Section 1 (a)	The proposed development involves the removal of 410m hedgerows, as the trunk main will cross agricultural fields, this is far below the 4 km threshold set for this class of development. A mandatory EIA is therefore not required for this aspect of the proposed development. However, as this aspect of the proposed development is sub-threshold, refer to Section 4 which provides the competent authority the information specified in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for EIA.
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4 SUB-THRESHOLD SCREENING ASSESSMENT

4.1 Introduction

Based on the above, it is concluded that the proposed development is a “*sub threshold development*” as defined in Article 92 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) as “*development of a type set out in Schedule 5 which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development*”.

Where a decision is being made on whether a proposed development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, regard must be given to the project characteristics outlined in Annex III of the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU as transposed to Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) (referred to as the ‘*Schedule 7 Criteria*’), reproduced **Table 4.1**. The Directive allows the applicant to propose measures, at the screening stage, to avoid or prevent what could otherwise result in significant adverse effects on the environment.

Where it is determined, upon preliminary examination, that there is a real likelihood of significant environmental effects, the applicant is required to provide to the competent authority the information specified in Schedule 7A of the Regulations for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for EIA.

Table 4.1. Schedule 7 Criteria

Characteristics of Proposed Development
1. Characteristics of projects The characteristics of projects must be considered with particular regard to: (a) the size and design of the whole project; (b) cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects; (c) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity; (d) the production of waste; (e) pollution and nuisances; (f) the risk of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge; (g) the risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution).
2. Location of projects The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by projects must be considered, with particular regard to: (a) the existing and approved land use; (b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground; (c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas: (i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths; (ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;

Characteristics of Proposed Development
(iii) mountain and forest areas; (iv) nature reserves and parks; (v) areas classified or protected under national legislation; Natura 2000 areas designated Member States pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC; (vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standard laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that this such a failure; (vii) densely populated areas; (viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.
3. Type and characteristics of the potential impact The likely significant effects of projects on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out in points 1 and 2 of this Annex, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in Article 3(1), taking into account: (a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected); (b) the nature of the impact; (c) the transboundary nature of the impact; (d) the intensity and complexity of the impact; (e) the probability of the impact; (f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact; (g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects; (h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

Table 4.2 to **Table 4.5** present the information in response to the Schedule 7 criteria which will assist the competent authority, Meath County Council, in forming a view on whether there is a real likelihood of significant effects arising from the proposed development.

Table 4.2. Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Schedule 7 Criterion	Response
(a) the size and design of the whole project	The project entails the construction of a new 800/700 mm trunk main extending approximately 8.4km long, connecting the Staleen Water Treatment Plant (WTP) to Duleek trunk main to the Bolies Little connection via the western environs of Duleek. The existing 400 mm uPVC trunk main will be decommissioned. The planned 800/700mm trunk main will include a number of ancillary chambers, e.g., scour valve, air valve, and sluice valve chambers, along the length of the trunk main to facilitate the operation and maintenance of the overall pipeline. All the works will be subsurface, including chambers, and there will be access covers at the surface of these chamber locations. This new trunk

Schedule 7 Criterion	Response
	main will replace the existing gravity trunk main from Staleen WTP to the Bolies Little connection. The overall area of the proposed development is ca. 29 ha which includes all temporary wayleave areas.
(b) cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects	A review of the relevant plans (e.g., Meath County Development Plan (CDP) 2021 - 2027) and a review of the online planning register for Meath County Council website for planning permissions granted over the past 5 years (since March 2020) has been carried out. This review did not identify any other projects, either existing or approved, which have the potential to interact with the proposed Development at either the construction or operation stages such that they would result in likely significant cumulative impacts.
(c) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;	Land The lands which are proposed for the construction of new trunk main will mainly be along private land corridors with a few road crossings along route. The upgraded route will be located to the west of the existing pipeline in a rural landscape consisting of agricultural lands and open fields. There will be no changes to the existing land use as a result of the proposed below-ground pipeline. During the operations phase, there will be a permanent wayleave of 10m, along with a 25m temporary working area during the construction phase. Soil In terms of soils, every effort will be made to reuse excavated soil material on site in accordance with the waste management hierarchy. Any waste produced, including soils which cannot be incorporated to the site, will be managed in accordance with all relevant waste management legislation and guidance (i.e., any waste removed from the site will be collected by a contractor with a valid Waste Collection Permit and will be disposed of at a licenced facility). To minimise waste and reduce the project's carbon footprint, options for the reuse of surplus excavated material at other construction sites will also be evaluated. Water The proposed pipeline will not use the water resource, instead, it will ensure that the future demand for growth is met and the level of service is maintained for customers, while also improving overall network resilience. The proposed works are an essential network upgrade to ensure the provision of a safe, secure, and sustainable source of drinking water to this network and to avoid further disruptions and interruptions to water supply.

Schedule 7 Criterion	Response
	Biodiversity The trunk main passes through agricultural lands, there are also a number of stream crossings along this route which will be constructed using open cut techniques. APEM completed an AA Screening for the entire length of the proposed Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Watermain in March 2025. Three European sites were located within the ZoI of potential impacts of the project, these sites are as follows: • River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC 002299 ca. 1.1 km North • River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA 004232 ca. 1.3 km North • River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA ca. 10.3 km East It was concluded that there is no likelihood for significant effects on any European site, in the absence of mitigation, either arising from the project alone or in combination with other plans and projects. Ecology surveys will be completed onsite at a later stage to determine if effects are likely as a result of the proposed development.
(d) the production of waste;	The quantities of both excavated and construction waste materials will be calculated and potential options for reusing this waste will be evaluated, with the aim to maximise on-site reuse. Although every effort will be made to reuse waste on site, when it is suitable to do so, some waste may have to be re-used or, if the opportunity for reuse is not available, disposed of off-site. Any surplus excavated material will be disposed of offsite to a licenced facility. The appointed Contractor will be required to prepare a comprehensive Construction Waste Management Plan included with this application and any waste produced as part of the Project will be managed in accordance with all relevant waste management legislation and guidance, particularly in relation to the safe removal and disposal of asbestos material (i.e., any waste removed from the site will be collected by a contractor with a valid Waste Collection Permit and will be disposed of at a licenced facility). Reinstatement activities will be undertaken across the trunk main route including the spreading of previously removed and stockpiled topsoil across the works corridor. To minimise waste and reduce the project's carbon footprint, options for repurposing surplus excavated material on-site shall be considered, subject to agreement from the respective landowners. Additionally, the reuse of surplus excavated material at other construction sites will be evaluated.

Schedule 7 Criterion	Response
	An appropriate Construction Waste Management Plan will be developed for the site by the appointed Contractor to promote minimisation and reuse of materials. It is anticipated that no operational waste will be generated as a result of the proposed development. Based on the above, it is considered that the production of any waste associated with the development can be appropriately managed to minimise the likelihood for significant effects.
(e) pollution and nuisances;	Discharges - Aquatic Pollution The planned pipeline route runs under three small streams. The water courses will be constructed using open cut methods in line with the Inland Fisheries Ireland guidelines. The appointed Contractor will be required to prepare and agree on a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), in line with ISO 14001 to address all construction activities to be carried out as part of this development, with Uisce Éireann before construction works commence on-site. Air Quality Emissions & Noise It will be a contractual obligation that the appointed Contractor shall implement best practice construction environmental protection and control measures when undertaking the works on behalf of UÉ. Best practice measures will be implemented to ensure noise levels remain within acceptable limits and works will be carried out in line with the guidance in BS 5228 "Noise Control on Construction and Open Sites" and dust management will be carried out in line with "Guidelines for the Treatment of Air Quality During the Planning and Construction of National Road Schemes" (NRA, 2011)). Noise levels shall remain within acceptable limits through the implementation of an appropriate CEMP. The use of construction site equipment and machinery, in general, will result in emissions to atmosphere of exhaust gases and dust generation. These impacts can be mitigated through the implementation of CEMP measures. The air and noise emissions resulting from the construction phase are transient and as such, are considered short-term and not significant. Permanent air quality and noise emissions as a result of the construction phase of the proposed development are not envisioned. Other Nuisances Other potential nuisances associated with the construction and operation of the proposed development, which might have effects on occupied buildings in the vicinity of the proposed development are traffic, visual intrusion, and lighting.

Schedule 7 Criterion	Response
	Traffic In terms of traffic, the construction works will be conducted in line with a project specific Traffic Management Plan which will reduce any significant potential effects on local commuters. In relation to the operational stage, there are no predictions for significant traffic effects associated with the pipeline route. Based on the above no significant traffic impacts are anticipated from the construction or operational phases of the proposed development. Visual In terms of the construction phase, there may be temporary impacts in terms of landscape and visual (e.g., construction vehicles and machinery along the pipeline route). However, due to the scale and duration of works required, this impact is not considered to be significant. During the operation phase, given the underground nature of the proposed trunk main, it is considered the proposed development, once constructed, will have no visual impact on the area. Lighting In relation to lighting, along the pipeline route it is envisaged that any additional lighting required will be designed to minimise light pollution by using fixtures that direct light downward and reduce glare, and use of lighting temporary (only during construction phase). As such, no significant long-term effects in terms of lighting are anticipated.
(f) the risk of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge;	An Emergency Response Plan will be developed including the event of incidents that may affect the existing trunk main. There is no risk of river, coastal or fluvial flooding at the site and no historic flooding events at the site. Since the trunk main will be buried and the surface reinstated to its original condition and elevation it is considered that the development will not increase the risk of flooding on-site or elsewhere or be impacted by matters relating to climate change. The design for the new proposed infrastructure will align with the following key principles mentioned in the UÉ Climate Change Policy (IW-AMT-POL-010): • Design, build, operate and maintain water services that are resilient to climate change • Use best available techniques to assess the vulnerability of water services to climate change • Increase knowledge, information and capacity to respond to climate risks • Develop and implement a climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy

Schedule 7 Criterion	Response
	• Develop a low greenhouse gas emitting water service aligned with UÉ's Energy Policy • Integrate climate change vulnerability assessment and greenhouse gas costing into decision making and planning processes • Comply with all applicable legal and statutory requirements related to climate change. The possible consequences due to climate change need to be considered during the design of the project. These consequences need to be identified, measured, and mitigated where possible. The following steps will be incorporated in the detailed design: • Identification of the potential risks at high level at all stages of the project. • Assess potential impacts both during the construction phase and the utilisation phase. • Identification of adaptation and resilience measures for each impact, along with the quantification of their adaptation level and their expected cost. • Incorporate UÉ agreement and necessary measures into the final design. The site will be operated in accordance with an agreed Health, Safety, Quality, Environmental (HSQE) plan. A Safety File will be kept and updated throughout the development.
(g) the risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution).	Appropriate controls will be in place to ensure that risks to human health arising from water contamination or air pollution during the construction phase are mitigated. It will be a contractual obligation that the appointed Contractor shall implement best practice construction environmental protection and control measures when undertaking the works on behalf of UÉ. The appointed Contractor will be required to prepare and agree a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), in line with ISO 14001 to address all construction activities to be carried out as part of this development, with UÉ prior to construction works commencing on site. Overall, construction impacts may result in short term impacts related to air and noise emissions resulting from the proposed trunk main works, which will be mitigated through CEMP measures, thus, reducing impacts to a level that is not significant. In terms of effects on water quality, the risks of potential water pollution during the construction phase will be mitigated to a level that is not significant by implementing appropriate controls as part of the CEMP. There is no risk for any significant adverse impacts on human health due to water contamination or pollution arising from the operation of the proposed trunk main.

Schedule 7 Criterion	Response
	In the long term, the proposed development will ensure the provision of clean drinking water to the growing population of Louth & Meath will provide a long term positive and permanent impact to the health and wellbeing of the local population.

Table 4.3. Location of the Proposed Development

Schedule 7 Criterion	Response
The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by projects must be considered, with particular regard to:	
(a) the existing and approved land use;	The site of the proposed development comprises private fields and public roadway. All of the development land is zoned as 'Rural Areas' under the current Meath County Development Plan (CDP) 2021-2027. The proposed pipeline works are consistent with the objective of the 'Rural Areas' zoning designation, which is to <i>'Protect and promote in a balanced way, the development of agriculture, forestry and sustainable rural-related enterprise, community facilities, biodiversity, the rural landscape, and the built and cultural heritage'</i>, as well as being a specific 'Permitted Use' i.e., 'Utility Structures', for this zoning designation within the CDP. In addition, the pipeline route has been specifically designed to allow for trunk main runs along the edge of agricultural lands. The construction phase will be temporary and short-term in duration. Therefore, the (below ground) pipeline route would not result in a significant adverse impact on the overall 'use' of land in the long-term. The potential impact on the natural environment from the proposed development will be assessed using ecology surveys at a later stage. If impacts are identified, relevant mitigation measures will be proposed and implemented.
(b) the relative abundance, availability, quality, and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water, and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;	The geographic extent of the proposed works is limited to the temporary wayleaves associated with the pipeline route. The overall geographic extent is <i>ca.</i> 29 ha. It is important to note that the proposed development means that an essential community benefit will be provided <i>i.e.</i>, access to clean drinking water for the predicted growing population of Meath. Every effort will be made to reuse excavated soil material in site works. Any waste produced, including soils which cannot be incorporated to the site, will be managed in accordance with all relevant waste management legislation and guidance.

	The proposed development will require the removal of 410m of hedgerows to facilitate crossing locations of the pipeline. However, these will be reinstated after construction, and a double hedgerow planted in its place, preferably with a drainage ditch in between. Bolstering of existing hedgerows and creation of new hedgerow will follow details included in Appendix C of the UÉ Biodiversity Action Plan guidelines for planting specification and methods. As a total of 410m of hedgerow will be removed at these crossing locations, a total of 820m hedgerow will be created. Hedgerow planting will include native species that are present in hedgerows in the area, such as hawthorn and ash, but can also include native blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>, spindle <i>Euonymus europaeus</i>, dog rose <i>Rosa canina</i>, privet <i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> and honeysuckle <i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>.
(c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:	(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths; The construction and operation of the proposed development will not have any direct impacts on the absorption capacity of any wetlands, riparian areas or river mouths. The planned pipeline route runs under three small streams. The water courses will be constructed using open cut methods in line with the Inland Fisheries Ireland guidelines. The appointed Contractor will be required to prepare and agree on a detailed CEMP, to ensure construction activities carried out as part of this development do not cause an impact on the water course. (ii) coastal zones and the marine environment The construction and operation of the proposed pipeline will not have an impact on the absorption capacity of these features of the natural environment at this location. (iii) mountain and forest areas The construction and operation of the proposed pipeline will not have an impact on the absorption capacity of these features of the natural environment at this location. (iv) nature reserves and parks The construction and operation of the proposed pipeline will not have an impact on the absorption capacity of these features of the natural environment at this location. (v) areas classified or protected under national legislation; Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC; There are no designated shellfish waters or designated bathing waters within the region of the proposed pipeline route. The Boyne River is a designated Nutrient Sensitive Area and is ca. 1.5km northwest of the proposed route at the closest point,

	although there are no hydrological connections between the proposed trunk main and the Boyne River. An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for the Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Watermain was undertaken by APEM on behalf of Uisce Éireann in March 2025. The Screening assessment concluded that in view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information, that, it can be excluded that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on the relevant European sites within the ZoI of potential impacts (River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code 002299); River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site Code 004232); and River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA (Site Code 004158) and therefore an AA, and the production of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS), was deemed not to be required. The construction and operation of the proposed development will not have an impact on the absorption capacity of these features of the natural environment at this location. (vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure. The construction and operation of the proposed development will not have an impact on the absorption capacity of these features of the natural environment at this location. (vii) densely populated areas The proposed development is located in a rural area of Meath. The proposed trunk main route runs outside the town boundary of Duleek ca. 50m west of an existing residential area as outlined in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. (viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural, or historical, cultural, or archaeological significance The potential for temporary visual impacts is identified during construction works along the pipe route within areas designated as having 'exceptional' and 'high' landscape value. The below-ground pipeline route will be located within private fields and the public road network and will be reinstated following the completion of the works. While it is expected that there will be temporary construction related impacts from the proposed temporary working areas along the pipeline route, given the underground nature of the proposed trunk main, it is considered that the proposed development, once constructed, will have no impact on the landscape character of the area. In terms of archaeology, an Archaeological Heritage Report was completed by Courtney Deery (CD) Heritage Consultancy Ltd (March 2025).
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	The proposed pipeline route is partially within the south-eastern edge of the buffer zone of the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Property (WHP). Given the location of the proposed scheme – beginning just inside the outer edge of the buffer zone, but predominantly outside of it – and the nature of the development (a below-ground pipeline), there will be no negative effects on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHP. Nor will the proposed scheme result in any negative visual impacts on the recorded archaeological sites in the wider landscape surrounding it. There are no recorded monuments (RMP / SMR sites) within the proposed scheme boundary. The nearest is a ring-ditch (SMR ME027-116), located c. 75m west of the proposed pipeline wayleave, identified as a cropmark in an arable field, with no above-ground presence. Its presence speaks to the high archaeological potential of the landscape through which the proposed scheme passes. The proposed scheme runs predominantly through agricultural greenfield areas, which have an inherent archaeological potential. In addition, the proposed pipeline will cross a watercourse, a tributary stream of the River Nanny at Garballagh. Riverine environments and water crossings have long attracted human activity. Considering the known and recorded archaeological sites in the wider landscape, there is therefore the potential for the discovery of previously unknown archaeological sites, features or deposits along the length of the proposed pipeline. A geophysical survey (Licence No. 24R0184) undertaken for the proposed scheme in 2024 covers c. 40% of the current proposed pipeline route. The survey identified a number of features of potential archaeological interest, which demonstrates the inherent below-ground potential of the agricultural greenfield areas along the remainder of the proposed pipeline route. The disused railway line (MIHS027-001; Navan, Kells & Oldcastle Branch of the Dublin-Drogheda Railway) crossed by the proposed scheme survives in good working order and is of interest from an industrial heritage perspective. Given the inherent below-ground archaeological potential of the agricultural fields, it is recommended that geophysical survey be undertaken along the proposed pipeline route in greenfield areas not previously surveyed. This non-invasive technique will assist in determining the archaeological potential and provide greater certainty for the proposed scheme. Further recommendations will be made based on the results of the additional geophysical survey. These may include archaeological testing to establish the nature, extent, and date of any potential archaeological sites or features that lie within the proposed pipeline route and archaeological monitoring.
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	It is recommended that any disturbance to the railway line (MIHS027-001) be made good to ensure the preservation of this industrial heritage asset.
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4.1.1 Type and Characteristics of the Potential Impacts

A further screening exercise was completed to identify potential significance of impacts, as outlined in **Table 4.4** per environmental aspect or factor as would be considered in an EIA as specified in the EU Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directives 97/11/EC, 2003/35/EC and 2009/31/EC) and as codified and replaced by Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment which was amended by Directive 2014/52/EU and clarifies the information to be contained in an EIAR.

Table 4.4. Likely significant effects identified

EIA aspect	Likely Significant Effects Identified
Population and Human Health	The proposed development comprises the provision of a new trunk main pipeline between Staleen WTP and Duleek trunk main. The majority of the proposed pipeline works are located within private fields, with the remainder in public roads. There is potential for temporary “nuisance” effects such as noise, dust, congestion and traffic diversions during construction, however, given the works are located in a rural area, any effects on sensitive receptors are expected to be on a lower scale given the lower density in population. In the long term, the provision of clean drinking water to the growing population of Meath will provide a long term positive and permanent impact to the health and wellbeing of the local population.
Biodiversity	The trunk main passes through agricultural lands, and there are also a number of stream crossings along this route which will be constructed using open-cut construction in line with the Inland Fisheries Ireland guidelines. Ecology surveys will be completed onsite at a later stage to determine if effects are likely as a result of the proposed development.
Land (including Land Use), Soils & Geology	There is a minimal risk for contaminated land as the construction works will be taking place largely in private fields and within the public road network. Nonetheless, it is possible that contaminated soil is encountered in built up areas. The excavations would be limited to the pipeline route and would require minimal soil stripping in site preparation. If contaminated soil is encountered, it will be required to be removed by a licensed waste contractor and disposed of at a licensed waste facility.

EIA aspect	Likely Significant Effects Identified
Water	The proposed pipeline will not use the water resource, instead, it will ensure that the future demand for growth is met and the level of service is maintained for customers, while also improving overall network resilience. The proposed works are an essential network upgrade to ensure the provision of a safe, secure, and sustainable source of drinking water to this network and to avoid further disruptions and interruptions to water supply. There are three stream crossings along the pipeline route, <i>i.e.</i>, Drumnahan, Kellystown and Garballagh streams. These crossings along the trunk main will be constructed using open-cut construction in line with the Inland Fisheries Ireland guidelines. The appointed Contractor will be required to prepare and agree on a detailed CEMP, to ensure construction activities carried out as part of this development do not cause an impact on the water course.
Air & Climate	There may be an impact on air quality and climate, through the generation of dust and exhaust gas emissions during the construction stage. However, any such impacts would be localised and temporary in nature and not considered to be significant. Also, all works will be carried out in line with a project specific CEMP, and this will ensure that there are no significant air and climate impacts arising from the works. There will be no impact to air quality and climate during the operational stage of the proposed development.
Noise & Vibration	Noise Noise will be generated during the construction phase, and as such, there are likely to be associated temporary negative impacts. All construction works will be carried out in accordance with BS 5228 "<i>Noise Control on Construction and Open Sites</i>". These impacts will be short term in nature and are not considered to be significant. There will be no operational noise generated by the proposed development. Vibration Vibrations will be limited to the construction phase. No long-term vibrations are envisaged. Overall, given the scale and location of works in this instance and the implementation of best practice environmental protection measures during the construction stage, significant impacts are not likely to be a matter of concern.
Landscape & Visual	The potential for temporary visual impacts is identified during construction works along the pipe route within areas

EIA aspect	Likely Significant Effects Identified
	designated as having 'exceptional' and 'high' landscape value. The below-ground pipeline route will be located within private fields and the public road network and will be reinstated following the completion of the works. While it is expected that there will be temporary construction related impacts from the proposed temporary working areas along the pipeline route, given the underground nature of the proposed trunk main, it is considered the proposed development, once constructed, will have no impact on the landscape character of the area. Changes to the landscape will therefore not be significant.
Material Assets (inc. Traffic and Transportation)	There will be no changes to the existing land use as a result of the proposed below-ground pipeline. All of the construction works will be within private fields and the existing road corridor and will be reinstated after construction is complete. There is potential for temporary effects on traffic and transport as a result of the proposed development. The greatest effect on traffic and transport would be during the construction phase where partial or temporary road closures are required. Where road closures are required, local access will be maintained at all times. There is potential for small increases in traffic from construction traffic during the construction phase. This could lead to driver and pedestrian delay; reduced safety for pedestrians, especially where there are no footpaths along the roads being used; and potentially severance of community facilities and businesses if any roads need to close. Overall, any impacts to traffic and transport will be temporary with no lengthy road closures anticipated.
Architectural & Cultural Heritage	An Archaeological Heritage Report was completed by Courtney Deery (CD) Heritage Consultancy Ltd (March 2025). The proposed pipeline route is partially within the south-eastern edge of the buffer zone of the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Property (WHP). Given the location of the proposed scheme – beginning just inside the outer edge of the buffer zone, but predominantly outside of it – and the nature of the development (a below-ground pipeline), there will be no negative effects on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHP. Nor will the proposed scheme result in any

EIA aspect	Likely Significant Effects Identified
	negative visual impacts on the recorded archaeological sites in the wider landscape surrounding it. There are no recorded monuments (RMP / SMR sites) within the proposed scheme boundary. The nearest is a ring-ditch (SMR ME027-116), located c. 75m west of the proposed pipeline wayleave, identified as a cropmark in an arable field, with no above-ground presence. Its presence speaks to the high archaeological potential of the landscape through which the proposed scheme passes. The proposed scheme runs predominantly through agricultural greenfield areas, which have an inherent archaeological potential. In addition, the proposed pipeline will cross a watercourse, a tributary stream of the River Nanny at Garballagh. Riverine environments and water crossings have long attracted human activity. Considering the known and recorded archaeological sites in the wider landscape, there is therefore the potential for the discovery of previously unknown archaeological sites, features or deposits along the length of the proposed pipeline. A geophysical survey (Licence No. 24R0184) undertaken for the proposed scheme in 2024 covers c. 40% of the current proposed pipeline route. The survey identified a number of features of potential archaeological interest, which demonstrates the inherent below-ground potential of the agricultural greenfield areas along the remainder of the proposed pipeline route. The disused railway line (MIHS027-001; Navan, Kells & Oldcastle Branch of the Dublin-Drogheda Railway) crossed by the proposed scheme survives in good working order and is of interest from an industrial heritage perspective. Given the inherent below-ground archaeological potential of the agricultural fields, it is recommended that geophysical survey be undertaken along the proposed pipeline route in greenfield areas not previously surveyed. This non-invasive technique will assist in determining the archaeological potential and provide greater certainty for the proposed scheme. Further recommendations will be made based on the results of the additional geophysical survey. These may include archaeological testing to establish the nature, extent, and date of any potential archaeological sites or features that lie within the proposed pipeline route and archaeological monitoring. It is recommended that any disturbance to the railway line (MIHS027-001) be made good to ensure the preservation of this industrial heritage asset.

EIA aspect	Likely Significant Effects Identified
Risk of Major Accidents and/or Disasters	During the construction stage, the appointed Contractor will prepare and implement an ERP. This Plan will be developed so that the Contractor has robust plans in place to deal with any environmental emergency. The ERP will cover the procedures to respond, control and manage an environmental incident effectively.
Interactions of the Foregoing	Based on the assessment of the above it is not considered that any environmental impacts resulting from the cumulative interaction of the above assessment impacts would give rise to any additional impacts.

The characteristics of the impacts are discussed in **Table 4.5**.

Table 4.5. Type and Characteristics of the Potential Impact

Schedule 7 Criterion	Response
The likely significant effects of projects on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out in points 1 and 2 of this Annex, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in Article 3(1), taking into account:	
(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The proposed development will comprise a trunk main pipeline, on specific greenfield sites and public roads. It is considered that given the scale and nature of the works, and along with the implementation of best practice measures and mitigation measures, that the extent of impacts will be limited to the site and immediate environs and wayleaves. In terms of the population likely to be affected, the site is located in a rural area of Meath with a limited population envisaged to be impacted by the short term construction impacts of noise, air / dust emissions and traffic. However, in the long term, the same population will have a permanent positive impact as a result of a more efficient drinking water distribution system to support the growing population.
(b) the nature of the impact;	The operation of the proposed development is expected to have a significant permanent positive impact on the population of Meath by building efficient drinking water infrastructure to support the future growing population.
(c) the transboundary nature of the impact;	The development is entirely within County Meath and therefore no transboundary impacts are likely to arise from construction and operation of the proposed development.

Schedule 7 Criterion	Response
(d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;	For the majority of environmental aspects, the magnitude and spatial extent of impacts relating to the construction stage will be limited to the development site itself, their immediate vicinity and road users in the area. All works will be carried out in line with a project specific Construction Environmental Management Plan. In terms of biodiversity, the proposed trunk main passes through agricultural lands and crosses three streams along its route. The stream crossings along the trunk main route will be constructed using open-cut construction in line with the Inland Fisheries Ireland guidelines. The appointed Contractor will be required to prepare and agree on a detailed CEMP, to ensure construction activities carried out as part of this development do not cause an impact on the water course. An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for the Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Watermain was undertaken by APEM on behalf of Uisce Éireann in March 2025. The Screening assessment concluded that in view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information, that, it can be excluded that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on the relevant European sites within the ZoI of potential impacts (River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code 002299); River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site Code 004232); and River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA (Site Code 004158) and therefore an AA, and the production of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS), was deemed not to be required. Ecology surveys will be completed onsite at a later stage to determine if effects are likely to the natural environment as a result of the proposed development. It is considered that there will be no likely significant adverse effects during operation.
(e) the probability of the impact;	The proposed project falls outside the categories of development that require an EIA under applicable regulations. While the construction works may have some environmental effects, these will be effectively managed and mitigated through the implementation of a comprehensive CEMP and associated sub-plans (e.g., Waste Management Plan). These plans incorporate best practice construction methods and mitigation measures as recommended in the Environmental Reports prepared to inform the project design.
(f) the expected onset, duration, frequency,	Any effects associated with the temporary construction period will be transient <i>i.e.</i>, temporary and short term (anticipated 30-month construction period). The proposed development shall be

Schedule 7 Criterion	Response
and reversibility of the impact	designed to incorporate a number of key measures to avoid/prevent significant adverse effects on the receiving environment. The operational effects are expected to have a long-term positive impact in terms of the provision of efficient drinking water supply infrastructure.
(g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects	The proposed development will comprise a below-ground trunk main pipeline over a distance of ca. 8.4km largely in private fields with the remainder along public roads. Following a review of relevant plans (e.g., Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027) and a review of the online planning register on Meath County Council's website for planning permissions granted over the past 5 years (back from March 2025), no other projects, either existing or approved have the potential to interact with the proposed pipeline works at either the construction or operation stages such that they would result in significant cumulative impacts.
(h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact	The construction process will avoid any significant effects of the proposed development through the implementation of standard best practice construction methodologies. In terms of the operational stage, the proposed development shall be designed to incorporate a number of key measures to avoid and prevent adverse effects on the receiving environment.

5 SCREENING CONCLUSION

This EIA Screening exercise has concluded that the proposed works relating to the Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main do not exceed any of the thresholds that trigger the mandatory requirement for EIA.

As the proposed development is sub-threshold, it has been screened in accordance with the criteria as outlined within Annex III of the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU.

It is concluded that the characteristics of the potential impacts of the proposed development are not considered significant and there are no long-term adverse impacts. Any potential impact on sensitive receptors during the construction phase will be temporary and short term. Impacts will be effectively managed through best practice approaches and specific mitigation measures.

No impact interactions have been identified and it is considered that any minor impacts will be avoided through the implementation of best working practices. No likely significant long-term or permanent adverse environmental impacts have been identified in the course of the screening process. A permanent long-term positive impact in terms of water supply security can be anticipated from the upgrade of the Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main.

It is therefore concluded that there is no requirement for UÉ to prepare an EIAR Report in relation to the proposed development.