Chapter 01
Introduction

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared in respect of the BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road scheme (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development). The extent of the Proposed Development (i.e., the extent of the road and street network where physical and / or transport management interventions are proposed) is presented in Figure 1-1.

The Proposed Development will support integrated sustainable transport usage through infrastructure improvements and transport management measures for active travel (both walking and cycling), and the provision of enhanced bus priority measures for existing (both public and private) and all future services users, in a manner which is consistent with, and will help attain, sustainable transport policies and objectives.

This Chapter introduces the Proposed Development, summarises the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, describes the methodology used to prepare this EIAR and outlines the non-statutory consultation activities that have been carried out to date.

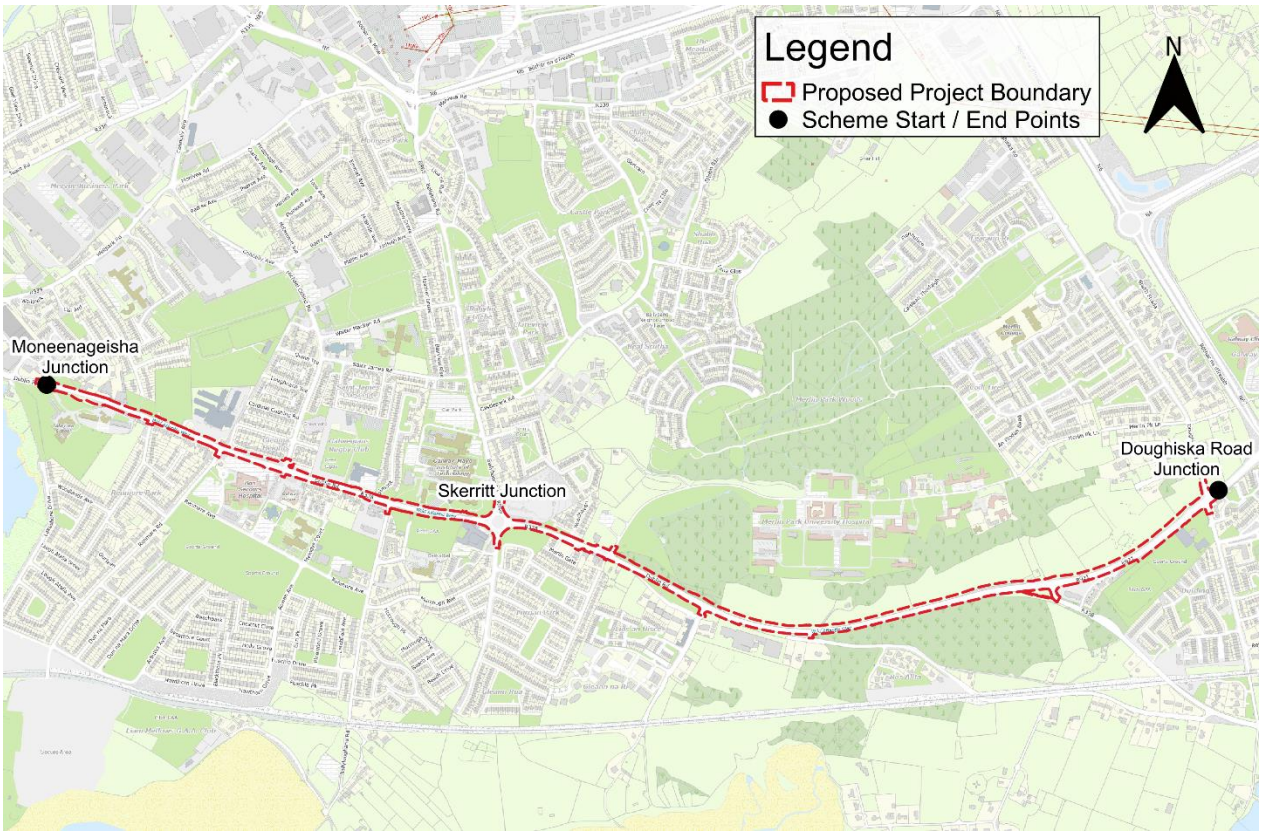

Figure 1-1 BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road Proposed Development

The Proposed Development is located in Galway City and extends along the Dublin Road from the east of Moneenageisha Junction to Doughiska Road Junction. The total distance is approximately 3.9km and includes junctions at Renmore Park, Renmore Road, Michael Collins Road, Ballyloughane Road, Skerritt Junction, Merlin Park Hospital, Lios an Uisce (Galway Crystal), Rosshill Road, Coast Road and Doughiska Road.

The Proposed Development is comprised of two sections, namely:

- Section 1: East of Moneenageisha Junction to Skerritt Junction; and

- Section 2: Skerritt Junction to Doughiska Road Junction.

The Proposed Development includes an upgrade of the existing bus priority and cycle facilities. The Proposed Development includes a substantial increase in the level of bus priority provided along the corridor, including the provision of additional lengths of bus lane, resulting in improved journey time reliability. Throughout the Proposed Development bus stops will be enhanced to improve the overall journey experience for bus passengers. Cycle facilities will be substantially improved with segregated cycle tracks provided along the links and protected junctions with enhanced signalling for cyclists provided at junctions.

The Proposed Development will provide for considerable journey time reliability for existing bus services travelling into and running through the city centre while also complementing the proposed new city bus network cross-city spine routes, proposed as part of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS, 2016). The city bus network routes will be designed to coalesce along this high-quality corridor, providing high-frequency services with journey time reliability and opportunities for interchange.

The Proposed Development will ensure that public transport services can access key areas such as the retail and recreational facilities, sports grounds, hotels and Bed & Breakfasts along the route and key areas such as Atlantic Technological University (ATU), Merlin Park Hospital and Bon Secours Hospital.

In addition to the improvements to bus journey times and journey time reliability, the Proposed Development will provide significant benefits for cyclists and pedestrians. The scheme design has been developed having regard to the relevant accessibility guidance and universal design principles so as to provide access for all users. The Proposed Development will provide improved pedestrian crossing facilities along the route, with an increase in the number of signalised crossing points.

The primary objective of the Proposed Development, therefore, is the facilitation of modal shift from car dependency through the provision of walking, cycle and bus infrastructure enhancements, thereby contributing to an efficient, integrated transport system and facilitating a shift to a low carbon and climate resilient City.

A full description of the Proposed Development is provided in Chapter 4 (Proposed Development Description), which is accompanied by the Proposed Development design drawings in Volume 3 (Figures) of this EIAR, while the assessment of cumulative impacts and interactions are presented in Chapter 20 (Cumulative Impacts & Environmental Interactions) of this Volume of the EIAR.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

Galway City Council's strategic objectives for transport as outlined in the GTS, 2016 are:

- to promote and encourage sustainable transport;
- to manage the traffic in a way which maximises mobility and safe movement; and
- to maintain and develop/upgrade infrastructure.

The aim of the Proposed Development is to provide enhanced walking, cycling and bus infrastructure on this key access corridor, which will enable and deliver efficient, safe, and integrated sustainable transport movement along the route. The objectives of the Proposed Development are to:

- Enhance the capacity and potential of the public transport system by improving bus speeds, reliability, and punctuality through the provision of bus lanes and other measures to provide priority to bus movement over general traffic movements;
- Enhance the potential for cycling by providing safe infrastructure for cycling, segregated from general traffic wherever practicable;
- Support the delivery of an efficient, low carbon and climate resilient public transport service, which supports the achievement of Ireland’s emission reduction targets;

- Enable compact growth, regeneration opportunities and more effective use of land in Galway City and environs, for present and future generations, through the provision of safe and efficient sustainable transport networks;
- Improve accessibility to jobs, education, and other social and economic opportunities through the provision of improved sustainable connectivity and integration with other public transport services; and
- Ensure that the public realm is carefully considered in the design and development of the transport infrastructure and seek to enhance key urban focal points where appropriate and feasible.

The planning and design of the Proposed Development has been guided by these aims and objectives, with the need for the Proposed Development described in detail in Chapter 2 (Need for the Proposed Development) of this EIAR.

The outcomes achieved from delivering the Proposed Development will be:

- An attractive, resilient, equitable public transport network better connecting communities and improving access to work, education, and social activity (refer to Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) for further details);
- Facilitate a transport infrastructure network that prioritises walking and cycling and a mode shift to public transport resulting in better air quality and reduced carbon emissions (refer to Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport), Chapter 7 (Air Quality) and Chapter 8 (Climate) for further details); and
- Support increased economic and social potential through integrated land-use and transport planning to reduce the time burden of travel (refer to Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) and Chapter 10 (Population) for further details).

1.3 Delivery of Project

In the event of approval by An Bord Pleanála (ABP) under Section 51 of the Roads Act 1993 as amended ("Roads Act") and confirmation of the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to allow property acquisition to facilitate the delivery of the Proposed Development, it is envisaged that construction would commence during 2026, with an expected construction programme to completion of approximately 24 months.

1.4 Role of Galway City Council

Galway City Council (GCC) fully recognises that Galway currently has a traffic and transport problem, due to its reliance on the private car, which has been influenced by the existing public transport network, limited cycling facilities, a large rural hinterland and being the key gateway in and out of Connemara.

Combined with this, it has a road and street network which is ill-suited to the high traffic flows currently prevalent, contributing to increased congestion and delay which is affecting quality of life and impacting on the functionality of Galway City and its environs.

To address this, a fundamental shift is needed towards sustainable travel throughout the city, reducing the dependency on the private car and taking action to make Galway more accessible and connected, enhancing quality of life within the city for all.

In order to meet the objectives, set out in Section 1.2, Galway City Council with Galway County Council and in partnership with the National Transport Authority, developed the GTS, an Integrated Transport Strategy for Galway City & Environs. The Strategy aims to address the current and future transport requirements of the city and surrounding towns and villages.

One of the key proposals in the GTS is the BusConnects Dublin Road (i.e. the Proposed Development), a corridor linking the western and eastern suburbs of the city, connecting with the Cross-City Link Scheme – linking homes with places of work, study, retail and recreation.

The Proposed Development is being delivered by GCC and funded by the National Transport Authority.

1.5 EIAR – Process, Screening, Content and Methodology

1.5.1 Statutory Requirements

As set out in the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (DHPLG 2018) (hereafter referred to as the "2018 Guidelines"), the EIA Directive requires that public and private projects that are likely to have significant effects on the environment be made subject to an assessment prior to development consent being given.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process to be undertaken in respect of applications for specified classes of development listed in the EIA Directive before a decision in respect of development consent is made. The process involves the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) by the applicant, consultations with the public, relevant prescribed bodies and any other affected Member States, and an examination and analysis of the EIAR and other relevant information leading to a reasoned conclusion by the competent authority on the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the environment. Again, as observed in the 2018 Guidelines, the provisions of the EIA Directive are aimed at enhancing the EIA process through ensuring the completeness and quality of the EIAR submitted by the applicant and the examination undertaken by the competent authority and by providing for early and effective public participation before the development consent decision is made.

The EIA Directive requires that public and private projects listed in the Directive that are likely to have significant effects on the environment be made subject to an assessment prior to development consent being given. The requirements of the 2014 EIA Directive were transposed into Irish law with the enactment of a number of implementing legislative measures, including S.171 Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, S.I. No. 296/2018 – European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018, as amended (hereafter referred to as the 2018 EIA Regulations), with effect from 1 September 2018. Further, S.I. No. 279/2019 – European Union (Roads Act 1993) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 amended the provisions of the Roads Act 1993 and S.I. No. 119/1994 - Roads Regulations 1994, as amended.

It is pursuant to the provisions of the amended Roads Act and Roads Regulations 1994 that this EIAR has been prepared in respect of the Proposed Development. Article 5 of and Annex IV to the EIA Directive and Section 50(2) of the Roads Act specify the information to be contained in an EIAR in relation to this Proposed Development. In addition, Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Part X Environment Impact Assessment which emphasises requirements for environmental impact statement has been taken in consideration.

Accordingly, this EIAR contains all of the information prescribed by the relevant provisions of Article 5 and Annex IV to the EIA Directive, and Section 50(2) of the Roads Act.

1.5.2 Relevant Policy, Plans and Guidelines

This EIAR has been prepared in accordance with, but not limited to, the following legislation and guidance:

- The Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU as revised by Directive 2014/52/EU);
- European Commission's Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (2017);
- Roads Act 1993, (as amended);
- Roads Regulations 1994, (as amended);
- Planning and Development Act 2000 (No. 30 of 2000) (as amended) (PDA);
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001) (as amended) (PDR);
- Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2021;

- Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (hereafter referred to as the EPA Guidelines) (EPA, 2022);
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (hereafter referred to as the 2018 Guidelines) (DHPLG 2018);
- European Commission Notice (2019) Clarification of the application of Article 2(3) of the EIA Directive;
- European Commission (2012) Interpretation suggested by the Commission as regards the application of the EIA Directive to ancillary/associated works;
- Guidelines for the Assessment of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts as well as Impact Interactions (European Commission 1999);
- Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Environmental Impact Assessment (European Commission 2013);
- National Roads Authority (NRA) Environmental Impact Assessment of National Road Schemes – A Practical Guide (NRA 2008); and
- Nationally significant infrastructure projects: advice on cumulative effects assessment (The Infrastructure Planning Inspectorate UK).

Where necessary, the impact assessment chapters refer to key policy documents that are specifically relevant to their assessment.

Key policy documents that inform the examination of all environmental topic areas include:

- Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (Government of Ireland 2018a);
- Project Ireland 2040 National Development Plan 2021 – 2030 (Government of Ireland 2021);
- Climate Action Plan 2024 (Government of Ireland 2023);
- National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) (DoT 2021);
- National Sustainable Mobility Policy, Action Plan 2022 - 2025 (DoT 2022);
- Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (RSES);
- Galway Transport Strategy (2016);
- Galway City Development Plan (2023-2029); and
- Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028), including the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan.

Where necessary, the impact assessment chapters refer to legislation and guidance documents that are specifically relevant to their assessment. In addition to the applicable EIA legislation and guidance, all relevant provisions of European Union (EU) Directives and national legislation relating to the specialist areas have also been considered as part of the process and are addressed in the relevant assessment chapters.

The Proposed Development is supported by an extensive policy framework of International, European, National, Regional and Local policies, planning strategies and plans. Refer to Chapter 2 (Need for the Proposed Development) for further information and to the Planning Report which is included in the planning application.

1.5.3 EIA Process

EIA is a systematic and an iterative process that examines the potential environmental impacts of a Proposed Development and establishes appropriate design and mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or offset impacts. The assessment of potential environmental impacts arising from the Proposed Development has been conducted in accordance with best practice as detailed in the chapters and associated appendices for each environmental topic.

The EIA process followed for the assessment of the Proposed Development can be summarised as follows:

- **Screening** – Determining whether or not an EIA is required for the Proposed Development. This included a review of the Proposed Development and understanding the legislative requirement for EIA under the Roads Act;
- **Consideration of the EIAR's Scope** – For the preparation of this EIAR the EIA team considered the characteristics of the Proposed Development and the likely relevant issues which could arise due to its construction and operation;
- **Baseline Data Collection** – Establishment of a robust baseline of the existing environment in the study area of the Proposed Development, including a review of existing available information and undertaking any surveys identified as required during the Scoping phase;
- **Impact Assessment** – Assessment of the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Development with and without mitigation measures, and an iterative process of informing design to avoid impacts;
- **Mitigation** – Formulation of mitigation measures to ameliorate the potential impacts of the Proposed Development which cannot be avoided through design;
- **Consultation** – With Statutory Authorities, Stakeholders, the public and other bodies;
- **Decision** – The competent authority, in this case ABP, will decide if the Proposed Development can be authorised, and if so, may specify conditions that must be adhered to;
- **Announcement** – The public is informed of the decision;
- **Right of review** – The public concerned have the right to seek a legal review of the decision, subject to meeting the necessary procedural requirements; and
- **Monitoring** – When required, monitoring of the effectiveness of implemented mitigation measures during construction and operation.

1.5.4 Screening and the Legislative Requirement for EIA

Screening is a stage in the EIA process, whereby a decision is made on whether or not an EIA is required.

Section 50 of the Roads Act is concerned with the requirement for EIA of road development. Section 50(1)(a) states that:

'*A road development that is proposed that comprises any of the following shall be subject to an environmental impact assessment*:

(i) The construction of a motorway;
(ii) The construction of a busway;
(iii) The construction of a service area;
(iv) Any prescribed type of road development consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road.'

Under Article 8 of S.I. No. 119/1994 – the Road Regulations 1994 (as amended) the prescribed type of road development for the purposes of Section 50(1)(a)(iv) of the Roads Act are:

'(a) The construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500 metres or more in length in an urban area'; and

'(b) The construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length.'

The Proposed Development meets the threshold as set out in Article 8 of the Road Regulations 1994 (as amended), in that it includes the realignment and/or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such realigned and / or widened road is more than 500 metres in length and is in an urban area.

1.5.5 Consideration of the EIAR Scope

As referenced above, the scope of the EIAR was developed having regard to the characteristics of the Proposed Development and all likely significant environmental effects which could arise due to its construction and operation.

In addition, during the development of the EIAR, prescribed bodies and relevant non-statutory consultees (refer to Section 1.7 of this Chapter) were consulted to apprise them of the proposed approach to the EIAR and they were afforded the opportunity to provide comments on the approach.

Comments received during this pre-application consultation process with prescribed bodies and non-statutory bodies were reviewed and considered in the preparation of this EIAR.

Moreover, as a result of the non-statutory public consultation in respect of the Proposed Development, submissions and observations received from the public were considered and, where appropriate, issues raised in those submissions and observations are included in the EIAR.

1.5.6 Content of EIAR

As set out in the European Commission's Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (2017):

"the EIAR is the document prepared by the developer that presents the output of the assessment. It contains information regarding:

- *the Project;*
- *the likely significant effect of the Project;*
- *the Baseline scenario;*
- *the proposed Alternatives;*
- *the features and Measures to mitigate adverse significant effects;*
- *as well as a Non-Technical Summary; and*
- *any additional information specified in Annex IV of the EIA Directive."*

The EPA EIA Guidelines (EPA, 2022) set out a similar description of the EIAR, based on the EIAR definition in the revised EIA Directive 2014/52/EU.

Article 5 of and Annex IV to the EIA Directive, as well as and Section 50(2) of the Roads Act specify the information to be contained in an EIAR in relation to this Proposed Development.

For clarity on the information to be contained in the EIAR, the relevant sections of the legislation are reproduced in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 Annex IV of the EIA Directive

Annex IV – Information Referred to in Article 5 (1) (Information for the EIAR)
Description of the project, including in particular: ▪ *A description of the location of the project;* ▪ *A description of the physical characteristics of the whole project, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases;* ▪ *A description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the project (in particular any production process), for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quantity of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil, and biodiversity) used; and* ▪ *An estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation) and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases*.

Annex IV – Information Referred to in Article 5 (1) (Information for the EIAR)
2. *A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of project design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.*
3. A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the project as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.
4. A description of the factors specified in Article 3(1) likely to be significantly affected by the project: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for example land take), soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydro morphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.
5. A description of the likely significant effects of the project on the environment resulting from, inter alia: ▪ *The construction and existence of the project, including, where relevant, demolition works;* ▪ *The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources;* ▪ *The emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste;* ▪ *The risks to human health, cultural heritage, or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters);* ▪ *The cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources;* ▪ *The impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change;* ▪ *The technologies and the substances used. The description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in Article 3(1) should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term, and long-term, permanent, and temporary, positive, and negative effects of the project.* *This description should take into account the environmental protection objectives established at Union or Member State level which are relevant to the project.*
6. A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.
7. A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.
8. A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the project on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the project to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments pursuant to Union legislation such as Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council or Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom or relevant assessments carried out pursuant to national legislation may be used for this purpose provided that the requirements of this Directive are met. Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies.
9. A non-technical summary of the information provided under points 1 to 8
10. A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments included in the report'.

Section 50(2)(b) Roads Act specifies the information to be contained in an EIAR shown in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2 Section 50(2)(b) Roads Act

Section 50(2) of the Roads Act 1993
50(2) An environmental impact statement shall contain the following specified information: *(a) a description of the proposed road development, comprising information about the site, design, size, physical characteristics, and land-use requirements of the development;* *(b) the data necessary to identify and assess the main effects which the proposed road development is likely to have on the environment;* *(c) a description of the likely significant effects, direct and indirect, on the environment of the proposed road development, explained by reference to its possible impact on* *(i) human beings, fauna, and flora,* *(ii) soil, water, air, climate, and the landscape,* *(iii) the inter-action between any of the matters referred to in subparagraphs (i) and (ii),* *(iv) material assets, and* *(v) the cultural heritage.* *(d) where significant adverse effects are identified with respect to any of the matters referred to in paragraph (c), a description of the measures envisaged in order to avoid, reduce and, if possible, remedy those effects;* *(e) where appropriate, an outline of the main alternatives (if any) studied and an indication of the main reasons for choosing the proposed alternative, taking into account the environmental effects; and* *(f) a summary in non-technical language.*

1.5.7 EIAR Structure

In order to ensure accessibility and to cover each of the topics included in Table 1-1, this EIAR presents the data in line with the outline structure provided in Table 1-3. The EIAR for the Proposed Development is presented in four volumes as follows:

- **Volume 1 – Non-Technical Summary**: This summarises the findings of the EIAR in a clear, accessible format that uses non-technical language and supporting graphics. The non-technical summary describes the Proposed Development, alternatives considered, existing environment, impacts and mitigation measures and relevant aspects of the EIAR in a manner that can be easily understood by the general public.
- **Volume 2 – Main Report**: This includes introductory chapters in addition to 'assessment' chapters for each environmental topic in accordance with Article IV of the EIA Directive. The introductory chapters provide the relevant project context whilst the assessment chapters provide a description of the relevant environmental topics and likely significant impacts with summary chapters provided thereafter.
- **Volume 3 – Figures**: This provides the drawings, maps, and graphics (including photomontages) which support and are cross-referenced in Volume 2.
- **Volume 4 – Appendices**: This provides the technical reports that support and are cross-referenced within Volume 2. This includes other relevant drawings, modelling outputs, background reports and/or supporting documents.

Table 1-3 EIAR Structure

EIAR	Description
Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary	
NTS	Summary of the EIAR in non-technical language.
Volume 2: Main Report	
1	Introduction
2	Need for the Proposed Development

EIAR	Description
3	Consideration of Alternatives
4	Proposed Development Description
5	Construction
6	Traffic & Transport
7	Air Quality
8	Climate
9	Noise & Vibration
10	Population
11	Human Health
12	Biodiversity
13	Water
14	Land, Soils, Geology & Hydrogeology
15	Archaeological and Cultural Heritage
16	Landscape and Visual
17	Waste & Resources
18	Material Assets
19	Risk of Major Accidents and / or Disasters
20	Cumulative Impacts and Environmental Interactions
21	Summary of Mitigation & Monitoring Measures
22	Summary of Significant Residual Impacts
Volume 3: Figures	
Figures	Graphics and plans supporting the EIAR chapters, illustrating the Proposed Development and environmental information.
Volume 4: Appendices	
Appendices	Technical reference information supporting the EIAR chapters, such as calculations and detailed background data.

While the EIAR has been prepared in compliance with the EIA Directive, it has also been written to make it accessible to a wider, non-specialist audience. Where technical terminology is used, an explanation is provided in the text, and / or in the glossary of terms which is provided at the beginning of Volume 2 of the EIAR.

Generally, the structure of Chapters in Volume 2 (Main Report) of this EIAR, aligns with both the European Commission EIAR Guidance (2017) and EPA Guidelines (EPA, 2022), and includes the following headings:

- **Introduction**: Provides an overview of the aims and objectives of the specific chapter in assessing the Proposed Development and outlines the scope of the assessment;
- **Methodology**: Describes the forecasting methods and evidence used to identify and assess the significant impacts on the environment;
- **Baseline Environment**: The baseline refers to the current state of environmental characteristics. It involves the collection and analysis of information on the condition, sensitivity and significance of relevant environmental topics which are likely to be significantly impacted by the Proposed Development;

- **Predicted Impacts**: Reporting in the EIAR is structured to ensure that criteria and standards of significance, sensitivity and magnitude used as part of the assessment are identified and documented and that the level of certainty of data is recorded. An explanation is provided for the assessment criteria that have been applied within each environmental topic area, including reference to the appropriate published guidance and the results of any other relevant assessments under other EU law;
- **Mitigation and Monitoring Measures**: This section sets out measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse impacts on the environment and, where appropriate, identifies any monitoring arrangements. This section covers both the Construction and Operational Phases; and
- **Residual Impacts**: Any significant impacts that are predicted to remain after all mitigation measures have been implemented are referred to as 'Residual Impacts.' These are the remaining environmental impacts of the Proposed Development that could not be reasonably avoided.

1.5.8 Assessment Scenarios

1.5.8.1 Do Nothing Scenario

The EIAR chapters consider a 'Do Nothing' scenario (with the exception of Air Quality / Noise & Vibration / Climate which assess the Do Minimum and Do Something scenarios described below). The 'Do Nothing' scenario outlines what is likely to happen to the environment should the Proposed Development not be implemented, taking account of the continuation or change of current management regimes as well as the continuation or change of trends currently evident in the environment.

1.5.8.2 Traffic and Transport Assessment Scenarios

The impact assessments that have been carried as part of Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) use the following scenarios:

'Do Nothing' – The 'Do Nothing' scenario is the same as set out above and it represents the current baseline traffic and transport conditions of the direct and indirect study areas **without** the Proposed Development in place, as outlined in Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport). This scenario forms the reference case by which to compare the Proposed Development ('Do Something') for the qualitative assessments only.

'Do Minimum' – The 'Do Minimum' scenario (Opening Year (2028), Design Year (2043)) represents the likely traffic and transport conditions of the direct and indirect study areas including for any transportation schemes which have taken place, been approved or are planned for implementation, **without** the Proposed Development in place. This scenario forms the reference case by which to compare the Proposed Development ('Do Something') for the quantitative assessments. Further detail on the Proposed Development and demand assumptions within this scenario is included in Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport).

'Do Something' – The 'Do Something' scenario represents the likely traffic and transport conditions of the direct and indirect study areas including for any transportation schemes which have taken place, been approved or are planned for implementation, **with** the Proposed Development in place (i.e. the Do Minimum scenario with the addition of the Proposed Development).

1.5.9 Assessment Criteria

The assessments evaluate the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Development, with the likelihood, extent, magnitude, duration and significance of potential impacts described. The interactions in impacts between different environmental aspects and the potential for cumulative impacts to arise are also considered. For all environmental topics, the significance of any residual impacts remaining are assessed and presented.

The assessment criteria used generally follow the European Commission EIAR Guidance (European Commission 2017) and EPA EIAR Guidelines (EPA 2022), as reproduced in Table 1-4 unless otherwise stated and described within the relevant EIAR Chapter.

Table 1-4 Description of Effects from the EPA Guidelines (EPA 2022)

Assessment Criteria	
Quality of Effects	
It is important to inform the non-specialist reader whether the effect is positive, negative or neutral.	**Positive Effects** A change which improves the quality of the environment (for example, by increasing species diversity or improving the reproductive capacity of an ecosystem; or by removing nuisances; or improving amenities)
	Neutral Effects No effects or effects that are imperceptible, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error
	Negative / Adverse Effects A change which reduces the quality of the environment (for example, lessening species diversity or diminishing the reproductive capacity of an ecosystem; or damaging health or property or by causing a nuisance)
Significance of Effects	
'Significance' is a concept that can have different meanings for different topics – in the absence of specific definitions for the different topics the following definitions may be useful.	**Imperceptible** An effect capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences
	Not Significant An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences
	Slight Effects An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities
	Moderate Effects An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends
	Significant Effects An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity, alters a sensitive aspect of the environment
	Very Significant Effects An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment
	Profound Effects An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics
Extent and Context of Effects	
Context can affect the perception of significance. It is important to establish if the effect is unique or, perhaps, commonly or increasingly experienced	**Extent** Describe the size of the area, the number of sites, and the proportion of a population affected by an effect
	Context Describe whether the extent, durations, or frequency will conform or contrast with established (baseline) conditions (is it the biggest, longest effect ever?)

Assessment Criteria	
Probability of Effects	
Descriptions of effects should establish how likely it is that the effect will occur so that the Competent Authority can take a view of the balance of risk over advantage when making a decision.	**Likely Effects** The effects that can reasonably be expected to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented
	Unlikely Effects The effects that can reasonably be expected not to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented
Duration and Frequency of Effects	
'Duration' is a concept that can have different meanings for different topics in the absence of specific definitions for different topics the following definitions may be useful.	**Momentary Effects** Effects lasting from seconds to minutes
	Brief Effects Effects lasting less than a day
	Temporary Effects Effects lasting less than a year
	Short-term Effects Effects lasting one to seven years
	Medium-term Effects Effects lasting seven to fifteen years
	Long-term Effects Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years
	Permanent Effects Effects lasting over sixty years
	Reversible Effects Effects that can be undone, for example through remediation or restoration
	Frequency of Effects Describe how often the effect will occur. (once, rarely, occasionally, frequently, constantly – or hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, annually)

1.5.10 Details of Competent Experts

This EIAR for the Proposed Development has been prepared by a team of competent experts and the main author(s) and details of the expertise of each competent expert for each environmental topic are provided in Table 1-5.

Table 1-5 Details of the Responsible Competent Experts

Topic	Responsible Competent Experts – Competency Details
Chapter 1 (Introduction & Environmental Impact Assessment Process)	**John Nolan BEng, MSc, CEng MIEI FConsEI, MCIHT, Barry Transportation** John is an Associate Director with Barry Transportation Ireland. He has over 26 years' experience in the planning, design and construction of large-scale transport infrastructure projects and leading multi-disciplinary teams both in Ireland and overseas. He has a Master's Degree in Highway Engineering (UCG). John is a Chartered Engineer, Member of Engineers of Ireland and Member of the Institute of Highways and Transportation. John is the Project Manager for the BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road project and approved Chapter 1 of the EIAR. **Mary Jo Costello BE MSc CEng FIEI, MIEnvSc, Barry Transportation** Mary Jo is an Associate with Barry Transportation. She holds an honours degree in Civil Engineering from DIT Bolton Street, a MSc in Environmental Sustainability from UCD, Post Graduate Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law from Kings Inns and is a Fellow Chartered Engineer with the Institute of Engineers of Ireland. She is also a member of the Institution of Environmental Sciences. Mary Jo has over 26 years' relevant experience in planning, design, construction and environmental co-ordination and management of large-scale transport infrastructure projects. She is responsible for the co-ordination and preparation of EIARs for a number of major infrastructure schemes. Mary Jo was the lead EIAR co-ordinator for the Proposed Development and supervised the preparation of Chapter 1 of the EIAR.
Chapter 2 (Need for the Proposed Development)	**John Nolan** **Mary Jo Costello** See above
Chapter 3 (Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives)	**John Nolan** **Mary Jo Costello** See above
Chapter 4 (Proposed Development Description)	**John Nolan** **Mary Jo Costello** See above
Chapter 5 (Construction)	**John Nolan** See above
Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport)	**Peter Gannon MSc, SYSTRA** Peter is a Principal Consultant with SYSTRA and has 10 years' experience as a Transport Planning Consultant in both Ireland and the UK. He holds a Master's Degree in Transport Planning and Engineering from Edinburgh Napier University. Peter has experience in a wide range of transport assessment and appraisal projects in Ireland, including the N11 Bus Priority Scheme, the Galway City Ring Road appraisal, Thurles

Topic	Responsible Competent Experts – Competency Details
	Local Transport Plan, Water Rock UEA Traffic & Transport Assessment, the N3 Virginia Bypass appraisal and in the UK, he was worked on projects including the Birmingham Westside Metro Extension. **Paul Hussey BEng, SYSTRA** Paul is an Associate with SYSTRA and has over 13 years' experience as a Transport Planning Consultant. He holds an honours degree in Civil Engineering from University College Dublin. Paul has 13 years' relevant experience in a wide range of transportation planning, policy and engineering projects. Through his work Paul has gained a broad knowledge of transport scheme appraisal in Ireland and has successfully delivered a number of challenging transport assessment and appraisal projects such as the MetroLink Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA), the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) Transport Strategy, Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS), DART Expansion Options Assessment and the Metro North Route Alignment Options Appraisal. Paul also managed and was heavily involved in the transport elements of the Dublin BusConnects scheme.
Chapter 7 (Air Quality) Chapter 8 (Climate)	**Jovanna Arndt BSc (Hons) PhD AMIAQM AMIEnvSc, AWN Consulting** Jovanna is a Senior Environmental Consultant with AWN Consulting. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Environmental Science (2010) and a Ph.D. in Atmospheric Chemistry from University College Cork (2016) and is a member of the Institute of Air Quality Management. Jovanna has specialised in air quality for over 10 years, 7 of which have been spent preparing Air Quality Impact Assessments for UK-based infrastructural developments such as HS2 and numerous Highways England road schemes, assessing impacts from traffic management schemes such as the Liverpool and Newcastle/Gateshead Clean Air Zones, and preparing Environmental Impact Assessment Report air quality and climate chapters for a variety of Ireland-based developments such as BusConnects Dublin, Codling Wind Park and Art Ennis Data Centre.
Chapter 9 (Noise & Vibration)	**Jennifer Harmon BSc MIOA, AWN Consulting** Jennifer is Associate (Acoustics) with AWN Consulting. She holds a BSc in Environmental Science, a Diploma in Acoustics and Noise Control and is a full member of the Institute of Acoustics (IOA). She has worked as a consultant since 2000, specialising in acoustics since 2001, and possesses extensive experience in the field of environmental noise and vibration impact assessment, noise control engineering, building and room acoustics. Jennifer has prepared noise and vibration impact assessments for a wide range of transport projects across Ireland, including new road schemes, road realignment and upgrade projects as well as light and heavy rail projects as landside air-noise. Her experience in road traffic noise impact assessment includes extensive baseline studies, detailed transport noise models, noise mitigation design, construction impact assessments and expert witness for planning hearings.
Chapter 10 (Population)	**Craig Bullock PhD, MSc, Dip (EIA), Optimize** Craig is an economist who has been working in the area of environmental policy for 30 years. He has a PhD in Environmental Economics (2004) and Diploma in Environmental Impact Assessment (2000). He has been working on environmental impact assessments for over 20 years, during which time he has contributed the Population (or socio-economic) impact chapters on over 50 projects, including public transport, road and infrastructure developments. He has also provided evidence in 12 oral hearings in this time. He is the Managing Director of Optimize and is also a senior research fellow in the School of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy at UCD.
Chapter 11 (Human Health)	**Dr. Martin Hogan, EHA Occupation Health Hygiene Consultants, CHI**

Topic	Responsible Competent Experts – Competency Details
	Dr. Martin is a medical doctor, registered with the Irish Medical Council as a Specialist in Occupational Medicine since 1997. He has 20 years' experience in assessing Human Health impacts of proposed projects and has contributed to many Environmental Impact Statements. He has given evidence in over 20 Oral Hearings including transport infrastructure such as road, rail and airport development, as well as waste management including landfills and incinerators. His specialist interests include Occupational Medicine in the Pharmaceutical and Chemical industry and Environmental Medicine. He lectures in Toxicology in University College Cork. He is a past National Speciality Director of Occupational Medicine in Ireland and a past Dean of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. He is the President of the Organising Committee for ICOH 2018 and a member of the Board of ICOH (International Commission on Occupational Health).
Chapter 12 (Biodiversity)	**Jason Guile BSc (Principal Ecologist), APEM** Jason is a Principal ecologist with APEM Ireland and has over 10 years' experience in ecological assessment and holds a BSc in Marine Biology/Oceanography from the University of Wales, Bangor and a HND in Coastal Conservation with Marine Biology from Blackpool and Fylde College. Jason has a wide range of experience in the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, Appropriate Assessment Screening reports and Natura Impact Statements. Jason was the lead ecologist on a range of projects in the UK, including large scale infrastructural schemes. Since moving to Ireland, he has been lead ecologist / author (EIAR, EcIA, AA Screening reports and NIS's) for a number of projects including historic landfill remediation works, urban planning applications and commercial regeneration sites. **Amy Adwan BSc (Senior Ecologist), APEM** Amy is a Senior ecologist with APEM Ireland and has 7 years' experience in the ecological sector in Ireland. She holds a BSc in Environmental Science from the University of Limerick. Amy is a qualified ecologist experienced in a wide range of ecological survey techniques and methodology including bats, mammals, freshwater and habitats. She has an extensive knowledge of environmental law with reference to Ireland as well as the EU and the Habitats Directive. Her expertise is focussed on compiling Appropriate Assessment reporting, including Screening for Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Statements, as well as reviews of same, in relation to relevant CJEU rulings and European Commission Guidance. She also undertakes Ecological Impact Assessments (EcIA), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) reporting.
Chapter 13 (Water)	**Robert Fitzgerald, BE, CEng, MIEI, Barry Transportation** Robert is a Civil Engineer who is Associate with Barry Transportation. He obtained his BEng from University College Galway in 2004 and has 18 years' experience as an Engineering Consultant. Robert has extensive experience in the planning and construction phases of mayor infrastructure projects, specialising in the hydrological, flooding and drainage elements. He has carried out Hydrological Impact Assessments and Detailed Designs of the Hydrological and Hydraulic aspects of a number of major road schemes including the M17/M18 Tuam to Gort PPP Scheme, and the N22 Macroom Bypass. **John Halpin, BEng (Hons) HDip MIEI, Barry Transportation** John is a drainage design engineer with Barry Transportation and has over 13 years of experience in the field of civil and environmental engineering, environmental impact assessment and flood risk assessment. He has experience in the preparation and coordination of hydrological EIAR chapter. John has co-authored water chapter of the BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road project.

Topic	Responsible Competent Experts – Competency Details
Chapter 14 (Land, Soils, Geology & Hydrogeology)	**Deirdre O'Hara, BSc MSc HDip, PM CEng MIEI PGeo EurGeol, Barry Transportation** Deirdre is an Associate Director and Geotechnical Team Lead at Barry Transportation with over 27 years' experience in geotechnics from project inception to post construction stage. She has a Bachelor of Science honours degree from University College Galway and a Master's Degree in Environmental and Geo-Resource Engineering. Deirdre is a Professional Geologist (PGeo) and a Member of the European Federation of Geologists (EurGeol). She has prepared numerous Land, Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology Impact Assessments for large civil projects including roads, railways, bridges, water and wastewater treatment plants.
Chapter 15 (Archaeological Cultural Heritage and Architectural Heritage)	**Martin McGonigle BA MSc, John Cronin & Associates** Martin graduated with a B.A. in Heritage Studies from G.M.I.T in 2001, followed by an MSc in Maritime Archaeology at the University of Ulster, Coleraine in 2002. Mr McGonigle is a Senior Archaeologist with John Cronin & Associates (JC&A) and has been a full-time professional archaeologist since 2002, a Licensed Archaeologist in RoI since 2008 & NI since 2009 and is a full member of Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland (MIAI). Since joining JC&A in 2008 Mr McGonigle has worked as Senior Archaeologist on numerous archaeological schemes and heritage projects, including cultural heritage assessments for environmental impact assessments, archaeological works on large infrastructure projects, etc. Mr McGonigle has also published nationally and internationally on a wide range of cultural heritage and archaeological subjects. In 2021 Mr McGonigle graduated with an MSc in Applied Landscape Archaeology from the University of Oxford, passing with distinction. **Camilla Brännström MA, John Cronin & Associates** Camila graduated with a Master of Arts with a major in Archaeology from the Dept. of Archaeology, Umeå University, Sweden (2000-2004). Ms Brännström has been a Licensed Archaeologist in NI since 2015 and in the RoI since 2019. Since joining JC&A in 2018, Ms Brännström has been involved with numerous archaeological excavations as well as the production of pre-development archaeological desktop assessments and EIARs for small and large scale projects throughout Ireland. Ms Brännström is a full member of Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland (MIAI). **Kate Robb MA Dip. EIA/SEA Mgmt. MIAI, John Cronin & Associates** Kate is a qualified archaeologist and an EIA heritage consultant, with over 15 years' industry experience and has been involved in the preparation and production of Cultural Heritage EIAR for a wide range of large-scale projects (including renewable projects), for both public and private developments.
Chapter 16 (Landscape (Townscape) & Visual)	**Bernadette O'Connell, BA MSc CMLI, JBA Consulting** Bernadette is a Director, Environmental Consultant and a chartered landscape architect, specialising in the project management of linear infrastructure projects in the Transportation, Power and Water sectors. She has worked in engineering consultancy for 30 years in Ireland, UK and Asia during which she has adapted her skills to suit the needs of the changing trends in infrastructure. Bernadette has assisted in the delivery of projects from Tender, Feasibility through the Statutory Process and has worked on Compliance and Implementation on site. She has provided landscape design and LVIA input for many significant infrastructure projects including N17 Knock to Collooney, Grid Link 400kV Overhead line Project, M50 Upgrade in Dublin, N22 Tralee Bypass and the Kilkenny Railway diversion. She has acted as an Expert Witness representing LVIA at 7 Oral Hearings. Bernadette specialises in the use of SuDS within the design of open spaces and has supplemented this experience with more recent training (PG Cert in Flood and Coastal Risk Management, Lancaster University) and project experience in the flood risk management sector.

Topic	Responsible Competent Experts – Competency Details
	Most recently she was the project landscape architect for the award-winning Lexicon, Library and Cultural Centre for Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council as part of the Carr, Cotter Naessens lead design team. **Maria Inês Timóteo, BLA MLA MILI, JBA Consulting** Maria is a Landscape Architect with over 8 years' experience in landscape design, LVIA, consultancy and landscape management, and a corporate member with the Irish Landscape Institute. She has worked in a wide variety of projects, including public parks, infrastructure, schools, historic landscapes, residential developments, data centres, infrastructures, and has produced Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Reports for renewable energy projects including wind farms, grid connections, solar farms, quarry extraction, recreational amenities, and strategic housing schemes. Maria was involved in award-winning projects in 2018 and 2020 with projects such as Johnstown Castle; The Green, Malahide; and Beckett Park, and is currently working on projects such as Donabate Residential Development, Coolbawn Residential Development, Galway Bus Connects design and LVIA, and Clondalkin Urban Design Strategy.
Chapter 17 (Waste & Resources)	**Martin Hogan, BSc (Hons) MSc PGD CChem FRSC FCIWM MIEI MInstD, Barry Transportation** Martin is a Divisional Director within Barry Transportation who holds a Master's Degree in Environmental Science (MSc) and Post graduate Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law. He has over 30 years' experience in construction and operational resource and waste management strategies and plans, material reuse, recycling and disposal technologies. Martin is a Fellow of the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management, a Chartered Waste Manager and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry as well as a Chartered Chemist. He has experience in leading environmental teams in preparing and delivering comprehensive EIAR waste and resource chapter for large projects. **Mary Jo Costello** See above
Chapter 18 (Material Assets)	**John Nolan** **Mary Jo Costello** See above
Chapter 19 (Risk of Major Accidents and / or Disasters)	**Martin Hogan** **Mary Jo Costello** See above
Chapter 20 (Cumulative Impacts & Environnemental Interactions)	**John Nolan** **Mary Jo Costello** See above
Chapter 21 (Summary of Mitigation & Monitoring Measures)	**John Nolan** **Mary Jo Costello**

Topic	Responsible Competent Experts – Competency Details
	See above
Chapter 22 (Summary of Significant Residual Impacts)	**John Nolan** **Mary Jo Costello** See above

1.6 Consultations

1.6.1 Consultation Objectives

Public participation has been an integral part of the iterative development of the Proposed Development from the outset to seek feedback and participation throughout its development. Galway City Council has undertaken a comprehensive consultation and engagement process with stakeholders, landowners and members of the public throughout the design progression of the Proposed Development. In fact, the consultation process for the concept of the Proposed Development commenced with its inclusion in the GTS and Galway City Development Plan, refer to Chapter 2 (Need for the Proposed Development) for further information.

The primary objective of the non-statutory public consultation process was and is to provide opportunities for members of the public and interested stakeholders to contribute to the Proposed Development planning and design and to inform the development process. Stakeholder participation in the planning and design of the Proposed Development was encouraged from an early stage through on-the-ground engagement, information campaigns, and engagement with Elected Representatives.

The early involvement of the public and stakeholders ensured the views of various groups, individuals, and stakeholders were taken into consideration throughout the development of the Proposed Development and in the preparation of this EIAR.

The non-statutory consultation process assisted in:

- The establishment of a sufficiently robust environmental baseline for the Proposed Development and its surroundings;
- The identification, early in the process, of specific concerns and issues relating to the Proposed Development so that they could be appropriately accounted for in the design and assessment scope; and
- Ensuring the appropriate involvement of the public and stakeholders in the assessment and design process.

1.6.2 Consultation Events and Stakeholder Engagement

Although non-statutory consultations have no legal status, NTA and GCC have chosen to carry out the consultation to seek views from those likely to be interested in or affected by the proposals, which can then be taken into consideration in the decision-making process and the design going forward.

The primary objective of the non-statutory public consultation process was and is to provide opportunities for members of the public and interested stakeholders to contribute to the planning and design of the Proposed Development and to inform the development process. Public participation in the planning and design of the Proposed Development was encouraged from an early stage through on-the-ground engagement and information and media campaigns.

The first Non-Statutory Public Consultation (NSPC) undertaken by GCC, and their consultant ran for a period of 12 weeks from the 8th October 2020 to 7th January 2021. This consultation was held fully online as were all meetings due to COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time. Due to changes in the Public Spending Code, revised NTA Project Approval Guidelines and proposed revised layouts along Bus Corridors (NTA Preliminary Design Guidance Booklet for BusConnects Core Bus Corridor_2021-05-05), the Strategic Assessment Report was redrafted, and the Proposed Development was subject to a revised Concept Development and Option Selection phase including a 2nd Non-Statutory Public Consultation.

As part of Phase 2 (Concept Development and Option Selection) Barry Transportation carried out the second Non-Statutory Public Consultation – Emerging Preferred Route in January 2023.

In advance of the public consultation, a briefing to elected members of Galway City Council was held on Wednesday 11th January 2023. The purpose of the briefing was to present and discuss the Emerging Preferred Option. The public consultation commenced on Friday 13th January 2023 and had a duration of four weeks. The resultant end date was 10th February 2023.

On the 11th January 2023, a registered letter was sent out to potentially affected landowners with a copy of a 24-page brochure attached. The brochure included information on the Proposed Development objectives, the option selection process, photomontages and drawings of the Emerging Preferred Route.

A brochure drop was also carried out to approximately 400 homes and businesses in close proximity to the Proposed Development. This ensured that the consultation was accessible to non-internet users and those who do not regularly follow local news.

Continuous consultation with an open public event was held in Renmore Community Centre on Monday 23rd January 2023. The Aerial Overview video was played on screen on a loop. A1 drawings showing the Emerging Preferred Route were displayed and GCC and Barry Transportation representatives were available on the day to explain the Proposed Development and answer any questions that the public had.

In addition to the above, a virtual information room was created, having had a total of 1,665 visitors, and the most popular time for visits occurred between the launch (13th January) and January 20th.

A total of 91 submissions were received from the various platforms of which 13 no. submissions were received via email, 66 no. submissions were received via the online submission form and 12. no were received through phone calls/voicemails using the dedicated phone line for the project.

The majority of feedback was positive with 86% expressing their overall support for the Proposed Development. The positive feedback concentrated on the merits of the segregation of the cyclists/pedestrians from the live traffic, and also there was a good response to the proposed junction improvements.

1.6.3 Summary of Main Issues Raised

The key issues raised during this consultation phase are summarised below:

- In total 177 separate issues were raised by the respondents. 69% of these were on the engineering aspects of the Proposed Development, 17% were in relation to safety and 14% were in relation to the environmental elements of the Proposed Development.
- Respondents raised concerns with the engineering arrangement of the Proposed Development the majority of which concerned the lane widths (15%) that are proposed and the junction/signalling arrangements (14%).
- The majority of safety concerns raised were regarding signalling phasing at junctions (5%). Respondents were also concerned with the crossing provisions for cyclists and pedestrians (3%).
- Environmental concerns raised include loss of green space and hedges (3%) and concerns for the impact to Annex 1 habitats at Merlin Park Meadows (5%).

The issues raised by respondents were further considered during the ongoing design development of the Proposed Development.

1.7 Consultation with Prescribed Bodies and Interested Parties

In addition to the extensive non-statutory public consultation on the Proposed Development, Galway City Council and the design team undertook consultation with prescribed bodies and produced an EIA Scoping Report. The report was issued to prescribed bodies and relevant non statutory consultees (refer to Table 1-6) in May 2023.

Consultations were also conducted with organisations such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), local environmental groups and relevant local authorities these are considered in the development of the relevant impact assessments chapters in Volume 2 of this EIAR.

Table 1-6 List of Prescribed Bodies and Interested Parties

Prescribed Bodies and Interested Parties	
Age Action	Galway City Fire Brigade
An Bord Pleanála	Galway City Local Enterprise Office
An Chomhairle Ealaíon (the Arts Council)	Galway Civic Trust
An Garda Síochána	Galway Commuter Coalition
An Post	Galway County Council
An Taisce	Galway Cycling Campaign
Association of Consulting Engineers	Galway Port Company
ATU Technological University	Geological Survey of Ireland
Badgerwatch Ireland	Health and Safety Authority
Bat Conservation Ireland	Health Service Executive
BirdWatch Ireland	Heritage Council
Bus Éireann	Housing Agency IBEC
CIÉ Group (Irish Rail, Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann)	Inland Fisheries Ireland
Climate Change Advisory Council	Irish Brent Goose Research Group
Coach and Tourism Council	Irish Deaf Society
Coillte	Irish Farmers Association
Commission for Regulation of Utilities	Irish Georgian Society
Construction Industry Federation	Irish Planning Institute
Cycling Ireland	Irish Rail
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Irish Raptor Study Group
Department of Education	Irish Road Haulage Association
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Irish Tourist Industry Confederation
Department of Environment, Climate and Communications	Irish Wheelchair Association
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Irish Wildlife Trust
Department of Justice	Local Authority Waters and Communities Office
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	Local Government Management Agency
Department of Rural and Community Development	National Council for the Blind Ireland
Department of the Taoiseach	National Disability Authority
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	National Museum of Ireland
Department of Transport	National Transport Authority
Development Applications Unit (DAU)	National Youth Council of Ireland
Eirgrid	Northern and Western Regional Assembly
Enterprise Ireland	Office of Public Works
Environmental Protection Agency	Rail Users Ireland
Ervia - Gas Networks Ireland	Retail Excellence Ireland
ESB	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
Fáilte Ireland	The Irish Cycling Advocacy Network
Friends of the Earth	The Irish Small and Medium Enterprise Association
Friends of the Irish Environment	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
Galway Chamber	Tree Council of Ireland
Galway Chamber	Uisce Eireann
Galway City Community Network	Waterways Ireland
Galway City Council	Young Planners Network

Where practicable, the information and advice received from the consultation process was subsequently incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development and addressed in the relevant chapters of the EIAR. Issues raised during the consultation process with the prescribed bodies and interested parties included the following:

Development Applications Unit, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage (DAU): Comments provided related to the assessment of the impacts of the Proposed Development on biodiversity and the Merlin Park Grasslands (Annex I Hay Meadow), the completion of ecological surveys (such as trees, hedgerows, bats, birds, etc.) alien invasive species, mitigation and monitoring measures and Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMP).

Geological Survey Ireland (GSI): Comments provided outlined the various databased available for consultation during the Environmental Impact assessment stage. It noted the presence of a County Geological Site located within the vicinity of the Proposed Development, namely Merlin Park Cave (GR 134492,225236). The submission also notes that the Proposed Development is underlain by a 'Regionally Important Aquifer – Karstified (conduit)' and that there are a number of karst features in the vicinity of the route including springs, swallow holes and enclosed depressions.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII): Comments included TIIs concerns regarding the impact of the Proposed Development on the national road network (and junctions with national roads). TII noted that a Traffic and Transport Assessment should be carried out (subject to meeting appropriate thresholds and criteria). The developer is required to identify haul routes proposed and assess their impact on the network to be traversed.

National Museum of Ireland (NMI): Comments noted the various databases to be consulted during the Environmental Impact Assessment and also discussed mitigation and monitoring measures.

1.8 Landowners

Since the initiation of the pre-application public consultation process in January 2023 there has been ongoing engagement with landowners, and / or anyone with an interest in potentially impacted properties or lands along the corridor of the Proposed Development, as the design development has progressed.

As set out in the Consultation section (Section 1.6), during each round of public consultation those landowners identified as being either potentially impacted or no-longer potentially impacted were written to directly to receive information on the consultation in advance of any wider publication of the proposals.

In total, 15 letters were issued between July to September 2023 to request access to properties to undertake more detailed noise or topographical surveys.

Throughout the planning process any requests for meetings, phone conversations, or other requests for information have been accommodated where possible. Many of the submissions received during consultations have been from potentially impacted owners and as with all other submissions they have been considered in the design development.

During the preliminary design process an investigation of the land registry database was undertaken to identify potentially impacted landowners. A total of 32 Registered or Reputed landowners, 5 No. Occupiers and 6 No. Lessees were identified as potentially requiring partial acquisition in order to complete the Proposed Development

Landowner meetings commenced in January 2023. Contact has been made with representatives of the majority of potentially impacted folios. There has been ongoing engagement with landowners whose properties are affected, as design development has progressed on the Proposed Development.

Over the course of the engagements, affected property owners have had the opportunity to discuss, among other things, the following aspects with Galway City Council and the Design Team:

- Overall Proposed Development proposals and potential impacts;
- Timelines for the Proposed Development design development and associated EIAR assessment;
- Procedural matters such as planning and CPO process;
- Specific details of impact of Proposed Development on landowner property including approximate extent of encroachment; and
- General information around reinstatement and accommodation works.

On the 1st July 2024 registered letters were issued to registered addresses of the properties likely to be the subject of the Proposed Development CPO process seeking to engage with them to outline the Proposed Development and CPO, to ascertain ownership details (or to confirm ownership details based on Property Registration Authority – Registry of Deeds referencing research), and to ascertain any other parties with an interest in the property / lands.

Since July 2024, a series of landowner meetings were scheduled with all identified parties who requested a meeting. Following this initial engagement, and where other parties were identified with an interest in any property/land, further registered letters were issued to these parties offering a meeting to discuss the proposed development and CPO. Follow-up conversations have been facilitated as a result of these letters on request.

1.9 References

Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) (2018). Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment

Department of Transport (DoT) (2022). The National Sustainable Mobility Policy Action Plan 2022 - 2025

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (2022). Guidelines of the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports

European Commission (1999) Guidelines for the Assessment of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts as well as Impact Interactions

European Commission (2019). Clarification of the application of Article 2(3) of the EIA Directive

European Commission (2012). Interpretation suggested by the Commission as regards the application of the EIA Directive to ancillary/associated works

European Commission (2017). Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment

European Union (2013). Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Environmental Impact Assessment

Galway City Development Plan (2023-2029)

Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028), including the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

Government of Ireland (2018a). Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework

Government of Ireland (2021). Project Ireland 2040 National Development Plan 2021 – 2030

Government of Ireland (2023). Climate Action Plan 2024

GTS (2016) Galway Transport Strategy: An integrated transport management programme for Galway City and environs

NRA (2008). Environmental Impact Assessment of National Road Schemes – A Practical Guide

Northern & Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) (2019). Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (RSES)

The Planning Inspectorate (2019). Advice Note 17: Cumulative Effects Assessment Relevant to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) (2014). Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines

Directives and Legislation

Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

Roads Act 1993, as amended.

EIA Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU.

S.I. No. 296/2018 – European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018, as amended.

S.I. No. 279/2019 – European Union (Roads Act 1993) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2019.