

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

1.1.1 Introduction

Cork County Council, in collaboration with the Office of Public Works (the funding authority for the scheme), intends to undertake engineering works along the Ballybrack Stream, Grange Stream and Tramore River with the objective of minimising the risk of flooding in the areas of Douglas and Togher in County and the City of Cork. Numerous significant flood events have occurred in the Douglas and Togher areas, necessitating the proposal to introduce flood relief works. Cork County Council is the lead authority for the purposes of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001.

The proposed Douglas Flood Relief Scheme (including Togher Culvert) will include the construction of direct flood defences and conveyance improvement measures along the Ballybrack Stream, Grange Stream and Tramore River. The direct defences proposed include flood walls and embankments with the conveyance improvements consisting of channel widening, channel deepening and the introduction of or replacement of culverts. The overall location of the proposed scheme is presented in **Figure 1.1 Site Location - Overview**. **Figures 1.2a** and **1.2b** below show key plans of the proposed flood defence works in Douglas and Togher respectively. The details of the proposed scheme are presented in the application drawings. Refer to the Proposed Scheme Drawings in **Appendix 3.1** for further details.

This chapter describes the methodology used to prepare this EIS and the consultation process that has been carried out to date. For ease of reference, the proposed Douglas Flood Relief Scheme (including Togher Culvert) is referred to as the “proposed scheme” in this chapter and throughout the EIS.

Copies of the application documents and the Environmental Impact Statement, of which this is a non-technical summary, will be available for inspection or purchase at the offices of Cork County Council, County Hall, Carrigrohane Road, Cork between the hours of 9am and 4pm from the 18th May 2017 to the 29th June 2017, at Douglas Library, Douglas Village Shopping Centre, Douglas, Co. Cork between the hours of 10am and 5:30pm on working days (Tuesday to Saturday) from the 18th May 2017 to the 29th June 2017 (inclusive of both dates) and from the offices of An Bord Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 between the hours of 9:15am and 5:30 pm on working days from the 18th May 2017 to the 29th June 2017 (inclusive of both dates).

The application documents and EIS will also be available online at the scheme website (www.douglasfrs.ie).

1.1.2 Study Area

The study area for the proposed scheme is located within the overall River Lee catchment area in County Cork. Specifically, the proposed scheme will be located within the Tramore River catchment area which is a sub catchment of the River Lee catchment area. Refer to **Figure 1.1 Site Location - Overview**.

The Tramore River rises in the southwest of Togher and flows eastwards into the Douglas River estuary, which discharges into Lough Mahon. A number of tributaries join the Tramore River, the largest of which is the Ballybrack Stream, which flows north through Douglas before joining the Tramore River in a culverted section at Douglas Village Shopping Centre. Note, the Douglas River is more commonly known as the Ballybrack Stream, and will be referred to as such in this report. The Grange Stream is a tributary of the Ballybrack Stream.

Construction works for the proposed scheme will take place in four separate areas along the Tramore River, Ballybrack Stream and Grange Stream as follows:

Area 1: Ballybrack Stream through Douglas

Area 2: Tramore River through St Patrick's Mills, Douglas

Area 3: Grange Stream (tributary of Ballybrack Stream) through Donnybrook Commercial Centre

Area 4: Tramore River through Togher

The works will take place over an approximate channel length in each area listed above as follows:

Area 1: 620m

Area 2: 80m

Area 3: 480m

Area 4: 810m

The general study area is shown in **Figure 1.1**. For some environmental disciplines (such as ecology), the study area was more extensive. For other disciplines, the study area was much smaller.

Figures 1.2a and **1.2b** show key plans of the proposed flood defence works in Douglas and Togher respectively. All areas are located south of the N40 Cork City South Ring Road. In Douglas, the northern extent of the proposed scheme is at St Patricks Mills and the southern extent is as far as the Donnybrook Commercial Centre. In Togher, the northern extent is at the Greenwood Estate, and the southern extent is at the Lehenaghmore Industrial Estate.

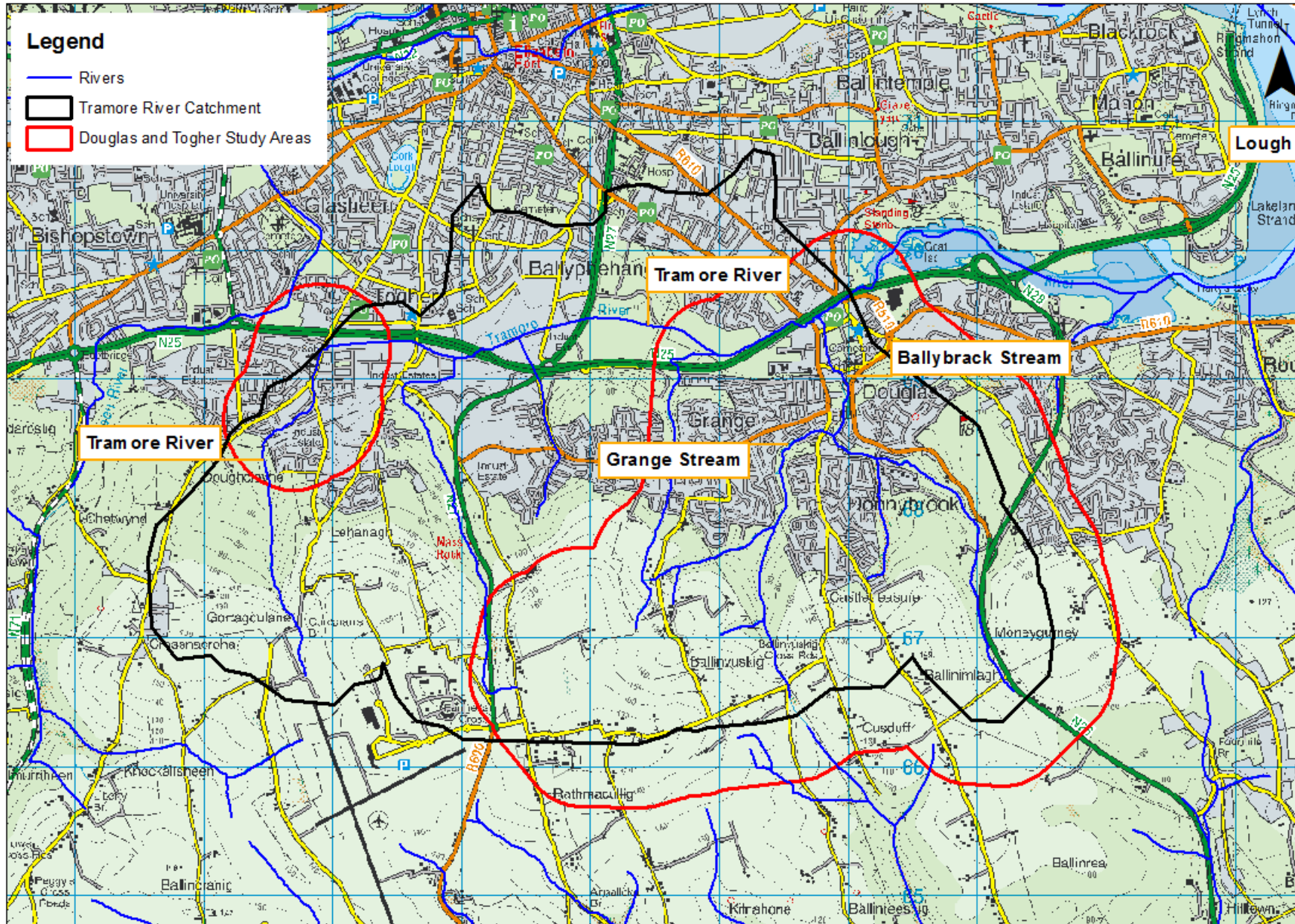


Figure 1.1: Site Location – Overview. Douglas Flood Relief Scheme (including Togher Culvert) Study Areas.

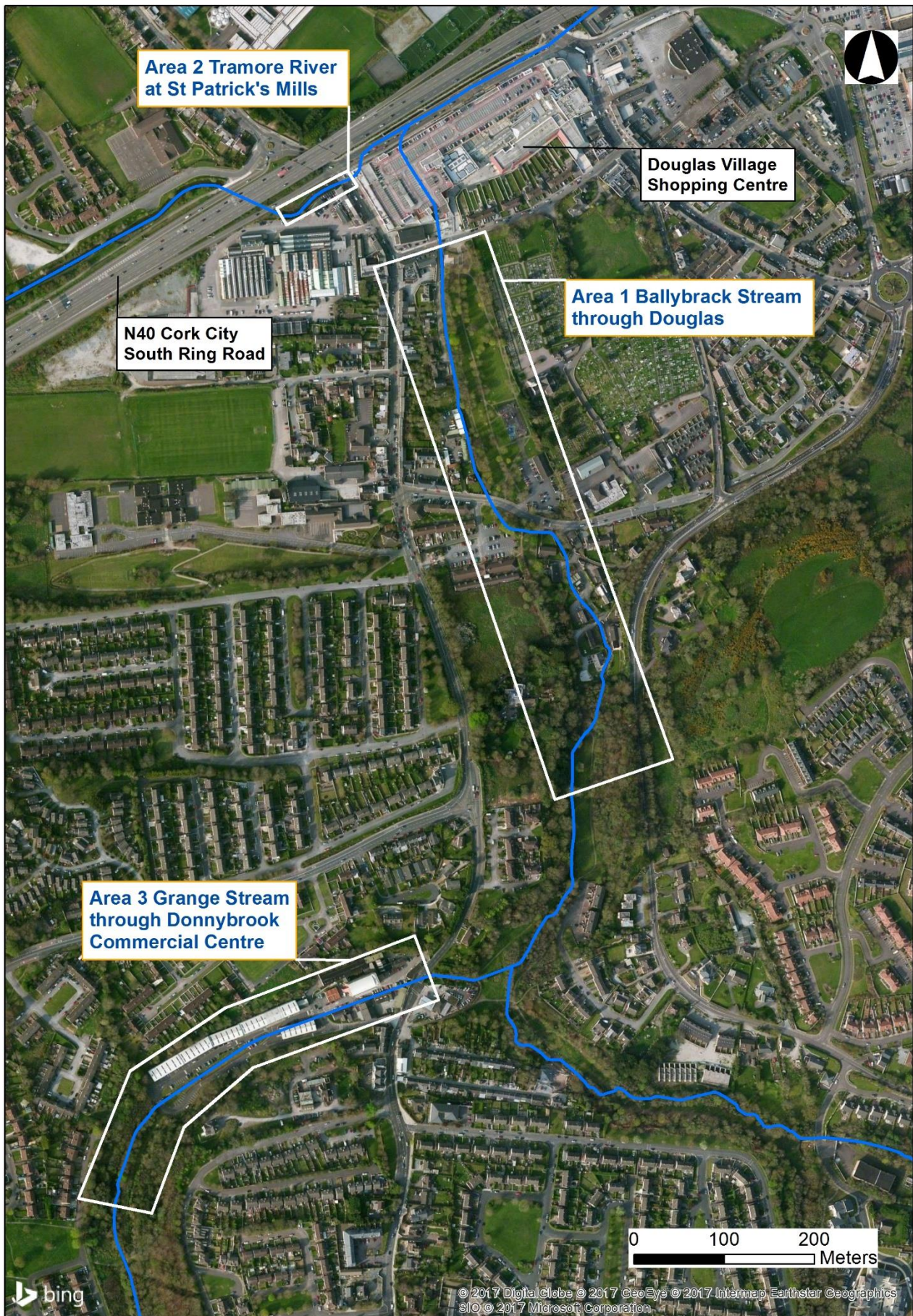


Figure 1.2a: Douglas Key Plan



Figure 1.2b: Togher Key Plan

1.2 Environmental Impact Statement Methodology

1.2.1 Purpose and Screening

The prescribed classes of development and thresholds that trigger a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended.

A review of the classes of development (requiring EIA) was carried out to determine whether the proposed development falls into any of the development classes contained therein.

The most relevant criterion is Class 10 of Part 2 of Schedule 5 which states:

10. Infrastructure projects

(f) (ii) Canalisation and flood relief works, where the immediate contributing sub-catchment of the proposed works (i.e. the difference between the contributing catchments at the upper and lower extent of the works) would exceed 1,000 hectares or where more than 20 hectares of wetland would be affected or where the length of river channel on which works are proposed would be greater than 2 kilometres.

Section 10 f (ii) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, was subsequently amended by SI 454 of 2011 Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2011.

(e) by the substitution of 100 for 1000 and 2 for 20 in 10(f)(ii),

Therefore an EIS is required if:

(f) (ii) Canalisation and flood relief works, where the immediate contributing sub-catchment of the proposed works (i.e. the difference between the contributing catchments at the upper and lower extent of the works) would exceed 100 hectares or where more than 2 hectares of wetland would be affected or where the length of river channel on which works are proposed would be greater than 2 kilometres.

In the case of the proposed Douglas Flood Relief Scheme (including Togher Culvert), the combined length of river channel on which works are proposed for Douglas and Togher is less than 2 km but the contributing sub-catchment of the proposed works exceeds 100 hectares. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the proposed scheme is therefore required to be prepared and submitted to the competent authority to allow an EIA of the scheme to be undertaken.

1.2.2 Statutory Requirements for the Contents of an EIS

This EIS has been prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions set out in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended ('the Regulations'), and the provisions of the codified 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. Annex IV to the EIA Directive and Schedule 6 to the Regulations specify the information to be contained in an EIS.

Thus, pursuant to the provisions of Article 5(1) of the EIA Directive, the information specified in Annex IV is to be provided, in as much as the information is relevant to a given stage of the consent procedure and to the specific characteristics of a particular project or type of project and of the environmental features likely to be affected, having regard to current knowledge and methods of assessment.

This EIS has been prepared in compliance with the requirements of Directive 2011/92/EU and the Regulations. Moreover, although the requirements of Directive 2014/52/EU have not yet been transposed into Irish law, this EIS has had regard to the provisions of Directive 2014/52/EU.

1.2.3 Structure of Environmental Impact Statement

This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been prepared to provide information on the likely significant effects of the project on the environment and, in particular:

1. A description of the project comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the project;
2. A description of the features of the project and/or measures envisaged in order to avoid or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment;
3. The data required to identify and assess the main effects which the project is likely to have on the environment;
4. An outline of the main alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the options chosen, taking into account the effects of the project on the environment; and
5. A non-technical summary of the information referred to in the above four points.

The EIS has been prepared on behalf of Cork County Council by environmental specialists under the supervision of Arup.

The format used in the EIS is the grouped format, in which each topic is addressed in a separate section. This is designed to allow readers to access the issues of interest to them as easily as possible. However there is overlap of some topics. For example, effects on human beings are addressed in a number of chapters including Landscape and Visual Assessment, Air Quality and Climate Assessment, and Noise and Vibration, as well as Human Beings. Issues not directly addressed in individual chapters and interactions between environmental issues are described in **Chapter 17 Potential Cumulative & Other Impacts and Interactions** of this EIS.

The EIS comprises three main sections contained within one volume as follows:

- Non-Technical Summary;
- Environmental Impact Statement (Main Text); and
- Appendices.

1.2.4 EPA Guidelines and Other Guidelines

This EIS has been prepared with due regard to the guidelines on the preparation of environmental impact statements published by the EPA. These are contained in *Advice Notes on Current Practice (in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements)* (2003), and *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements* (2002). Moreover, the EIS has been prepared having had due regard to:

- Revised Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements (Environmental Protection Agency, draft September 2015);
- Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements Draft (September 2015) Environmental Protection Agency;
- European Union (2013) Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Environmental Impact Assessment;
- European Commission (2012) Interpretation suggested by the Commission as regards the application of the EIA Directive to ancillary/associated works;
- European Commission (2006) Clarification of the application of Article 2(3) of the EIA Directive; and
- European Commission (1999) Guidelines for the Assessment of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts as well as Impact Interactions.

1.3 Difficulties Encountered during the Study

No particular difficulties were encountered during the preparation of this EIS.

1.4 Consultation

A number of Public Information Days (PID) have been held for the proposed scheme where members of the public were invited to attend and make their views and comments known to the project's design team.

Advertisements were published each time in advance of these, both on the scheme website and in local newspapers and in addition, leaflet drops to local residents and businesses were carried out. The project team used a series of posters and other visual aids, to give an overview of the scheme, the planning history, and the legislative and policy context; and to demonstrate how the scheme is of benefit to the immediate and wider communities of Douglas and Togher.

Information leaflets and consultation letters were also sent out to many stakeholders during the consultation process. The following organisations were also consulted:

- Inland Fisheries Ireland;
- Cork County Council;
- An Comhairle Ealaíon (The Arts Council);
- An Taisce;

- Fáilte Ireland;
- HSE Southern Regional Health Forum;
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII);
- Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs including National Monuments Service (NMS) and National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS); and
- The Heritage Council.

Further details on the early stage consultations can be found in the Constraints Report on the project website (www.douglasfrs.ie)

The first Public Information Day (PID) was held in Douglas Community Centre on Wednesday 26th February 2014. Members of the public were invited to attend and make their views and comments known to the Arup design team. The purpose of the PID was to present the Study Area to the general public and to outline the process involved in the preparation of the Douglas FRS. The information gathered via the PID was also used to inform the Constraints Study. The PID was attended and staffed by members of Arup's engineering and environmental teams and representatives of Cork County Council and the Office of Public Works, who were available to answer questions from the members of the public who attended, and to explain the Study Area and the flood relief scheme process, while also accepting information from the attendees.

The second PID was held in Nemo Rangers GAA Club on Wednesday 8th October 2014 and members of the public were again invited to make their views and comments known to the Arup design team. On both days, the programme for the scheme delivery was outlined, and the public was made aware of the key public consultation dates. Details of localised flooding issues were explained, as well as the emerging preferred options to address these. The project team remained available for all questions from the public for the duration of the consultation period.

A third PID was held on 4th April 2017 at Douglas Community Centre to present and explain the developed scheme and the statutory approval process to the public and affected residents.

The scheme website (www.douglasfrs.ie) is updated regularly to provide ongoing information relating to the project and its development.

On-site consultation was carried out by the design team at any opportunity which presented when visiting the catchment. Local residents were engaged in conversation to acquire any local knowledge that they might have and their experiences of flooding in the vicinity. The residents/owners of a number of properties in the area were visited to discuss their experiences of flooding on their property and to outline the preferred option which is being pursued at their respective locations.

1.5 References

Environmental Protection Agency (2003) Advice Notes on Current Practice in the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements.

Environmental Protection Agency (2002) Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements.

Revised Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements (Environmental Protection Agency, draft September 2015).

Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements Draft September 2015.

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

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