



N24-N74 Tipperary Town Road Improvement Scheme

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening
Report

October 2020

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1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

Mott MacDonald Ireland have been commissioned by Tipperary County Council (TCC) to provide consultancy services for the planning, detail design and tender action, evaluation and award of the N24-N74 Tipperary Town Road Improvement Scheme (proposed development).

The proposed development is located in Tipperary Town, Co. Tipperary and comprises sections of the N24 and N74 National Roads. It extends from the N24-R515 Junction at the intersection of Church Street, O'Brien Street and Main Street at the western extent; to approximately 1km along the N74 on the Cashel Road incorporating Fr Mathew Street at the eastern extent. The scheme has a total length of approximately 1.6km.

The site has been designated as a *High Collision Site (HCL)* based on accident data made available by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Road Safety Section. Furthermore, the existing road pavement has been identified as needing rehabilitation in the *Pavement Asset Repair and Renewal (PARR)* report prepared by Mott MacDonald on behalf of TII in 2018.

In response to these existing problems on the N24 and N74 in Tipperary Town, the scheme proposes improvements to the existing road layout to promote traffic calming and greater road safety for users, the rehabilitation of road carriageway pavement for current and future traffic volumes, and the enhancement of the existing streetscape through implementation of *Design Manual for Urban Roads Streets (DMURS)* design principles.

The location of the scheme is provided below in Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.1: Site Location Map

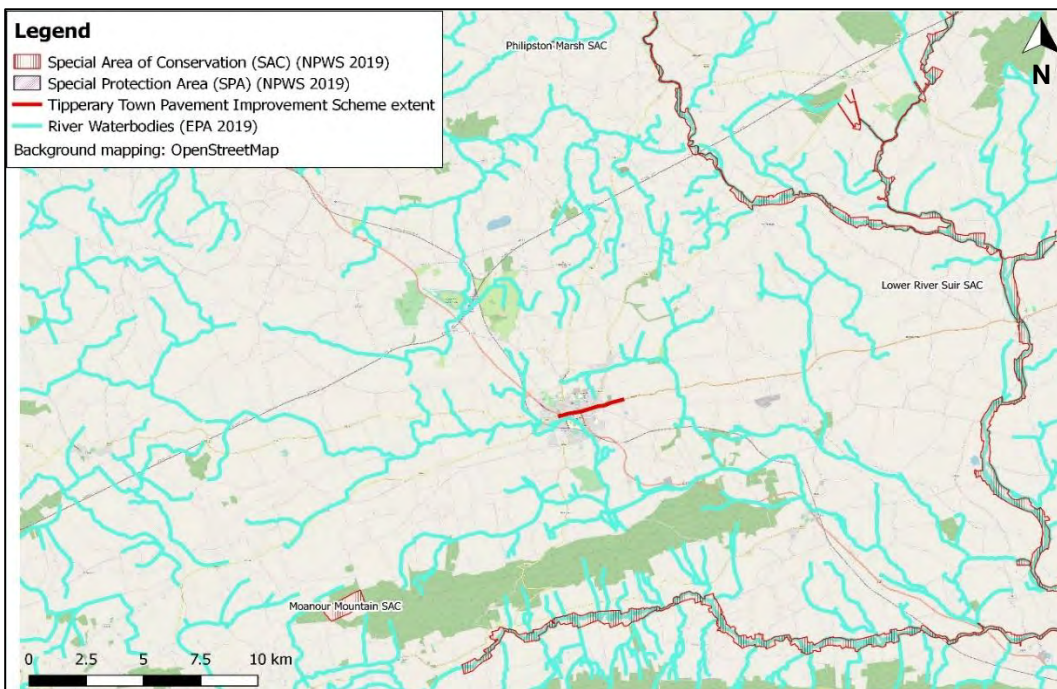


Figure 1.2: Scheme Location



Further details on the project subject to this Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening are included in Section 2.1

1.2 EIA Legislative Background

The primary objective of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (Directive 2014/52/EU) is to ensure a high level of protection of the environment and human health, through the establishment of minimum requirements for EIA, prior to development consent being awarded, of public and private developments that are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Directive 2014/52/EU provides a definition of EIA as being a process consisting of:

- The preparation of an environmental impact assessment report (EIAR);
- The carrying out of consultations required to inform the EIAR;
- The examination by the competent authority of the information presented in the EIAR and any supplementary information provided, where necessary, by the developer and relevant information received through consultations with the public, prescribed bodies and any affected Member States;
- The reasoned conclusion by the competent authority on the significant effects of the project on the environment; and
- The integration of the competent authority's reasoned conclusion into any development consent decision.

In determining the requirement for EIA, the Directive differentiates between the projects that always require EIA and those for which an EIA may be required. These projects are listed in Schedule 5 Part 1 and Part 2 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended*.

1.2.1 Schedule 5, Part 1 Projects

Schedule 5, Part 1 are projects which are considered to have significant effects on the environment and require a mandatory EIA. The proposed development is not identified as a type of development listed in Schedule 5 Part 1; therefore, a mandatory EIA is not required.

1.2.2 Schedule 5, Part 2 Projects

Schedule 5, Part 2 projects are where national authorities have to decide whether an EIA is needed. This is done by the "screening procedure" which determines the effects of projects based on either thresholds/criteria or case by case examination. The proposed development is not of a type identified within Schedule 5, Part 2 and therefore is not subject to a screening procedure.

1.3 Subthreshold EIA Screening

As the proposed development and associated works are not a project type identified in Schedule 5 Part 1 or Part 2 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001*, as amended, given the works are subthreshold there is no requirement under the EIA Directive for the proposed development to be subject to EIA.

Notwithstanding this, TCC are committed to assessing the proposed development for its potential to have significant effects on the environment. As such, Mott MacDonald, on behalf of TCC has prepared this EIA screening report to assist TCC in their consideration of whether the proposed development would have significant effects on the environment.

As noted above, the proposed development does not require a mandatory EIA nor is a project type subject to a 'screening procedure'. However, in assessing the impact of the proposed development, this report utilises the format of Schedule 7 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001*, as amended.

Schedule 7 sets out the criteria to determine whether projects listed in Part 2 of the Regulations should be subject to EIA and is the approach adopted to assessing the impact of the proposed development and is as follows:

Characteristics of Projects

The characteristics of projects must be considered, with particular regard to:

- a) *the size and design of the whole project;*
- b) *cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects;*
- c) *the nature of any associated demolition works,*
- d) *the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;*
- e) *the production of waste;*
- f) *pollution and nuisances;*
- g) *the risk of major accidents and/ or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge;*
- h) *the risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution).*

Location of Projects

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by projects must be considered, with particular regard to:

- a) the existing and approved land use;*
- b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;*
- c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:*
 - i. wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;*
 - ii. coastal zones and the marine environment;*
 - iii. mountain and forest areas;*
 - iv. nature reserves and parks;*
 - v. areas classified or protected under national legislation; Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC;*
 - vi. areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;*
 - vii. densely populated areas;*
 - viii. landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.*

Type and Characteristics of Potential Impact

The likely significant effects of projects on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out in points 1 and 2 of this Annex, with regard in particular to the impact of the project on the factors specified in Article 3(1), taking into account:

- a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);*
- b) the nature of the impact;*
- c) the transboundary nature of the impact;*
- d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;*
- e) the probability of the impact;*
- f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;*
- g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects;*
- h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.*

Section 3 of this report provides a comprehensive analysis of the proposed development having regard to the above headings.

1.3.1 Other Relevant Guidance

In addition to the requirements of the Planning Regulations, the following guidance was also considered in the preparation of this EIA Screening Report:

- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, August 2018
- Guidance on EIA Screening (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU), European Commission, 2017;
- Draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, EPA, Draft, August 2017;
- EIA, Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2003;
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2009 (Revised 2010); and
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Office of Public Works, 2009.

1.4 Statement of Competency

Mott MacDonald is a multidisciplinary consultancy with over 20 years' experience of undertaking complex and challenging EIARs and EIA Screenings for a wide range of projects. These include some of the world's largest infrastructure, engineering and development projects.

Mott MacDonald is a corporate member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and hold its EIA Quality Mark. The Quality Mark Scheme allows organisations that lead the co-ordination of statutory EIAs in the UK and Ireland to make a commitment to excellence in their EIA activities and have this commitment independently reviewed. The EIA Quality Mark is a voluntary scheme with organisations free to choose whether they are ready to operate to its seven EIA Commitments.

This EIA Screening Report was prepared by Mott MacDonald with no significant difficulties encountered in the course of preparing this EIA Screening Report.

2 Description of the Development

2.1 Project Overview

The proposed development is located in Tipperary Town, Co. Tipperary and comprises sections of the N24 and N74 National Roads. It extends from the N24-R515 Junction at the intersection of Church Street, O'Brien Street and Main Street at the western extent; to approximately 1km along the N74 on the Cashel Road incorporating Fr Mathew Street at the eastern extent. The scheme has a total length of approximately 1.6km.

The scheme is to include for the following;

- upgraded road layout with reduced carriageway width (approximately 6.5m along N24 Main Street/Bank Place and 6.0m along Fr Mathew Street/Cashel Road)
- widened footways with new paving along N24 Main Street/Bank Place
- widened footways with new paving along N74 Fr Mathew Street/Cashel Road including new footways between James Connelly Park and St. Michael's Avenue (West), and between St. Michael's Avenue (East) and St. Michael's Cemetery car park.
- upgraded car park at St. Michael's Cemetery with new pavement, defined spaces and improved pedestrian and vehicle access from N74 Cashel Road
- new road pavement
- upgraded public lighting along N74 Fr Mathew Street/Cashel Road
- localised drainage upgrades
- enhanced soft and hard landscaping including the provision of upgraded street furniture
- new town gateway signage at the existing 60kph speed limit on N74 Cashel Road

2.2 Construction Phase Description and Duration

Construction works are anticipated to commence in Q4 2021 and could take approximately 18-24 months to complete. During the construction phase, normal working hours are expected to be Monday to Friday 08.00 to 18.00 hours and Saturday 08.00 to 13.00. During certain stages of the construction phase, it is expected that some work will have to be carried out outside of normal working hours.

During the construction phase there is potential for:

- Surface water runoff;
- Generation of dust;
- Increase in noise;
- Changes to access; and
- Generation of waste.

These impacts are short term and temporary and are not considered to be significant. They can be appropriately mitigated and managed in accordance with environmental good practice e.g. Construction Industry Research and Information Association(CIRIA) Environmental Handbook for Building and Civil Engineering Projects: Part 2 Construction, appropriate traffic management and drainage design (no new outfalls will be required for drainage and any alterations to the network will maintain the existing drainage regime).

The construction phase will be to good industry standard and the design will be in accordance with industry requirements. The project will improve the road layout by renewing the pavement surface, improving pedestrian infrastructure and enhancing road safety.

2.2.1 Operational Phase

The proposed works will improve the road layout by renewing the pavement surface, improving pedestrian infrastructure and enhancing road safety. It is expected that the road will operate in the same manner following the works and that there would be no increase in traffic flows. The design life of the pavement works is 20 years and any further improvements will be subject to environmental assessment.

3 EIA Screening Assessment

3.1 Characteristics of Project

Criterion	Discussion
Will the size and design of the whole project be considered significant?	No. Whilst the proposed works will take place on 1.6km of urban carriageway on N24 Main Street/Bank Place and N74 Fr Mathew Street/Cashel Road, the proposed works will not significantly alter the current road infrastructure but will improve the existing layout for both motor traffic and vulnerable road users. In terms of size the project is not considered significant in the context of the overall development of the town and in terms of design the proposed development will upgrade what is existing and utilise design techniques to upgrade the road layout while maintaining the current built form on the impacted streets.
Will the project have a significant impact when considered in cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects?	<p>No. The Tipperary County Council planning database was searched on 16th September 2020 to determine if any nearby plans or projects within a 1km radius of the proposed development site are likely to result in cumulative impacts. Existing development within proximity of the proposed development are predominantly small in scale i.e. extensions to dwelling houses, minor retail and retention applications.</p> <p>The closest large development to the proposed development site is a mixed-use residential scheme (TCC Ref: 20237) approximately 300m north of the N74 and consists of a 10,383.41 sqm single storey childcare facility and 84 residential units. This application is currently subject to a request for Further Information.</p> <p>As such, there are no other plans or projects within the vicinity of the proposed development which would result in significant cumulative effects within the surrounding area. No other mitigations are therefore required or proposed, other than those already specified in the design of the proposal.</p>
Will the project involve the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity? Is the use of these natural resources considered significant?	No. Due to the nature of the proposed development, the improved road layout and reduction of the existing carriageway width on N24 Main Street/Bank Place and N74 Fr Mathew Street/Cashel Road, the proposed development does not involve the use of natural resources. In the context of the above, the use of natural resources is not considered significant.
Will the project produce a significant volume of wastes?	<p>No. Prior to the commencement of development, the appointed contractor to undertake the works will prepare a Construction Waste Management Plan (CWMP) in accordance with the <i>Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects</i> published by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in 2006.</p> <p>The CWMP will provide for the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes including any litter arising during the construction phase of the development. All operations at the site will therefore be managed and programmed in such a manner as to prevent/minimise waste production and maximise upper tier waste management (i.e. re-use, recycle, and recovery) where technically and economically feasible.</p>
Will the project result in significant pollution or nuisance?	<p>Yes. The proposed development by its location and design will have an impact in terms of nuisance on the local community, specifically in terms of noise. However, the proposed development will only have an impact during the construction phase and will be mitigated and managed.</p> <p>During the construction phase there is potential for: Surface water runoff; Generation of dust; Increase in noise; Changes to access; and Generation of waste.</p> <p>These impacts are short term and temporary and are not considered to be significant. They can be appropriately mitigated and managed in accordance with environmental good practice e.g. <i>CIRIA Environmental Handbook for Building and Civil Engineering Projects: Part 2 Construction</i>, appropriate traffic management and drainage design (no new outfalls will be required for drainage and any alterations to the network will maintain the existing drainage regime). The construction phase will be to good industry standard and the design will be in accordance with industry requirements.</p>

The project will improve the road layout by renewing the pavement surface, improving pedestrian infrastructure and enhancing road safety. The scheme will operate in a similar manner to existing conditions and accordingly impacts during operation are not considered to be significant.

Will the project result in a risk of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge?

No. Due to the nature and scale of the proposed development, the improved road layout and reduction of the existing carriageway width on N24 Main Street/Bank Place and N74 Fr Mathew Street/Cashel Road, there will not be a risk of major accidents or disasters. Furthermore, given the nature and scale of the project and its location there will not be any risk of major accidents or disasters caused by climate change.

Will the project result in any risks to human health (i.e. due to water contamination or air pollution)?

No. Due to the nature and scale of the proposed development, the improved road layout and reduction of the existing carriageway width on N24 Main Street/Bank Place and N74 Fr Mathew Street/Cashel Road, there will not be a risk to human health from water contamination or air pollution.

3.2 Location of Proposed Development

Criterion	Discussion
What is the existing and approved land use?	The land subject to the proposed development, the improved road layout and reduction of the existing carriageway width on N24 Main Street/Bank Place and N74 Fr Mathew Street/Cashel Road, is not subject to a land use designation as it is a public road. Therefore, the proposed development will not alter the current situation relative to land use zoning within Tipperary Town.
Has the project the potential to impact on the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground?	No. As noted above the site area is comprised of an existing public road, the proposed development consists of the improvement of the road layout and reduction of the existing carriageway width on N24 Main Street/Bank Place and N74 Fr Mathew Street/Cashel Road. Therefore, there is no potential impact occurring from the proposed development on the quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area or underground as it is located in an 'urban setting'.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths?	No. Due to the nature of the proposed development, the improvement of the road layout and reduction of the existing carriageway width on N24 Main Street/Bank Place and N74 Fr Mathew Street/Cashel Road, the proposal will not have an impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment. In particular the proposed development site is not located close to wetlands, riparian areas or river mouths.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to coastal zones and the marine environment?	No. The project has no potential to impact on these features of the natural environment having regard to its location and the nature of the proposed works. The proposed development site is not located close to coastal zones and the marine environment.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to mountain and forest areas?	No. The project has no potential to impact on these features of the natural environment having regard to its location and the nature of the proposed works. The proposed development is not located close to mountain and forest areas.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to areas classified or protected under national legislation; Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC?	No. The closest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is the Lower River Suir SAC (002137) which is approximately 5km to the south of the proposed development site. The closest Special Protection Area (SPA) is the Slievefeilim to Silvermines Mountains SPA (004165) which is approximately 18.5km to the north of the site. A Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been prepared for the project (Document Ref: 229100430-MMD-0300-02-RP-E-0002) which investigated the potential for the proposed development to have significant effects on a European Site(s) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The Screening for Appropriate Assessment concluded that there is no potential for impacts on European Sites due to lack of any source-pathway-receptor links to the Project. There is therefore no potential for significant effects on any European Sites or their qualifying features, either alone or in combination with any other Plans or Projects.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered	No. Due to the nature of the proposed development, the improvement of the road layout and reduction of the existing carriageway width on N24 Main Street/Bank Place and N74 Fr Mathew Street/Cashel Road, the proposal will not have an impact on areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation. The closest potential area which is failing to meet the environmental quality standards of the EU legislation is the River Ara which is approximately 135m from the proposed development site but is not affected by the proposed development.

that there is such a failure?	No. Whilst the proposed development is located within the centre of Tipperary Town which is a densely populated area in the context of the proposed development site. There is no impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment in this context given the proposed development is an upgrade to an existing road network and will not have any long-term impacts on the surrounding densely populated area of Tipperary Town.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to densely populated areas?	No. Whilst the proposed development is located within the centre of Tipperary Town which is a densely populated area in the context of the proposed development site. There is no impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment in this context given the proposed development is an upgrade to an existing road network and will not have any long-term impacts on the surrounding densely populated area of Tipperary Town.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance?	No. Whilst part of the proposed development site is within the Tipperary Town Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and there are a number of protected structures within the site environs, the proposed development will not impact on these designations. In terms of Archaeology, part of the proposed development site is within a Zone of Archaeological Potential (ZAP), the proposed development is to take place entirely on made ground. The Cultural Heritage Assessment Report accompanying this Part 8 application proposes mitigation impacts during construction involving archaeological monitoring, by a suitably qualified licenced archaeologist, of excavations within the ZAP and ACA of Tipperary Town. It is proposed that the proposed drainage works on O'Brien Street, although located outside the ZAP of the town, will be surveyed using geophysics, followed by targeted archaeological testing, in advance of the works.

3.3 Type and Characteristics of Potential Impact

Criteria	Discussion
Outline the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact. (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The proposed development is approximately 1.6km in length and is located entirely within the existing road and pavement area. The proposed development is within the centre of Tipperary Town and will have an impact on nearby human receptors during the construction phase only in terms of disruption to traffic however access to retail within the town centre will be provided throughout the construction phase. The construction works are expected to be temporary and completed within 18-24 months with no impacts during the operational phase of the development.
Outline the nature of the impact.	<p>During the construction phase there is potential for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Surface water runoff; ● Generation of dust; ● Increase in noise; ● Changes to access; and ● Generation of waste. <p>These impacts are short term and temporary and are not considered to be significant. They can be appropriately mitigated and managed in accordance with environmental good practice e.g. <i>CIRIA Environmental Handbook for Building and Civil Engineering Projects: Part 2 Construction</i>, appropriate traffic management and drainage design (no new outfalls will be required for drainage and any alterations to the network will maintain the existing drainage regime). The construction phase will be to good industry standard and the design will be in accordance with industry requirements.</p> <p>The project will improve the road layout by renewing the pavement surface, improving pedestrian infrastructure and enhancing road safety. The scheme will operate in a similar manner to existing conditions and accordingly impacts during operation are not considered to be significant.</p>
Outline the transboundary nature of the impact.	There will not be a transboundary impact as a result of the proposed development.
Outline the intensity and complexity of the impact.	The proposed development is not considered to be complex and will use standard construction techniques. As noted above, all impacts arising during construction can be readily mitigated through construction phase environmental best practice.
Outline the probability of the impact	There is a high probability of an impact during construction phase, however this can be appropriately mitigated and managed in accordance with environmental good practice e.g. <i>CIRIA Environmental Handbook for Building and Civil Engineering Projects: Part 2 Construction</i> , appropriate traffic management and drainage design (no new outfalls will be required for drainage and any alterations to the network will maintain the existing drainage regime). The construction phase will be to good industry standard and the design will be in accordance with industry requirements.
Outline the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.	<p>The proposed development is relatively large in nature and will be ongoing for an approximate total of 18-24 months from initial construction phase to completion. During the construction phase, normal working hours are expected to be Monday to Friday 08:00 to 18:00 (inclusive), and Saturday 08:00 to 14:00 (inclusive) and not at all on Sundays and public holidays. Deviation from these times will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the planning authority.</p> <p>As noted above, potential impacts can be appropriately mitigated and managed in accordance with environmental good practice e.g. <i>CIRIA Environmental Handbook for Building and Civil Engineering Projects: Part 2 Construction</i>, appropriate traffic management and drainage design (no new outfalls will be required for drainage and any alterations to the network will maintain the existing drainage regime). The construction phase will be to good industry standard and the design will be in accordance with industry requirements.</p>
Outline the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects.	As noted above there is a single large-scale mixed-use residential project (TCC Ref: 20237) which is currently the subject of a Further Information request. This site is not impacted directly by the proposed development and will not have a significant cumulative impact on the surrounding area.
Outline the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.	The design of the project has been optimised to ensure that environmental impacts are minimised as much as possible. Short term, temporary construction impacts will be managed through good environmental site practice and no further mitigation measures are considered necessary.

4 Conclusions

As the proposed development and associated works are not a type of project identified in Schedule 5 Part 1 or Part 2 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001*, as amended, there is no automatic requirement under the EIA Directive for it to be subject to EIA.

Notwithstanding this an EIA Screening was carried out to assist the competent authority in carrying out EIA Screening and concludes that impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed development are not considered to be significant in the context of Schedule 7 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001*, as amended. This conclusion is based on the findings of the analysis provided in the preceding sections in relation to:

- Characteristics of Project;
- Location of Project; and
- Type and Characteristics of Potential Impact.

As part of the above analysis, a broad range of environmental media have been assessed including soil, hydrology, ecology, air quality and noise in combination with planning and land-use considerations in the context of construction and operational phases. No potential impacts of significance were identified during either phase of the proposed development's lifetime.

