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Introduction

4.1 This Chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), prepared by SLR Consulting Ireland Ltd, addresses the potential effects of a proposed extension at an existing sand and gravel pit on population and human health. The existing pit is located at Ballymacoonoge and Glentire townlands. The proposed planning application area spans across Ballynamonabeg, Ballymacoonoge and Glentire townlands, Ballaghkeen, Co. Wexford (hereafter referred to as the 'application site').

4.2 The proposed development being applied for under this planning application is shown in plan on **Figure 2-2**, and in cross section on **Figure 2-3**, and will consist of:

- Continued use of the existing sand & gravel pit for completion of extraction and restoration (c. 4 hectares) under planning permission ref. 20191259);
- Extension to the existing sand & gravel pit over an extraction area of c. 11 hectares;
- Extraction to final level two metres above the groundwater table;
- Screening berms and operational landscaping;
- Continued processing of sand & gravel using permitted mobile screening plant located on the pit floor;
- Continuance of use of the existing permitted access and internal access road to / from the R744 regional road;
- Continuance of use of existing permitted ancillary facilities: Office, portaloo, storage container, wheelwash and fuel storage;
- Phased and final restoration of the lands to agricultural use;
- Proposed duration c. 18 years plus 2 years for final restoration, total permission duration of 20 years;
- Within an overall planning application area of c. 23.2 hectares.

4.3 The application site (shown on EIAR **Figure 2-2**) contains a new proposed extension extraction area of c. 11 hectares that operate beyond the duration of the existing pit planning permission (P. Ref. 20191259) which will expire in 2030.

Scope of Work

4.4 The EPA guidelines in relation to the preparation of EIAR[1] note the following in respect of population and human health:

- assessment of land-use planning and demographic issues or detailed socio-economic analysis is not generally required;
- economic development or settlement patterns are only relevant if they give rise to new development and associated effects;
- human health should be considered in the context of the relevant environmental topics addressed by the EIAR;
- the effects on human health via relevant pathways (such as air and water) should be considered in the context of accepted standards for exposure, dose or risk; and

[1] Environmental Protection Agency, 'Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' (2022)

- other health and safety issues are addressed under other EU directives.

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4.5 This chapter of the EIAR has considered all of the above items in relation to population, employment, amenity and human health.

4.6 The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) issued two guidance documents in 2022 on the assessment of human health within EIA as follows:

- Effective Scoping of Human Health in EIA; and
- Determining Significance for Human Health in EIA.

4.7 Section 1.11 of the IEMA Guidance on the Effective Scoping of Human Health in EIA recommends that if there is not potential for likely significant population effect, human health should be scoped out of the EIA. The guidance makes clear that the topics of population and human health are separate technical topics. The assessment of socio-economic conditions addressed through the topic of 'Population' provides baseline information on which an assessment of sensitivity of human health can be made, therefore it is considered appropriate that both topics are covered within this chapter.

4.8 **Table 4-1** of this chapter sets out an initial review of the wider determinants of health identified within the guidance on scoping of human health and how these have the potential to be impacted by the proposed development. The initial assessment within **Table 4-1** provides a framework in order to focus the assessment of human health impacts on areas of most relevance.

4.9 This Chapter of the EIAR presents baseline information on population (including employment, amenity and community resources) and assesses likely impacts as a result of the proposed development. This facilitates an assessment of the potential impacts on human health where there is a potential for this to be impacted as identified within **Table 4-1**.

Table 4-1: Wider Determinants of Health and Proposed Development

Categories	Wider Determinants of Health	Commentary
Health related behaviours	Physical activity	No changes likely as a result of proposed development
	Risk taking behaviour	No changes likely as a result of proposed development
	Diet and nutrition	No changes likely as a result of proposed development
Social environment	Housing	Enhanced source of aggregates has potential to support increased supply of housing & infrastructure
	Relocation	Not relevant, no relocation proposed
	Open space, leisure and play	No changes likely as a result of proposed development
	Transport modes, access and connections	No changes likely as a result of proposed development, using existing accesses/routes
	Community Safety	No changes likely, boundaries of application site will continue to be kept secure
	Community identity, culture, resilience and influence	No changes likely, proposed development is activity that is in keeping with existing activity at site

Categories	Wider Determinants of Health	Commentary
	Social participation, interaction and support	Not relevant to application site/proposed development
Economic environment	Education and training	Not relevant to application site/proposed development
	Employment and income	Increased quantity of resource will sustain small-scale employment within the local area
Bio-physical environment	Climate change mitigation and adaptation	Potential for aggregates from site to contribute to developing infrastructure for climate resilience / adaptation in line with national planning & climate policy
	Air quality	Potential for air quality impacts from HGV use and dust from activities on site
	Water quality or availability	Potential for contaminants in, run-off to, impact on surface water and/or groundwater
	Land quality	Removal of minerals, overburden and restoration to agriculture afteruse
	Noise and vibration	Potential for impacts from site activities
Institutional and built environment	Health and social care services	No changes likely as a result of proposed development
	Built environment	Security of supply of aggregates critical to the provision of housing & infrastructure
	Wider societal infrastructure and resources	Security of supply of aggregates critical to the provision of housing & infrastructure

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Consultations

4.10 Consultation has been undertaken directly with EIA topic contributors such as noise and air in the preparation of the population and human health assessment.

Contributors / Authors

4.11 This chapter of the EIAR was prepared by:

- Niamh Doyle - an EIA co-ordinator with SLR Consulting Ireland. Niamh has a BSc in Zoology (2019), a MSc in Environmental Science (2021) and 2 years of experience in the preparation of EIARs for a wide range of projects, including quarries, transport upgrades and sustainable housing developments.
- Lynn Hassett - an EIA co-ordinator with a BSc in Applied Ecology (2000) and a MSc in Environmental Impact Assessment (2001). She has over 16 years of experience of EIA across the not-for-profit, public and private sectors in the UK and Ireland. She has worked on both the review of EIA on behalf of planning authorities assessing applications and in the production of them to support planning applications being lodged. She is a Practitioner member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, which she is a member of since 2001. She is also a Full Member of the Institution of Environmental Sciences, which she joined in 2023.

Limitations / Difficulties Encountered

4.12 No limitations or difficulties were encountered in the preparation of this chapter of the EIAR.

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Regulatory Background

Legislation

4.13 There is no specific legislation relevant to this chapter of the EIAR. Legislation that is relevant to each pathway (noise, air, water, etc.) is addressed elsewhere in this EIAR. However, the framework of information provided within this chapter is informed by:

- Section 37D and 171A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended);
- Section 94 and Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended); and
- European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018.

Guidance and Technical Standards

4.14 This chapter of the EIAR has been prepared on the basis of the Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports by the EPA (2022).

4.15 There are no technical standards relevant to this chapter of the EIAR. Technical standards, if any, that are relevant to each pathway (noise, air, water, etc.) are addressed elsewhere in this EIAR.

4.16 The framework for human health protection is predominantly set out within World Health Organisation (WHO) Guidelines and Limits.

4.17 The WHO works worldwide to promote health, keep the world safe, and serve the vulnerable. Their goal is to ensure that a billion more people have universal health coverage, to protect a billion more people from health emergencies, and provide a further billion people with better health and well-being. It has a wide remit, from setting limits to prevent danger to human health, to providing responses to health emergencies, and promoting health and wellbeing.

4.18 The Institute of Public Health (IPH) is an organisation that informs public policy to promote health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities in Ireland and Northern Ireland. It has previously provided comments on draft legislation on EIA and has been represented on the working group for the IEMA guidance on human health in EIA. It has its own guidance on stand-alone Health Impact Assessments[2] (HIAs), however, the guidance is clear that EIA does not have to adopt all the HIA methods and tools. The IPH set its Strategic Objectives 2020-2025 in order to be able to fulfil its role to its best potential in informing public health policy. The Institute supports the national implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG3, which focuses on good health and wellbeing. Taking opportunities to enhance wellbeing is a common thread in the IPH and IEMA guidance on human health assessment.

4.19 There is no policy or validation requirement to undertake HIA for the proposed development, therefore this chapter of the EIA aligns to HIA principles, as identified in the IPH Guidelines,

[2] Institute of Public Health, 'Health Impact Assessment Guidance: A Manual' (2021)

including considering wider determinants of health, considering existing inequalities of health and encouraging stakeholder engagement.

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4.20 The Healthy Ireland Framework was launched by the Irish Government in 2013, with a focus to deliver a vision where 'everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility'. The Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025 identifies 6 themes to deliver the vision and identifies relevant government departments as well as specific implementation actions. A network of Healthy Cities and Counties (including one for Wexford) is intended to be developed to deliver the Framework at a local level. One of the commitments within the Strategic Action Plan is to publish a Healthy Cities and Counties Strategic Development Plan.

4.21 The Healthy Ireland Framework is delivered within each local authority area through the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), which also has the responsibility for creating a Local Economic and Community Plan every six years. In Wexford, the health programme is supported by a dedicated Healthy County Co-ordinator. In order to achieve their allocation from the most recent round of funding (Round 4), WCC was required to focus on two of the twenty-seven programme-level Healthy Ireland Outcome Indicators. Following an extensive public and stakeholder consultation and research process in late 2022, the following two indicators were agreed upon for Healthy Wexford:

- Increase in percentage of adults and children meeting physical activity guidelines; and
- Decrease in unconditional probability of dying (aged 30-70) from four major non-communicable diseases: cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease, in terms of potential years of life lost.

To this end, several Healthy Wexford Initiatives have been implemented and made available to Council residents to support health in these areas. Resources include accessible walking trails, availability of Digital Radon Monitors for loan from local libraries and online knowledge sharing resources.

Wexford County Council Planning Policy

4.22 The consolidated version of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 (WCDP) is the statutory plan detailing the development objectives/policies, including variations, and was adopted as a consolidated version in June 2022. The County Development Plan sets out the settlement strategy and policies for the sustainable development of Co. Wexford.

4.23 The application site lies within the administrative area of Wexford County Council, therefore the planning and development controls pertaining to it are those outlined in the current Plan.

4.24 Volume 1 Section 6.7.6.5 of the WCDP is concerned with 'Aggregate Resources and Extractive Industry'. It references the valuable resource in terms of construction, employment and revenue that quarrying and mineral extraction represent to the county and specifically refers to the desirable nature of Wexford sand for equestrian and sporting facilities.

4.25 In relation to specific objectives for towns and villages in the County, Policy Objective TV09 seeks

> *"To regenerate and revitalise our towns and villages, diversify and seek new roles and uses to stimulate economic and cultural development and provide necessary physical and social infrastructure."*

4.26 In relation to economic development strategy in the County, Policy Objective ED02 seeks

"To develop a strong economy in the county supported by enterprise, innovation and skill by building competitive regional economic drivers, supporting opportunities to diversify and strengthen the rural economy, supporting entrepreneurialism, sustaining and developing skills and talent and the development of high quality infrastructure, including digital connectivity."

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4.27 Additionally, in relation to economic development strategy in the County, Policy Objective ED03 seeks

"To sustainably develop, deepen and enhance the county's regional economic resilience by widening economic sectors and boosting innovation, export diversification, and productivity and increasing access to new markets."

4.28 In relation to the rural economy in the County, Policy Objective ED91 seeks

"*To facilitate the development of the rural economy through supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism."*

4.29 Of most relevance to the proposed development are the following objectives regarding aggregate resources and the extractive industry:

4.1.1 Objective ED116 seeks

"To require extractive and processing industries to be appropriately sited, designed and managed to avoid significant adverse impacts on their surrounding environment, amenities, road/public safety, and built and natural heritage. The Council will have regard to 'Quarries and Ancillary Activities' (DEHLG, 2004) in its considerations on quarrying (as may be updated in the lifetime of this Plan)."

4.1.2 Objective ED117 seeks

"To prohibit extractive industry development where it has not been demonstrated that adverse effects on the environment, landscape, heritage and surrounding residential, recreation or tourist amenities will not be generated, even if significant aggregate resources are identified. A strict precautionary approach will be taken where designated sites, proposed designated sites or protected species such as Special Areas of Conservation, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, National Heritage Areas, proposed National Heritage Areas or County Geological Sites may be affected."

4.1.3 Objective ED118 seeks

"To ensure that all extractive industry development complies with the relevant objectives of this Plan, including those in Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy, Chapter 10 Environmental Management, Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation and all relevant standards in Volume 2 Development Management Manual including, but not limited to, the specific standards for the extractive industry contained in Section 5.8 Aggregate Resources and the Extractive industry."

4.1.4 Objective ED119 seeks

"To ensure that the road network to serve the extractive industry development is adequate in respect of its condition, width and horizontal and vertical alignment to carry the anticipated number and types of vehicles generated by the operation of

the development without unduly impacting on the capacity or function of the road and / or effecting the safety of other road users including walkers and cyclists."

4.1.5 Objective ED120 seeks

"To ensure that an effective buffer is provided for between proposed quarry operations and adjoining dwellings, landholdings, water courses, built and natural heritage (including archaeology), roads and other public infrastructure."

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4.30 Volume 2 sets out the development management standards for different types of development and land uses that will be applied in the assessment of planning applications. Section 5.8 details the matters to be taken into account in the assessment of planning applications for aggregate resources and the extractive industry with proposed developments to be in accordance with industry best practices and planning applications must demonstrate that:

4.2.1 No significant adverse impacts to existing or proposed designated sites of natural heritage would be associated with the proposal.

4.2.2 Sufficient access via the roads network would be present such as to not significantly impact other road users. Details of proposed haul routes, sightlines and measures to prevent the deposit of mud, stones, water and other materials are to also be submitted.

4.2.3 The proposed design, including all structures, plant and stockpiles, avoids adverse visual impacts on the landscape.

4.2.4 Potential impacts to ground and surface water are prevented and/or mitigated to acceptable levels.

4.2.5 Adjoining residential and agricultural amenities would not be significantly adversely affected as a result of noise, dust, vibration or other disturbance. Where necessary, the use of sufficient buffer zones (no less than 100m for dust generating activities) and the utilisation of existing landform features are employed to mitigate noise and dust impacts, with all structures, plant and stockpiles located within the site.

4.2.6 No significant adverse impacts on cultural heritage structures or sites will arise.

4.2.7 The project design safeguards and encourages biodiversity.

4.2.8 Following the completion of quarrying, a methodical closure process of the proposed project would be implemented, provisioning for the removal of all structures, plant and stockpiles, preservation of landscaping and site security.

4.2.9 Proposals for the importation of materials to facilitate the after-use of quarried sites are to be subject to a separate planning application.

4.2.10 The proposed project does not contradict other objectives of the Wexford County Development Plan.

4.2.11 Where the proposed project is to be an extension of an existing quarry, that responsible and compliant operation of the existing quarry can be demonstrated.

Receiving Environment

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Study Area

4.31 The study area relates to the vicinity of the application site and to those dwellings in the vicinity of the application site and has been defined as a c. 1 km buffer radius from the application site boundary as shown on **Figure 4-1**, which identifies residential and other community receptors within this zone. Although population and human health effects would not expect to be experienced at a 1 km distance from the development, the radius has been selected to facilitate a conservative assessment and to ensure that a range of community services and facilities representative of the local area were included.

Baseline Study Methodology

4.32 The Study Area described above has been taken to represent potentially sensitive residential and community receptors in the area, and identification of these has been based on a desktop map and aerial photography search, as well as information obtained from site visits by the EIA team as described throughout this EIAR.

4.33 Eircode data (2025), aerial photography and a review of recent planning applications on the Wexford and An Coimisiún Pleanála planning portals have been used to identify specific receptors within the 1 km study area indicated on **Figure 4-1**.

4.34 Demographic data has been sourced from the Central Statistics Office (CSO)'s Census of Ireland publicly available records. Demographic data at the Electoral Division (ED) level was used to represent demographic conditions within the Study Area. The study area falls primarily within the Bolaboy Electoral Division but intersects minorly with the Ballyhuskard and Castle Talbot Electoral Divisions, as is shown on **Figure 4-2**.

4.35 The area of intersection between the Castle Talbot ED and the study area (c. 0.017 km^2) comprises only agricultural land and contains no residential receptors. On this basis, this area is not believed to be representative of Castle Talbot ED from a population demographics perspective and so Castle Talbot ED has not been scoped into this population and human health assessment. The section of the Ballyhuskard ED that falls within the study area (c. 0.033 km^2) is within the village of Ballaghkeen and contains approximately 8 residential receptors. As a result, data from Bolaboy and Ballyhuskard EDs has been collated to represent the 'Study Area' demographic situation in the assessment that follows. Data relating to the State and Wexford have been presented to enable a comparison with the trends identified in the Study Area.

Sources of Information

4.36 Baseline information was obtained from the following sources:

- Myplan.ie (http://myplan.ie/index.html);
- Historic Environment Viewer (http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/);
- Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028;
- The environmental topic chapters of this EIAR;
- OSi Maps;
- Aerial Photographs;
- EPA Maps (https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/);

- Fáilte Ireland Interactive Attractions Dashboard (https://www.failteireland.ie/Research-Insights/Activities/visitor-numbers-to-attractions-dashboard.aspx);
- Live Register statistics; and
- CSO SAP map data.

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Site Location

4.37 The application site is located within a rural area referred to as 'The Ballagh', located c. 1 km southeast of Ballaghkeen and c. 9 km southeast of Enniscorthy, refer to EIAR **Figure 1-1**. The application site consists of the existing access route, an area of the existing extraction area (operating under existing planning permission P. Ref. 20191259) and a proposed extraction extension area. The extraction extension area is directly adjacent to the existing sand and gravel pit. The existing access route that runs from the northeastern edge of the existing pit links to the R744 regional road.

4.38 The existing pit operation straddles the townlands of Ballymacoonoge and Glentire, with the central area containing the site facilities and processing area, consisting of a mobile screening plant, integrally bunded fuel storage, site office, and wheelwash. The northwestern area of the existing sand and gravel pit site is exhausted of resources and partly restored. Extraction works within the existing pit are advancing in a southeasterly direction within the permitted extraction.

4.39 The proposed pit extension extraction area is c. 11 hectares of previous agricultural land located immediately adjacent and southeast of the existing permitted sand and gravel pit development. It is made up of grassland with a periphery of mature hedgerow as shown in EIAR Chapter 2, **Figure 2-1**.

4.40 The proposed application site spans across Ballynamonabeg, Ballymacoonoge and Glentire townlands, Ballaghkeen, Co. Wexford.

4.41 For the avoidance of doubt, any reference within this EIAR to 'site' or 'application site' should be taken to refer to the application area (red line) shown in **Figure 4-1**.

Site and Surroundings

4.42 The proposed development will use the existing permitted access to the existing sand and gravel pit. This access is from the regional road R744. The setback of the access and the layout of the junction provide generous space for HGV manoeuvring and unobstructed visibility. The access is also well signposted and lit.

4.43 A large portion of the western extraction extension area boundary borders the existing sand and gravel pit, with the remaining portion abutting existing agricultural lands. The northern application site boundary also borders agricultural lands. The eastern boundary runs along the L6033 local road with a residential property located along the periphery. The southern boundary runs along the L20411 local road. Both roads separate the application site from further agricultural lands. Residences lie to the north, east, south and west of the proposed extraction extension area.

4.44 The character of the wider area is predominantly agricultural. Small rural settlements and isolated farmsteads are scattered along the local road network. The regional R744 route is a dominant feature to the north of the application site.

4.45 There are few residences in the immediate vicinity of the site, with the residential pattern comprising isolated farm dwellings along the local roads. There are c. 30 properties within 250 m of the application site. In total there are c. 240 residential properties within a 1 km radius of the application site. These are shown in **Figure 4-1**.

Population

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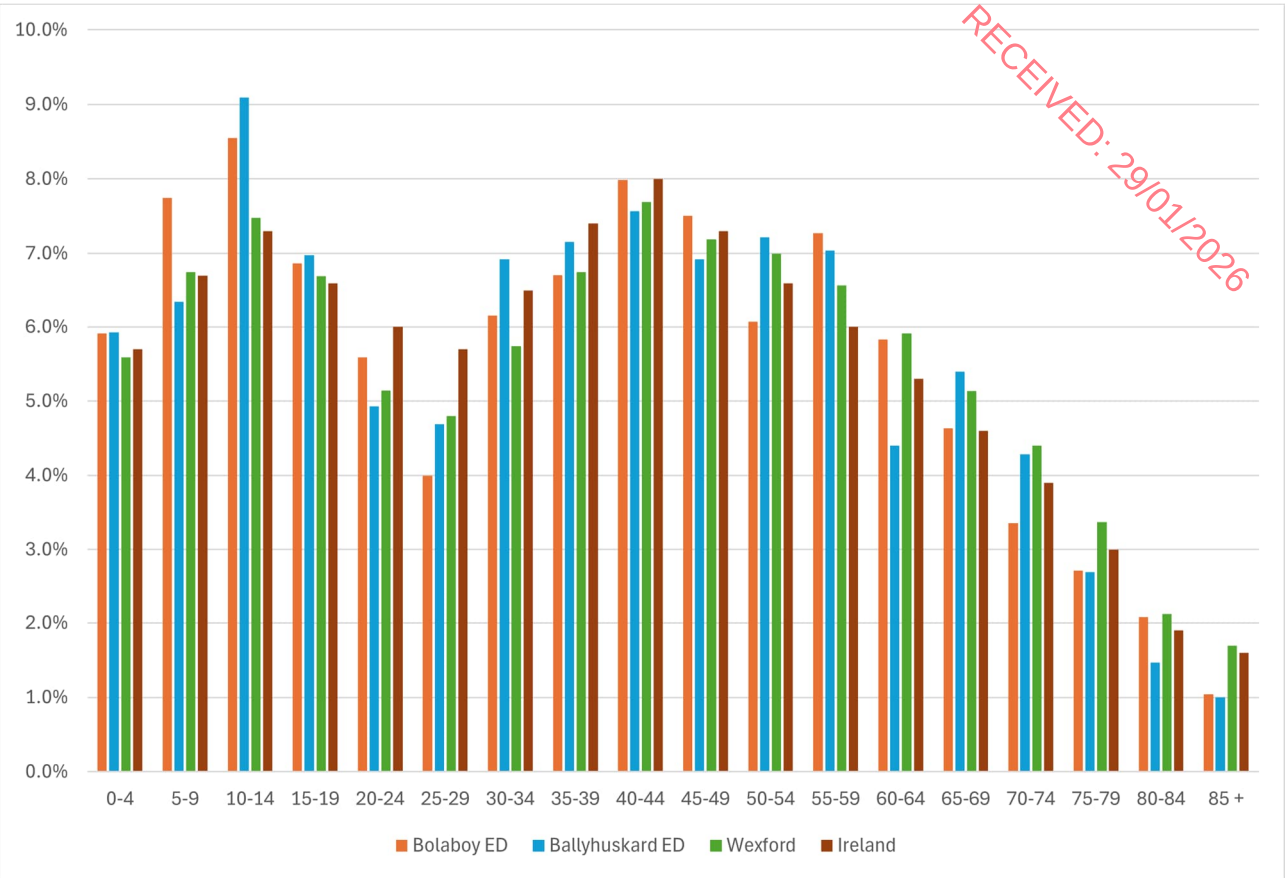
4.46 The population, and the rate of change experienced in the Study Area Electoral Divisions, County Wexford and Ireland between the census period 2016 and 2022 is presented in **Table 4-2**.

Table 4-2: Population Trends 2016 - 2022

	2016	2022	% Change
Bolaboy ED	1,222	1,252	2.45%
Ballyhuskard ED	1,579	1,705	7.98%
County Wexford	149,722	163,919	9.48%
Ireland	4,761,865	5,149,139	8.13%

4.47 The census results indicate that the population has increased in the local area, but at a much lower rate in Bolaboy ED than that observed at the county and national level. County Wexford experienced a very rapid pace of growth exceeding that of the Country.

4.48 **Plate 4-1** shows a breakdown of the age range of the population within the local and wider areas, to enable an understanding of the population trends and any implications of the patterns.



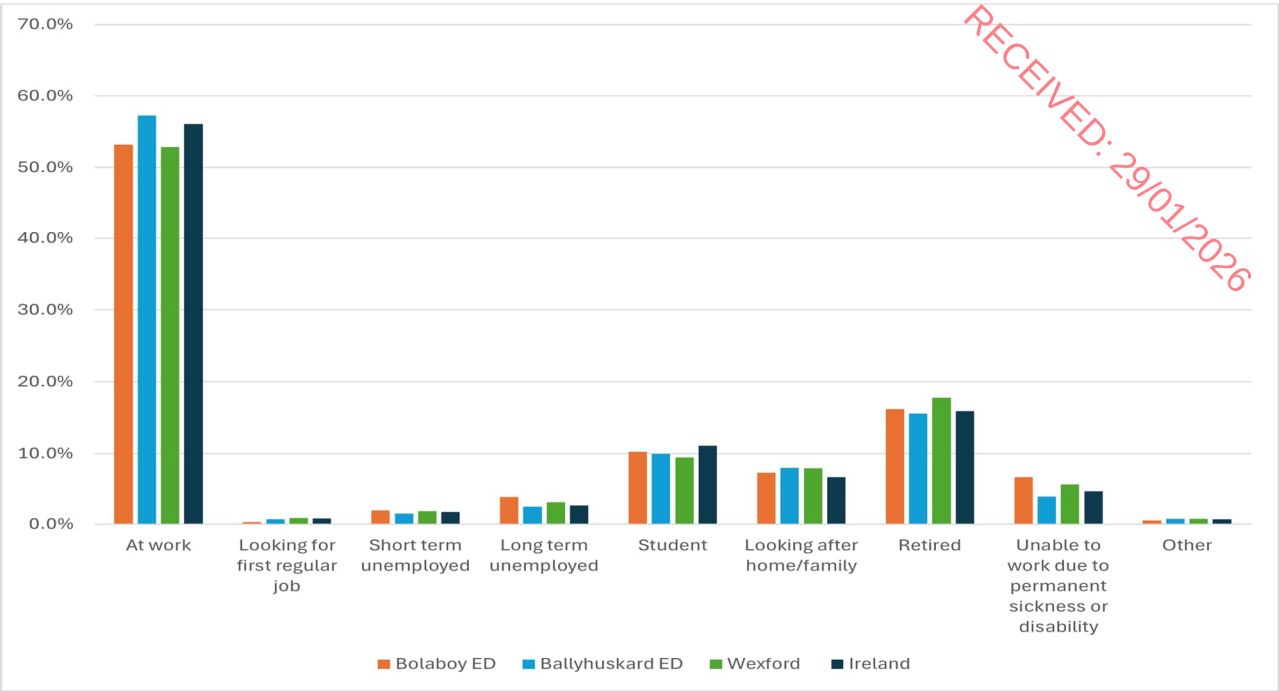
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Plate 4-1 Age Range of Population

4.49 The Study Area has a noticeably higher rate of population in age categories under the age of 15. In general, it also has a lower rate of population across most of age ranges over the age of 75, apart from the age 80-84 bracket.

Employment

4.50 **Plate 4-2** shows a visual breakdown of employment status in the latest Census period of 2022 within the Study Area Electoral Divisions, County Wexford and the State.



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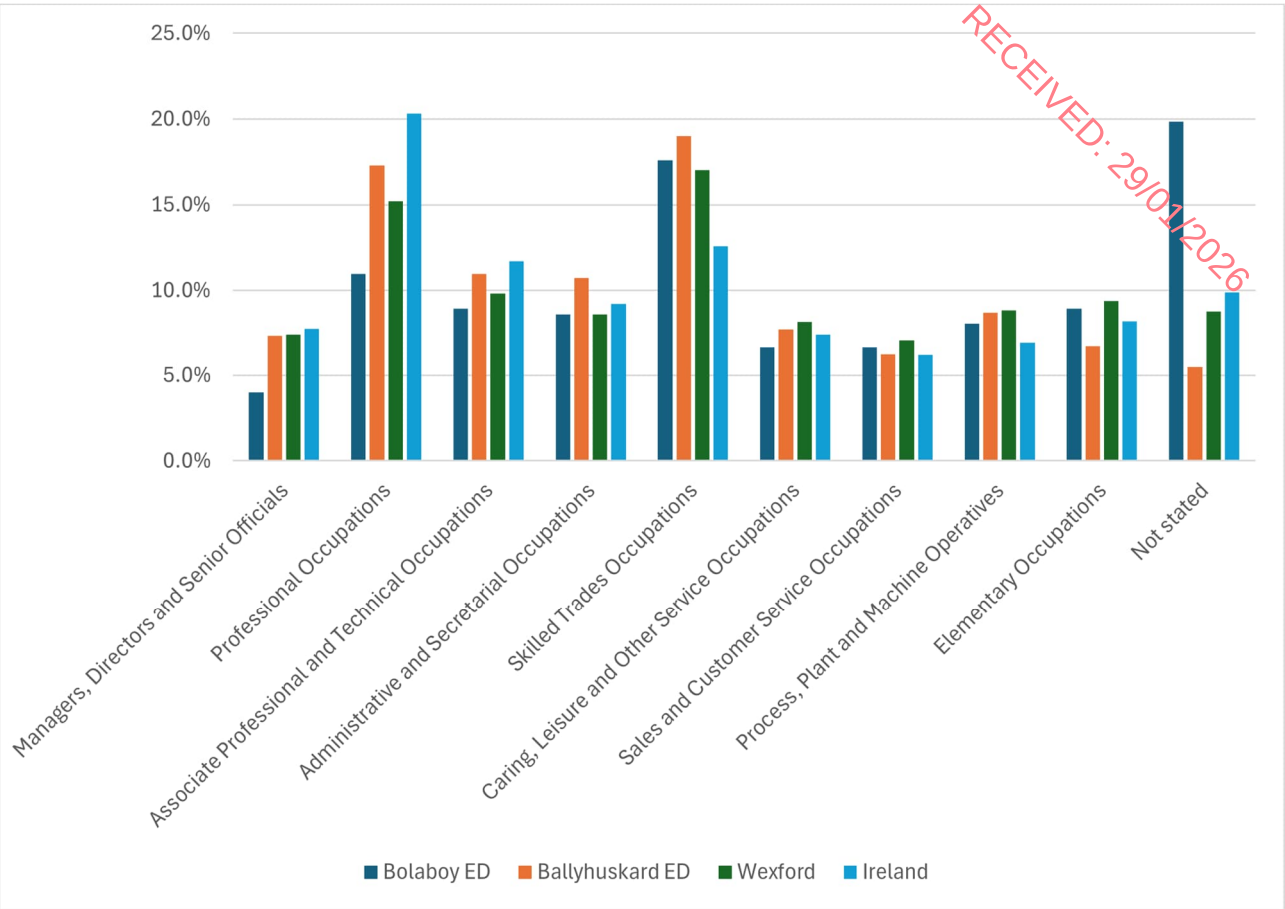
Plate 4-2 Principal Economic Status of Population

4.51 The proportion of residents at work in the Bolaboy ED was slightly lower than the proportion observed in the State, but generally in line with County Wexford. Ballyhuskard ED had a higher proportion of residents at work than at the County or State level. Bolaboy ED had a slightly higher proportion of long-term unemployment than at the other comparator levels. The proportion of the population in Bolaboy ED that are unable to work due to permanent illness is higher than in the County and State. However, both of these principal status categories had lower rates of occurrence in Ballyhuskard ED than at the County or State levels.

4.52 The closest Social Welfare Office to the application site is in Enniscorthy, c. 10 km northwest. According to the September 2025 Live Register statistics[3], there were 1,692 persons on the live register. The figures have been showing a steady downward decline since c. July 2011 when the numbers on the live register in that location were recorded as 4,996.

4.53 The population of the Study Area compared with that within County Wexford and the State is categorised by occupation as per **Plate 4-3**.

[3] Central Statistics Office: data.cso.ie



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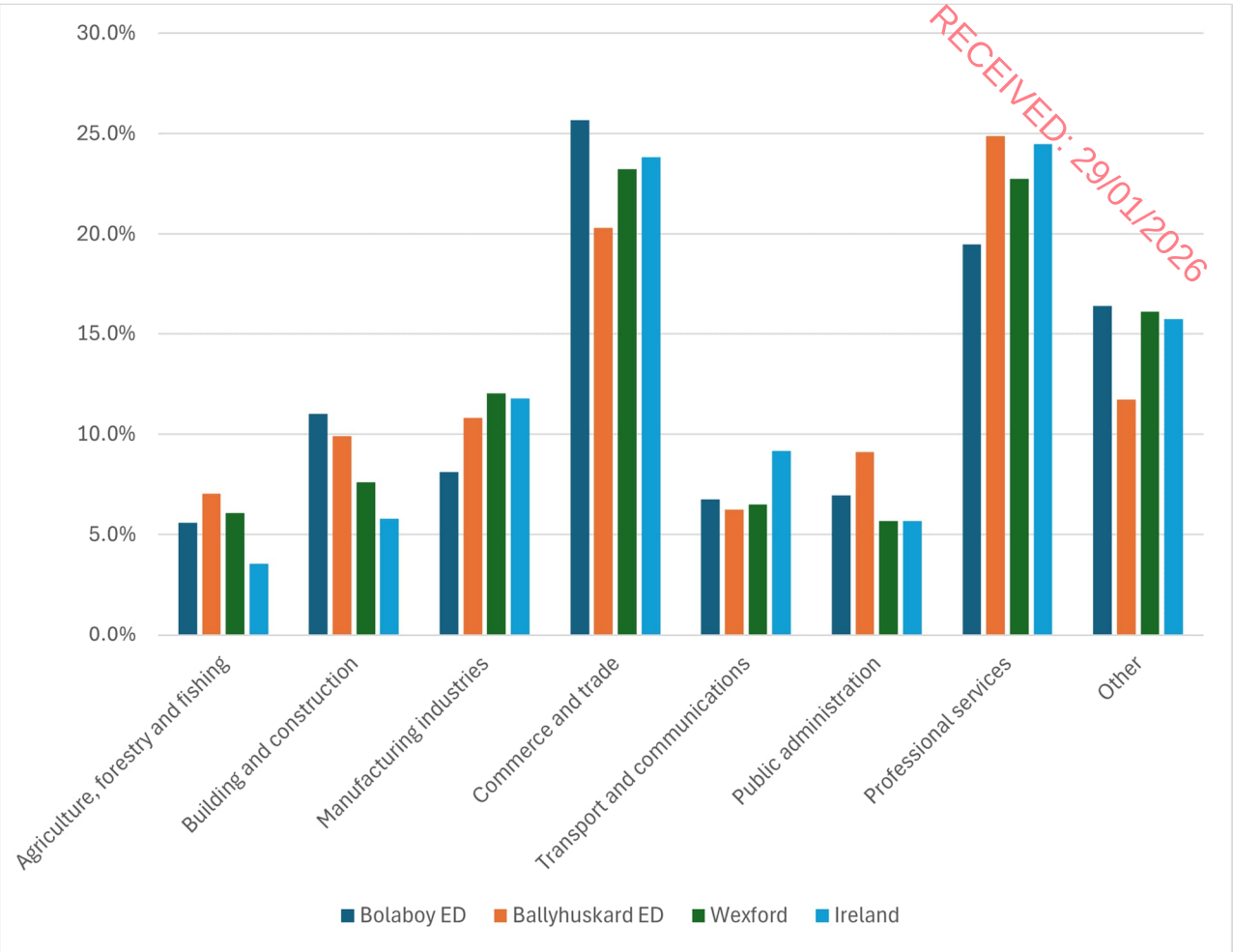
Plate 4-3 Occupations of Populations

4.54 The graph shows that the population within the Study Area has a higher proportion of skilled tradespeople than at the County and State level.

4.55 There appears to be less reliance on managing, directing, senior official, professional, associate and technical jobs in Bolaboy ED. However, it is worth nothing that analysis of the same data for Bolaboy ED from the 2016 census period does appear to show a slight decrease in almost all categories of occupation with a marked increase in the proportion of individuals who did not state their occupation.

4.56 This trend was not observed across the same data for Ballyhuskard ED. In fact, Ballyhuskard ED saw an increase in the proportion of individuals working in professional, associate and technical jobs from the 2016 census to the 2022 census.

4.57 The population of the Study Area compared with that within County Wexford and the State is categorised by industry sector employment as per **Plate 4-4**. From this graph it can be inferred that more residents in the local area are reliant on employment such as building, construction and public administration than at the County and State level. The reliance on agriculture, forestry and fishing at the local level also exceeds that of the State level.



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Plate 4-4 Population Employment by Industry

4.58 Comparison of the data in the Study Area EDs from 2016 and 2022 indicates that reliance on agriculture, forestry, fishing and professional services in the Study Area has decline. During this period, the local reliance on building, construction and public administration have increased.

Economic Activities including Tourism

4.59 The WCDP acknowledges that employment in the County is based on a broad enterprise sector, with particular emphasis on Information Communication Technology (ICT), old International Financial Services, Life Sciences and food production. No single economic sector offers the total solution to the challenges facing rural areas. The optimal response most likely lies in the development of a variety of measures to tap into the potential that individual rural areas possess. In all areas of the County, there is a role for rural development in contributing to the general economic growth of the County. The Council will encourage diversification by acknowledging the importance of traditional sectors of agriculture, construction and fishing while promoting tourism (drawing on its location on Ireland's Ancient East), leisure (including farm bases enterprise, such as equestrian, open farms and pet farms) and recreation and renewable energy production.

4.60 The County's natural sand resource, including high quality fine Wexford sand used in equestrian and sporting facilities, has potential to provide employment and economic growth in the local and regional economy. This is recognised in the WCDP, as is the need

to develop such resources in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner that incorporates decommissioning and restoration of all sites.

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4.61 The application site has supported typical rural employment through agricultural use and has generated employment through previous extraction. Both of these activities have also contributed to the rural economy which is acknowledged for its importance to County Wexford.

4.62 Tourism is also one of the major contributors to the national economy and is a significant source of full time and seasonal employment, particularly in coastal areas. Tourism and recreation are noted in the WCDP as key sectors in both the economic and social development of the County, providing opportunities for employment and wealth generation, in addition to facilities and infrastructure that enhance the quality of life for residents.

4.63 The surrounding countryside is scenic, featuring rolling hills. The Tulach a' tSolais Monument is a monument embedded in a grassy mound to commemorate the 1798 rebellion, c. 4 km north of the site, that allows visitors to appreciate local history while availing of the benefits of the landscape.

4.64 Blackwater Open Farm is an Agri-tourism attraction that is located c. 7 km to the southeast of the application site. It allows visitors to experience an aspect of rural life, learn about food production, animal welfare and the role of farmers. Fáilte Ireland recorded 4,000 visitors to Blackwater Open Farm over the course of 2023.

4.65 The Ancient East brand has been developed to showcase the authentic character of Ireland, its living culture, landscapes and history, with Wexford being referred to as the cornerstone of Ireland's Ancient East. Wells House & Gardens is a Victorian Tudor gothic country house museum located c. 8 km to the northeast of the site and is advertised as part of Ireland's Ancient East. It is a 450-acrea estate dating back to the 1600s with the house and gardens having been reimagined in the 19th century. The attraction also offers woodland walks, the Wells Animal Farm and restored Terrace Garden and Walled Garden. It had 55,905 visitors in 2023 according to Fáilte Ireland.

4.66 Enniscorthy Castle is located c. 10 km northeast of the application site and allows visitors to history with the construction dating back to the late 1100s. It is a Norman Castle featuring corner towers and a four-storey rectangular keep. The castle is home to the Wexford County Museum which allows visitors to explore the development of the castle and the town itself. Also, located c. 15 km to the southwest of the application site is the Irish National Heritage Park, an open-air museum showcasing the history of human settlement in Ireland from the Mesolithic period up to the Norman Invasion. Fáilte Ireland reported a total of 59,096 visitors to the heritage park in 2023.

Community Infrastructure

4.67 The application site is located in a rural area, with the closest village being Ballaghkeen, c. 1 km to the northwest and the town of Enniscorthy c. 9 km northwest. Ballaghkeen has some small-scale business developments but limited community services. Enniscorthy has a variety of community facilities such as supermarkets, pharmacies, banks and schools. It also has a Garda station, fire station and health centres.

4.68 As is typical in rural areas, there are various enterprises, smaller community HSE / private healthcare services and GAA facilities interspersed in the region.

Indices of Deprivation

4.69 Pobal is an organisation that works on behalf of Government to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion and development. The organisation

produces mapping information[4] including on deprivation indices in order to identify areas in need of social/community investment. The overall levels of deprivation have been based on census data in relation to demographic profile, social class composition and labour market situation. According to the deprivation indices based on 2022 census data, Bolaboy and Ballyhuskard EDs were both categorised as marginally below average (i.e. slightly disadvantaged).

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General Health

4.70 **Plate 4-5** presents the results of the 2022 census in relation to the self-reported health status of the Study Area EDs, County Wexford and the State residents.

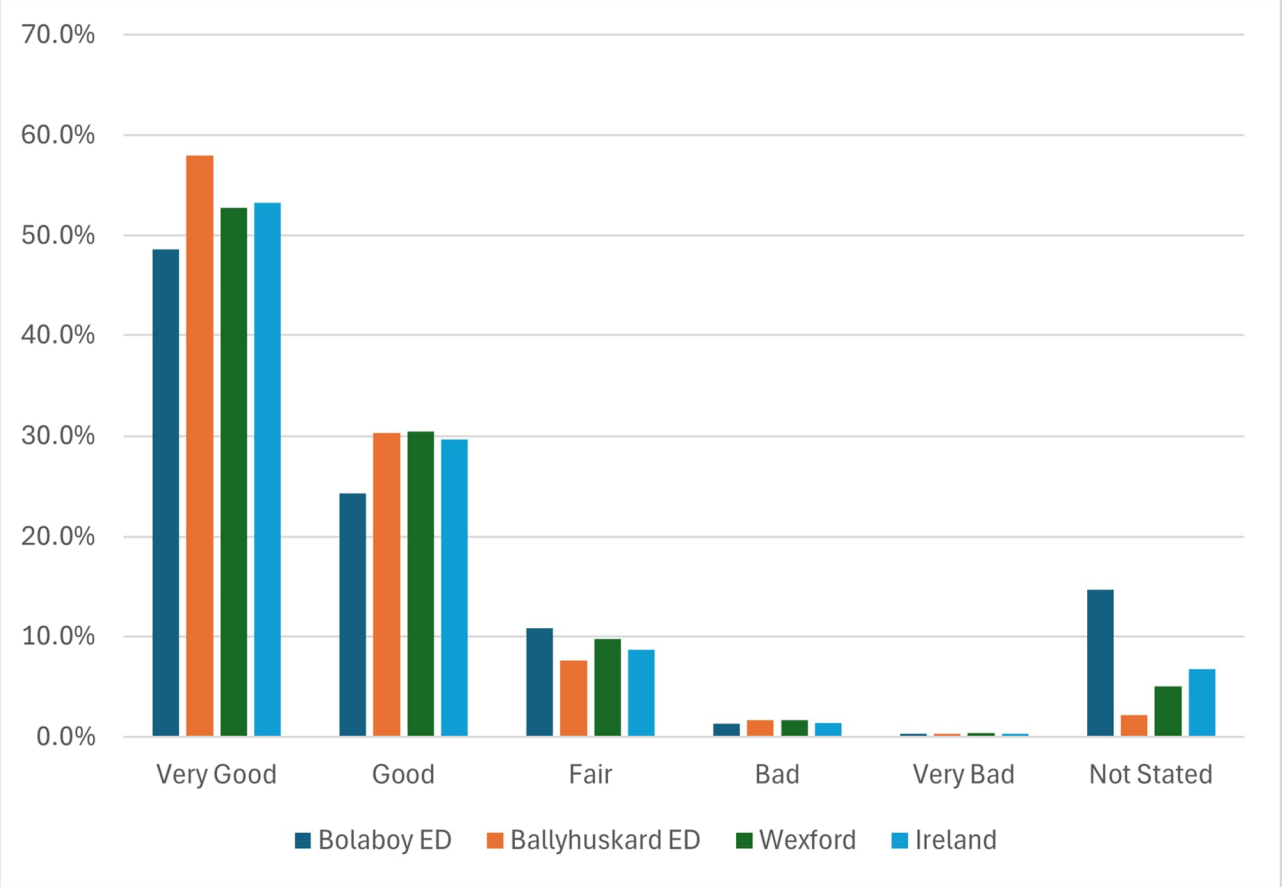


Plate 4-5 Self-reported Health Status of Population

4.71 The information presented in **Plate 4-5** does not reveal specific health concerns in the local area. While fewer respondents in Bolaboy ED classified their health as very good or good (72.9%, in comparison to 83.2% at County Wexford and 82.9% at State level), this does not correspond with an increase in in respondents reporting bad or very bad health. In fact, the proportion of individuals classifying their health as bad or very bad is slightly lower at 1.6% in Bolaboy ED than the 2.0% observed at the County level and 1.7% at State level. It is worth noting that there is a significantly higher proportion of individuals who did not state a classification of health in Bolaboy ED than County or State (14.7%, 5.1% and 6.7% respectively). The proportion of individuals classifying their health as very good or good in

[4] Tailte Éireann, Pobal HP Deprivation Indices

Ballyhuskard ED exceeded County and State levels at 88.2% and the proportion of individuals reporting bed or very bad health in the ED was in line with County Wexford.

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Radon

4.72 The proposed application site is mapped by the EPA[5] as being within the 'About 1 in 10 homes likely to have high radon levels' risk bracket, and within an area where radon testing for workplaces located within enclosed work environments (e.g. factories, office developments etc.) is recommended (see **Plate 4-6**). The proposed development comprises open air operations and accordingly no further consideration of radon is required.

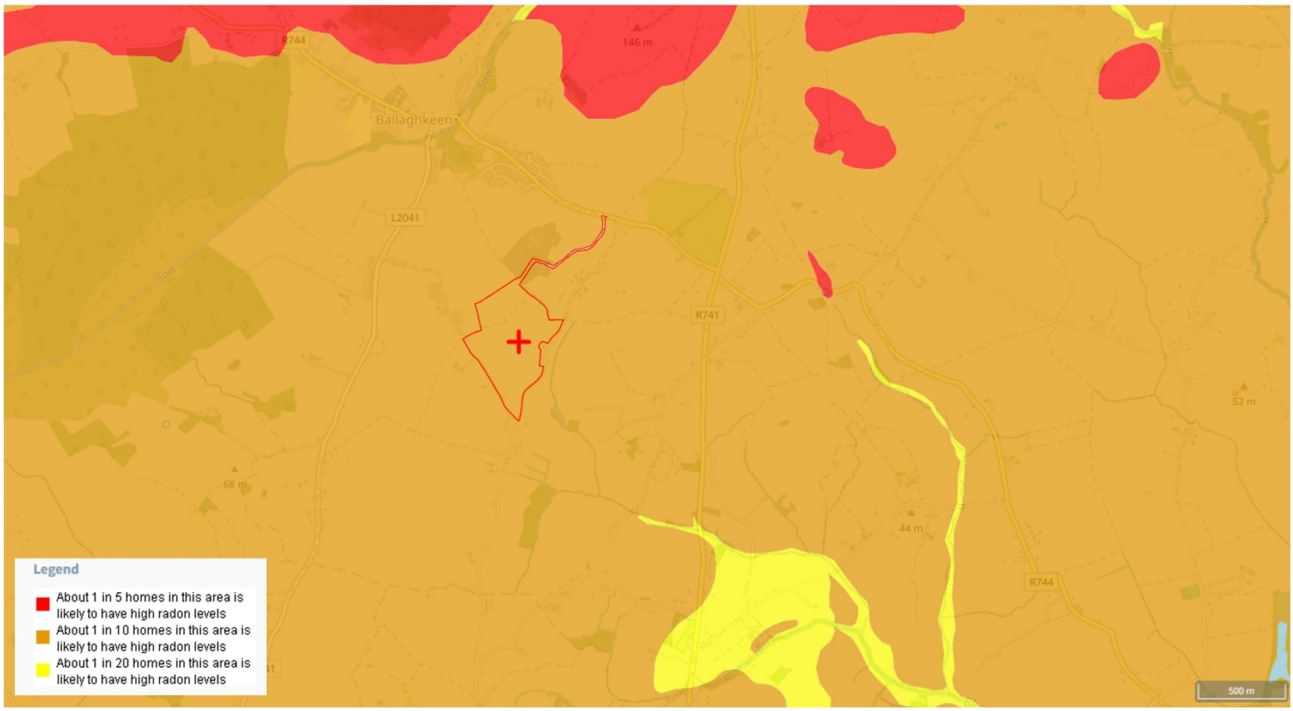


Plate 4-6 Radon Mapping around the Application Site

Sensitive Receptors

4.73 Dwellings in the vicinity of application site are generally located along the local road network. The nearest dwellings to the application site boundary are identified on **Figure 4-1**, based on a google map review and Eircode data. There are six residences in the immediate vicinity of the site, all of which will be given a 100 m buffer zone. The residential pattern comprises of isolated farm dwellings and agricultural buildings. There are c. 30 properties located within 250 m of the application site. In total, there are c. 240 residential properties within a 1 km radius of the application site.

4.74 The baseline information presented in the preceding sections has not identified any particular sensitivities in relation to human health. The deprivation indices in the area do not highlight the area as significantly disadvantaged and self-reported health status is positive. The scale of community facilities and amenities available to local residents is considered to be in proportion with their rural location. The proposed development, itself, will not introduce new communities to the local area and is not expected to create any additional demand on services.

[5] EPA, Radon Risk Map of Ireland

4.75 A further review of **Table 4-1** in the context of the baseline population confirms that the main potential for the proposed development to cause negative impacts to human health is through the potential for noise emissions and emissions to air, land and water. These issues have been addressed in detail in their respective chapters of the EIAR and conclusions in relation to their resulting impact to human health are set out below. The proposed development has potential for a substantial positive influence on the local economy through the enabling of the application site to continue to provide a source of direct and indirect employment. This has potential knock-on effects in terms of contributing to the overall wellbeing of the local population.

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Impact Assessment

Evaluation Methodology

4.76 The evaluation of effects on employment, human health and amenity comprises a qualitative assessment based on the analysis of potential effects on the environment undertaken in other chapters of this EIAR. The assessment also takes into account a review of relevant literature and professional judgement in relation to impact on population and human health.

4.77 The location and intensity of associated environmental impacts at receptors may vary somewhat as the extraction activities move across the application site over time. The localised effects predicted are worst-case (i.e. assuming the closest proximity of extraction works for the entire operation period, even though they will generally be short-term and time-limited).

Population

4.78 Given the nature of the proposed development (continuation of existing established sand & gravel pit operations) which will not introduce any new communities or housing to the area, and that no new workers that will be introduced to the application site during the proposed development, it is considered that there will be negligible impacts to the population make-up.

Employment

Construction Stage Impacts

4.79 The planning application is for the proposed continued use and extension to the existing sand and gravel pit. No construction stage impacts on employment have been identified.

Operational Stage Impacts

4.80 The existing sand and gravel extraction operations provide employment directly for c. 3 people. The wider ADL Company provides direct employment for c. 20 personnel and indirectly throughout all site locations. The extension of the sand and gravel pit into an area with proven mineral reserves will secure the life of the existing established aggregate manufacturing business beyond the duration of the current planning permission due to expire in 2030 and therefore provide continued employment at the site. This will in turn provide sustained revenue in the rural area surrounding the site. The development will also provide employment indirectly in the form of hauliers, maintenance, contractors, material suppliers, etc.

4.81 Employment will cease on completion of extraction activities.

4.82 The employment impacts associated with the operational phase of the proposed development are therefore considered to have a medium-term, direct and minor positive effect which will not have a significant effect.

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Post – Operational Stage Impacts

4.83 Following the permanent cessation of operations, the application site will be restored. This would result in the loss of employment at the site in the long term. These are considered to have a short-term, direct and negative effect which will not have a significant effect. It should however be noted that the negative effect is due to the 'non-permanent' nature of mineral extraction developments in general which have a finite life. Continued employment may be available at the Ballagh should a further planning permission be secured at the site in the future or alternative employment may become available at a new site should ADL source a site with suitable quality reserves and secure planning permission.

4.84 Some short-term employment would be provided in relation to the aftercare of the restored site (establishment maintenance) during the final restoration period of two years resulting in an intermittent, short-term, direct and positive effect which will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Economic Activities including Tourism

Construction & Operational Stage Impacts

4.85 The proposed development will contribute indirectly to supporting and sustaining both the local and regional economy through the contribution to equestrian / sporting facilities of high-quality specialist sand that is proven to be rare in the region. The knock-on effect of the direct and indirect employment generated from the proposed development also can contribute to an enhanced local economy.

4.86 Potential effects on economically important tourism and agricultural features could arise from general disturbance or from potential environmental emissions from site activities. Potential emissions arising as a result of the proposed development relate mainly to potential disturbance from noise, dust, traffic, and visual effects. All such effects would however be limited within phases, occurring for the duration of extraction works and will effectively cease on completion and restoration activities.

4.87 The application site is remotely located and of considerable distance from the tourism and community features described as part of the baseline environment. It is well screened from its nearest neighbours by intervening hedgerows. It is typical of an operational rural pit, which is being worked to obtain sand and gravel, therefore it is in line with the range of rural activities that the Ancient East tourism brand wishes to showcase. It also provides an opportunity for rural employment that is not dependent on agriculture, tourism or commuting. It is considered that, overall, the proposed development will have a minor positive impact on the regional economy given its potential to provide a secure supply specialist sand.

Post – Operational Stage Impacts

4.88 Following the permanent cessation of operations, the application site will be restored to agricultural use. It is considered that there will be a negligible impact on the economy, including tourism, as a result.

Community Infrastructure

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Construction, Operational Stage and Post – Operational Impacts

4.89 Given the size and nature of the proposals, it is not considered likely that any additional pressure will be placed on community services such as schools and health facilities.

Human Health and Health and Safety

4.90 Ultimately, all of the effects of a development on the environment impinge upon human beings. Direct effects relate to matters such as land, water and air quality, noise, and changes to landscape character. Indirect effects relate to such matters as flora and fauna.

4.91 The potential for impacts on human health has been assessed based on the technical assessments of the EIAR, which identify potential pathways for respective impacts to human receptors.

Construction & Operational Stage Impacts

4.92 The construction & operational stages of the development relate to the extraction of sand and gravel using industry standard techniques comprising of soil stripping, extraction, processing of sand and gravel, and progressive restoration. These stages have the potential to generate impacts that would have effects on human health through the pathways of air, noise, and water which may include:

- The generation of fugitive dust, particularly during periods of dry weather;
- The generation of noise by the operation of machinery and the movement between the working face and the processing plant;
- The accidental leakage or spillage of fuel.

4.93 As outlined in each of Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 10 of this EIAR, a number of mitigation measures are proposed to control and minimise these effects and to ensure that the residual effects of the proposed development on human health during the construction and operational phases are acceptable and not significant. On this basis, it is considered that, with implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, there would be no likely significant temporary or permanent effects on human health during either the construction or operational stages of this development. The landscape and visual assessment has concluded that the proposed development would have moderate or moderate/minor landscape effects on the landscape receptors identified and all impacts are regarded as not significant.

4.94 Potable water will be brought to site via a bottled water supplier, hence there is no potential risk to human health from water consumption at the site.

4.95 The site will be operated in line with strict industry controls for health and safety which will ensure that the potential for impacts will be negligible.

Post – Operational Stage Impacts

4.96 Following cessation of extraction and the final restoration of the site, any potential effects on air, noise, land and water would cease owing to the cessation of site extraction and processing operations, the cessation of machinery operation, and the removal of plant and machinery from the site. The proposed development will not result in any significant direct or indirect impacts on human health following restoration.

Unplanned Events

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4.97 According to the EPA guidelines, unplanned events, such as accidents, can include *"spill from traffic accidents, floods or land-slides affecting the site, fire, collapse or equipment failure on the site"*. The 2014 EIA directive refers to *"major accidents, and/or natural disasters (such as flooding, sea level rise, or earthquakes)"*.

4.98 In this instance, the vulnerability of the proposed development to accidents, unplanned events or natural disasters is relatively limited owing to the relatively simple nature of the development works, the established nature of the techniques, regulations and procedures to be followed, the material to be handled on site and the relatively rural location of the proposed works.

4.99 Unplanned events in relation to the proposed development could potentially relate to:

- Instability during the extraction process; and
- Spills from traffic accidents.

4.100 There are a range of management and mitigation measures that will be implemented to manage these risks, refer to EIAR Chapter 6 – Land, Soils and Geology and EIAR Chapter 7 – Water. Regular geotechnical inspections are carried out at the quarry in accordance with the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work (Quarries) Regulations 2025 to ensure stability of the pit faces during the operational and final restoration periods.

4.101 The HSA Safe Quarry Guidelines to the Safety Health and Welfare at Work (Quarries) Regulations 2008, as amended, are implemented at the site and will limit the potential for unplanned events in the form of instability during extraction. The final restoration will provide for a stable landform restored agricultural grazing lands on the pit floor with some dedicated peripheral areas for natural habitat after-uses included.

4.102 Chapter 7 (Water) notes that accidental spillages or leaks of fuels or chemicals during site activities could happen without proper control measures. Appropriate mitigation measures and monitoring will continue to be implemented to ensure that there are no potential impacts on the water environment as a result of unplanned events at the site.

4.103 It is considered that the risk of an accident resulting in a spillage from traffic associated with the development would be no greater in relation to this development than it is for any other form of development that relies on the transportation of goods and materials by HGVs. The potential for significant impacts on employment, human health in the wider population or amenity as a result of a road spillage is likely to be very low and any such effects would be temporary.

Cumulative / Synergistic Impacts

4.104 A search of the Wexford County Council and An Coimisiún Pleanála's online planning search facilities was undertaken to identify any potential cumulative projects that have been or may be granted within the last five years within 1 km of the proposed development.

4.105 With the acknowledgement of small-scale projects (predominantly agricultural and domestic in nature), there are no other planned developments in the vicinity of the application site that would have the potential to have any significant adverse cumulative impacts on population and human health.

Transboundary Impacts

4.106 By virtue of its location the application site is a significant distance from any international boundaries. It is not anticipated that the impacts of the proposed development would have any transboundary effects on population and human health.

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Interaction with Other Impacts

4.107 The effects of the proposed development on population and human health and the interaction with other environmental topics is covered in the relevant EIAR chapters i.e. Chapter 6 (Land, Soil and Geology), Chapter 7 (Water), Chapter 8 (Air Quality), Chapter 10 (Noise and Vibration), Chapter 11 (Material Assets) and Chapter 13 (Landscape).

'Do-nothing Scenario'

4.108 If planning permission is not approved for the proposed development, the extraction extension area would not contribute much needed specialist sand. The high value reserves that have been tested within the newly proposed extraction extension area would remain unworked despite identified needs for specialist sand in the region and general policy support for continuation/extension of mineral extraction in existing quarries with extant ancillary infrastructure.

4.109 A 'do-nothing scenario' would result in the loss of opportunity to obtain economically important aggregate reserves and secure continued and diverse rural employment in line with the objectives of the WCDP.

Mitigation Measures

4.110 Mitigation measures to be adopted during the extraction and restoration activities will aim to minimise any impacts of the project on surrounding sensitive receptors (primarily those associated with noise, dust and traffic). These measures are discussed in the following chapters of this EIAR:

- Chapter 6 - Land, Soil and Geology
- Chapter 7 - Water (Hydrology and Hydrogeology)
- Chapter 8 - Air Quality
- Chapter 10 - Noise and Vibration
- Chapter 11 - Material Assets
- Chapter 13 - Landscape
- Chapter 14 - Traffic

4.111 As will be seen from a review of the relevant EIAR Chapters, these mitigation measures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Location of the mobile screening plant on the floor of the pit;
- Water will be sprayed from a tractor-drawn bowser on dry exposed surfaces and stockpiles (paved roads, unsealed haul roads and hardstand areas), as required;
- Areas of bare or exposed soils will, insofar as practicable, be kept to a minimum through the phased/ gradual topsoil stripping and extraction proposals;
- All HGV loads of fine materials leaving the site will be covered / sheeted;
- The existing wheelwash will remain in place;
- The amount of dust or fines carried onto the public road network will be further minimised by periodic maintenance of the internal paved site roads and use of a road sweeper on the adjacent section of regional road, if required;

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- The potential for noise generation will be reduced by relocating the mobile processing plant within the pit floor of the extraction extension area as the extraction operation progresses as this will limit the need to transport extracted materials across the site;
- All machinery used will be CE certified for compliance with EU noise control limits;
- The machinery will be regularly maintained, with regular checking of any muffler systems and servicing or replacing as required. It will also ensure any loose or damaged panels or covers that suppress noise are fixed or replaced immediately;
- If there are further noise-reducing modifications available for any machinery, they will be fitted wherever practical (e.g. rubber-decked screens, rubber chute linings etc.);
- Haul road grades will be kept as low as possible (</= 1:10) to reduce engine / brake noise from heavy vehicles.

4.112 In addition, to the proposed mitigation measures, it is anticipated that impacts associated with the proposed works could be controlled by further conditions attached to any planning permission granted by the Planning Authority in due course.

Residual Impact Assessment

4.113 With implementation of the management & mitigation measures detailed above there will be no residual impacts on population and human health at any stage of the development.

Monitoring

4.114 As outlined in Chapters 7, 8 and 10 of this EIAR, monitoring in relation to the proposed development will be undertaken in respect of groundwater, air, and noise. Refer to the relevant Chapters of this EIAR for full details of the monitoring programmes that will be implemented at the application site for the duration of the works.

4.115 Environmental monitoring locations shall be reviewed and revised where and as/when necessary. Environmental monitoring results will be submitted to Wexford County Council in accordance with their requirements, for review and record purposes.

References

- Central Statistics Office (2022) Census Data 2016 and 2022.
- Environmental Protection Agency (2022) ‘Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports’.
- Wexford County Council - Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028.
- Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).
- Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended).

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Figures

Figure 4-1: Receptors Location Map

Figure 4-2: Electoral Division Map

N

1 km

750 m

500 m

250 m

0 500 1,000 m

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Notes:

1. OSM Standard © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA

LEGEND:

- Planning Application Area (c. 23.2 Hectares)
- Residential Receptor
- Planning Permission Granted But Not Yet Built

Rev	Amendments	Date	By	Chk	Auth
1		01/2026	ND	TP	TP

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Project: Continued Use & Extension of Existing Sand & Gravel Pit at Ballymacoonoge, Glentire & Ballynamonabeg Tds., Co. Wexford

Drawing Title: Receptors Location Map

Scale	SLR Project No.
1:12,000 @A3	501.065860.00001

Designed	Drawn	Checked	Authorised
ND	ND	TP	TP
Date: 01/2026	Date: 01/2026	Date: 01/2026	Date: 01/2026

Drawing Number: **FIGURE 4-1** Rev.: 1

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Notes:

1. OSM Standard © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA
2. Electoral Divisions © Tailte Éireann 2024

LEGEND:

- Planning Application Area (c. 23.2 Hectares)
- Electoral Division

Rev	Amendments	Date	By	Chk	Auth
1		01/2026	ND	TP	TP

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Scale	SLR Project No.
1:12,000 @A3	501.065860.00001

Designed	Drawn	Checked	Authorised
ND	ND	TP	TP
Date: 01/2026	Date: 01/2026	Date: 01/2026	Date: 01/2026

Drawing Number: **FIGURE 4-2** Rev. **1**

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