

# Quinn's Cross to Raheen Roundabout Cycle Scheme, Raheen, Co. Limerick



## Screening for Environmental Impact Assessment

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## SUMMARY

This report presents a Screening for Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) of a proposed cycle scheme along an existing road corridor in the Raheen/Dooradoyle area of Limerick. The proposed development is located on the R510 between Quinn's Cross and Raheen Roundabout. The proposal comprises reducing the current width of the existing road carriageway and the construction of off-road cycle tracks along the route, with raised toucan crossings and entrances along the road where required.

The report has assessed the potential impact of the proposed development on the environment. The proposed development does not fall under any category within Schedule 5 (10) of the Planning and Development Regulations (2001) for Mandatory EIAR. The EIA Screening Assessment has determined that a sub-threshold EIAR is not required for the proposed Quinn's Cross to Raheen roundabout cycle scheme. Based on the criteria listed in Annex III of the Directive 2014/52/EU, the proposed development is not considered to have a significant adverse affect on the environment due to the scale and nature of the project and the location of the proposed development. The characteristics and sensitivities of the site and receiving environment are not considered vulnerable to significant adverse effects from the proposed project. Although, no EIAR (mandatory or sub-threshold) was found to be required some mitigation for local minor impacts is nonetheless required.

The location of the proposed development is considered suitable for the proposed cycle scheme. The proposed development is located in a built-up residential area at the south-east of Limerick City. High traffic volumes and a lack of cycle facilities on the road mean that it is currently unsafe for cycling. The proposed cycle scheme is considered to have an overall positive impact by facilitating and promoting cycling as a mode of transport in the area. Due to current high disturbance levels and the general urbanised nature of the environment at this site it is not considered to be of any significant ecological importance or sensitivity. There are no protected sites in the immediate vicinity and no watercourses on the site that would be vulnerable or connect to any sensitive areas. The nearest Nature 2000 site is the Lower River Shannon SAC, which is c. 1.4km north of the proposed development. A Screening for Appropriate Assessment has also been undertaken (Ecofact, 2021) which found that there is no potential for significant impacts affecting the Lower River Shannon SAC or any Natura 2000 sites to arise from the proposed development.

Some construction phase impacts are likely to occur during the proposed development. These are expected to be minor impacts, typical of construction projects of this nature and not assessed as being significant. It was noted that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) or outline CEMP has not been prepared for the proposed development at this stage which is considered necessary. However, the impacts identified are nonetheless considered to be mostly 'temporary' and 'slight'. The identified impacts relate mainly to waste generation, air pollution and contaminated run-off and noise and vibration disturbance that will be temporary in duration during the construction period. Slight, temporary adverse effects to traffic flow may also occur during construction but such is expected to improve in the operational phase.

Some vegetation and tree removal will be required to facilitate the proposed cycle tracks. It is noted that one tree proposed to be removed was considered to have some potential for bat roosting due to the presence of significant crevices. However, due to the existing disturbance and habitat fragmentation in the vicinity it was concluded that it is unlikely for the tree to be of importance to bats in the unfavorable setting. Overall, due to the urban setting of the proposed development, there is no particularly valuable or sensitive habitat or wildlife expected to be present in the



immediate vicinity of the works. Any impacts on the natural environment and ecological features / habitats / biodiversity are not envisaged as being more than 'slight' in significance.

In conclusion the negative impacts likely to arise are much localised and temporary nuisance impacts having a slight effect, and are not in the vicinity of particularly vulnerable environmental sensitivities. The identified potential adverse impacts are not assessed as significant. As per Directive 2014/52/EU "*The screening procedure should ensure that an environmental impact assessment is only required for projects likely to have significant effects on the environment*". Overall, the proposed development is likely to have a positive long-term / permanent impact in the locality by improving the road safety and infrastructure. The proposed development is not expected to have significant impacts on the environment. It is concluded that the proposed Quinn's Cross to Raheen Roundabout Cycle Scheme does not require a sub-threshold EIAR. However, it is highlighted although the potential impacts are not 'significant', and therefore do not trigger an EIAR (either mandatory or sub-threshold), it is acknowledged that some mitigation will be required to minimise the slight adverse impacts on the local scale.

It is noted that a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) or Outline CEMP has not been prepared for the proposed development at this stage which will be necessary to manage the nuisance construction impacts identified (contamination of surface run-off and dust and noise pollution). A traffic management plan or strategy will also be required to reduce potential traffic congestion in the vicinity of the proposed works. Although it is acknowledged that the proposed development site is not of significant importance in terms of wildlife or ecology, a biodiversity assessment of the site has not been undertaken and should be carried out to consider potential impacts on the local biodiversity as some vegetation removal is required. Subsequently some precautionary mitigation may be required, for example implementing best-practice procedures following the NRA (2006) *Guidelines for the Treatment of Bats during Construction of National Road Schemes* for tree removal works. This would inform optimal lighting and landscaping designs also, which should be drawn up and implemented for the proposed project to help minimise adverse impacts relating to vegetation / habitat loss / disturbance and potentially enhance the boundaries of the proposed scheme for wildlife.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents a Screening for Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) of a proposed cycle scheme on the R510 between Quinn's Cross and Raheen Roundabout in Co. Limerick. The current document has been revisited and amended based on minor project design changes. The purpose of the report is to determine if Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for the proposed development as set out in the mandatory and discretionary provisions of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2019 (Unofficial Consolidation) (annotated) 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019. The requirement for a 'sub-threshold' development to be subject to EIA is determined by the likelihood that the development would result in *significant* environmental effects which may arise due to the location of the development or the characteristics of the development. The EIA screening exercise outlined below has examined the project with reference to the relevant thresholds and criteria.

The 'Screening stage' ascertains whether the project's effects on the environment are expected to be significant, i.e. the project is 'Screened' to determine whether an EIA is necessary. Projects listed in Annex I of the Directive are automatically subjected to an EIA because their environmental effects are presumed to be significant. Projects listed in Annex II of the Directive require a determination to be made about their likely significant environmental effects. The Member State's Competent Authority make that determination through either a (i) case-by-case examination or (ii) set thresholds or criteria.

The purpose of Screening is to determine whether or not an EIA is required for a particular project listed in Annex II of the EIA Directive. Projects listed in Annex II will hereafter be referred to as 'Annex II Projects'. Screening has to implement the Directive's overall aim, i.e. to determine if a project listed in Annex II is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, therefore, be made subject to a requirement for Development Consent and an assessment, with regards to its effects on the environment. At the same time, Screening should ensure that an EIA is carried out only for those Projects for which it is thought that a significant impact on the environment is possible, thereby ensuring a more efficient use of both public and private resources. Hence, Screening has to strike the right balance between the above two objectives.

This report meets the requirements of Directive 2014/52/EU and has been prepared with regard to the relevant guidelines from the European Commission, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and EPA. This report has been prepared to allow the Competent Authority (CA) to prepare an EIAR Screening Conclusion Statement.

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposed cycle scheme is located Gouldavoher in the Raheen/Dooradoyle area. The Raheen/Dooradoyle area is a large residential area in the southwest suburbs of Limerick City. There are also a number of commercial facilities in the area including Raheen Business Park and Courtfield and Racefield Shopping Centres. There are educational facilities at St. Nessian's National School on the R510 and St. Paul's National School on St. Nessian's Road.


The proposed development site comprises the road corridor along the existing R510 regional road between Quinn's Cross and Raheen Roundabout, approximately 1.1km in length. The proposed section of the R510 is currently considered to be unsafe for cyclists and has a lack of cycle facilities. Traffic volumes at this site are high and there are multiple vehicular accesses which are designed to prioritise motorised vehicles along the proposed stretch of the road. Wide carriageway approach widths, large





junction radii and wide circulating carriageway are resulting high vehicular speeds and vulnerable road user movements.



— Raheen Cycle Tracks Site Boundary	Date: 2.2.2021	Drawn by: Amy Butler Checked by: William O'Connor
	Location of Proposed Raheen Cycle Tracks Project in Limerick, Co. Limerick	 Environmental Consultants

**Figure 1** Location of Proposed Cycle Scheme in Raheen, Co. Limerick.



### 3. EIA SCREENING METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Legislation

This EIAR screening report has been prepared to meet the requirements of EU Directive 2014/52/EU and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2019 (Unofficial Consolidation) (annotated) 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019. The requirements for Screening are contained in Article 4 of the EIA Directive, Annex IIA, and Annex III to the Directive. The relevant provisions of Article 4 are cited below.

#### **Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU**

##### *Article 4(2)*

*[...] for projects listed in Annex II, Member States shall determine whether the project shall be made subject to an assessment in accordance with Articles 5 to 10. Member States shall make that determination through:*

- (a) a case-by-case examination; or*
- (b) thresholds or criteria set by the Member State.*

*Member States may decide to apply both procedures referred to in points (a) and (b).*

##### *Article 4(3)*

*Where a case-by-case examination is carried out or thresholds or criteria are set for the purpose of paragraph 2, the relevant criteria set out in Annex III shall be taken into account. Member States may set thresholds or criteria to determine when projects need not undergo either the determination under paragraphs 4 and 5 or an environmental impact assessment, and/or thresholds or criteria to determine when projects shall in any case be made subject to an environmental impact assessment without undergoing a determination set out under paragraphs 4 and 5.*

##### *Article 4(4)*

*Where Member States decide to require a determination for projects listed in Annex II, the developer shall provide information on the characteristics of the project and its likely significant effects on the environment. The detailed list of information to be provided is specified in Annex IIA. The developer shall take into account, where relevant, the available results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to Union legislation other than this Directive. The developer may also provide a description of any features of the project and/or measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.*

##### *Article 4(5)*

*The competent authority shall make its determination, on the basis of the information provided by the developer in accordance with paragraph 4 taking into account, where relevant, the results of preliminary verifications or assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to Union legislation other than this Directive. The determination shall be made available to the public and:*

- (a) where it is decided that an environmental impact assessment is required, state the main reasons for requiring such assessment with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Annex III; or*
- (b) where it is decided that an environmental impact assessment is not required, state the main reasons for not requiring such assessment with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Annex III, and, where proposed by the developer, state any features of the project and/or measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.*

##### *Article 4(6)*

*Member States shall ensure that the competent authority makes its determination as soon as possible and within a period of time not exceeding 90 days from the date on which the developer has submitted all the information required pursuant to paragraph 4. In exceptional cases, for instance relating to the nature, complexity, location or size of the project, the competent authority may extend that deadline to make its*



*determination; in that event, the competent authority shall inform the developer in writing of the reasons justifying the extension and of the date when its determination is expected.*

While Article 4(2) defines a common Screening approach, to be adopted by Member States, Article 4(3) requires that the competent authorities consider relevant criteria when deciding whether EIA is needed, i.e. the type/characteristics and size of Projects, the sensitivity of Project locations, as well as the potential impacts the Project may trigger. These criteria are listed in Annex III to the Directive. Where Member States require that a case-by case examination be conducted for Annex II Projects in their national legislation, then the Developer must submit the information required about the Project in accordance with the detailed requirements in Annex IIA to the Directive (see Article 4(4)). The Developer shall, when submitting the information, take the available results or data from other relevant assessments of effects on the environment, carried out pursuant to other EU legislation than the EIA Directive (e.g. SEA, see the Annex to this Guidance Document on Links with Other EU Instruments), into account. Furthermore, the Developer may enclose information about the Project's features and the measures envisaged to avoid or prevent potential significant adverse effects on the environment. The Competent Authority in Member States must issue its decision, on whether a proposed Annex II Project is to be subjected to the EIA procedure or not, based on the information provided by the Developer in accordance with the detailed requirements in Annex IIA (see Article 4(5)). The authority is also required to take any other relevant assessments, carried out on the effects on the environment pursuant to other EU legislation than the EIA Directive, into account. Finally, the Competent Authority must make its decision on whether EIA is required or not within the time period specified in Article 4(6).

The 2014 revisions to the EIA Directive introduced several amendments (e.g. to Annex III, which lays down the criteria to determine whether the Projects listed in Annex II should be subject to an EIA) and added a number of new provisions to the Screening process, including a timeframe within which the Member State's Competent Authority must reach a decision on whether an EIA is required or not. A new Annex IIA is to be used in the case of screening determination (i.e. information to be provided by the developer on projects listed in Annex II), which consists of:

**A description of the project, including in particular:**

- a. A description of the physical characteristics of the whole project and, where relevant, of demolition works;
- b. A description of the location of the project, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas, likely to be affected.

**A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the project.**

**A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, or the project on the environment resulting from:**

- a. The expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant;
- b. The use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.

The criteria of Annex III shall be taken into account, where relevant, when compiling the information in accordance with points 1 to 3.

The Directive also amends Annex III "Selection Criteria referred to in Article 4(3)". The details to be considered in the new Annex III are as follows:

**Characteristics of proposed development:**

The characteristics of project, with particular regard to:





- the size and design of the whole project,
- cumulation with other existing and / or approved development,
- the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;
- the production of waste,
- pollution and nuisances,
- the risk of major accidents and / or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate changes, in accordance with scientific knowledge
- the risk to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution).

#### **Location of proposed development:**

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

- the existing and approved land use,
- the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,
- the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:
  - (a) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;
  - (b) coastal zones and the marine environment;
  - (c) mountain and forest areas,
  - (d) nature reserves and parks,
  - (e) areas classified or protected under national legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to Directives 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC,
  - (f) 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,
  - (g) densely populated areas,
  - (h) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

#### **Type and Characteristics of potential impacts:**

The likely significant effects on the environment proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Annex, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in Article 3(1), taking into account:

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

In compliance with the requirements of 2014/52/EU, this EIAR Screening Report provides details of the information specified in Annex IIA, taking account of the criteria in Annex III.

## **3.2 Guidance**

The following guidance has been followed during the preparation of the current EIAR screening report:



- European Commission (2017a) Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on Screening.
- European Commission (2017b) Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (2018) Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment.
- EPA (2017) Draft Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR).
- European Commission (2001) Guidance on EIA Screening.

In Figure 2 the step-by-step guide of the main steps involved in EIAR screening are illustrated (from EPA, 2017).

### 3.3 Consultation

No consultation was undertaken as part of the current EIAR Screening report. This report has been prepared to allow the Competent Authority (CA) to prepare an EIAR Screening Conclusion Statement.

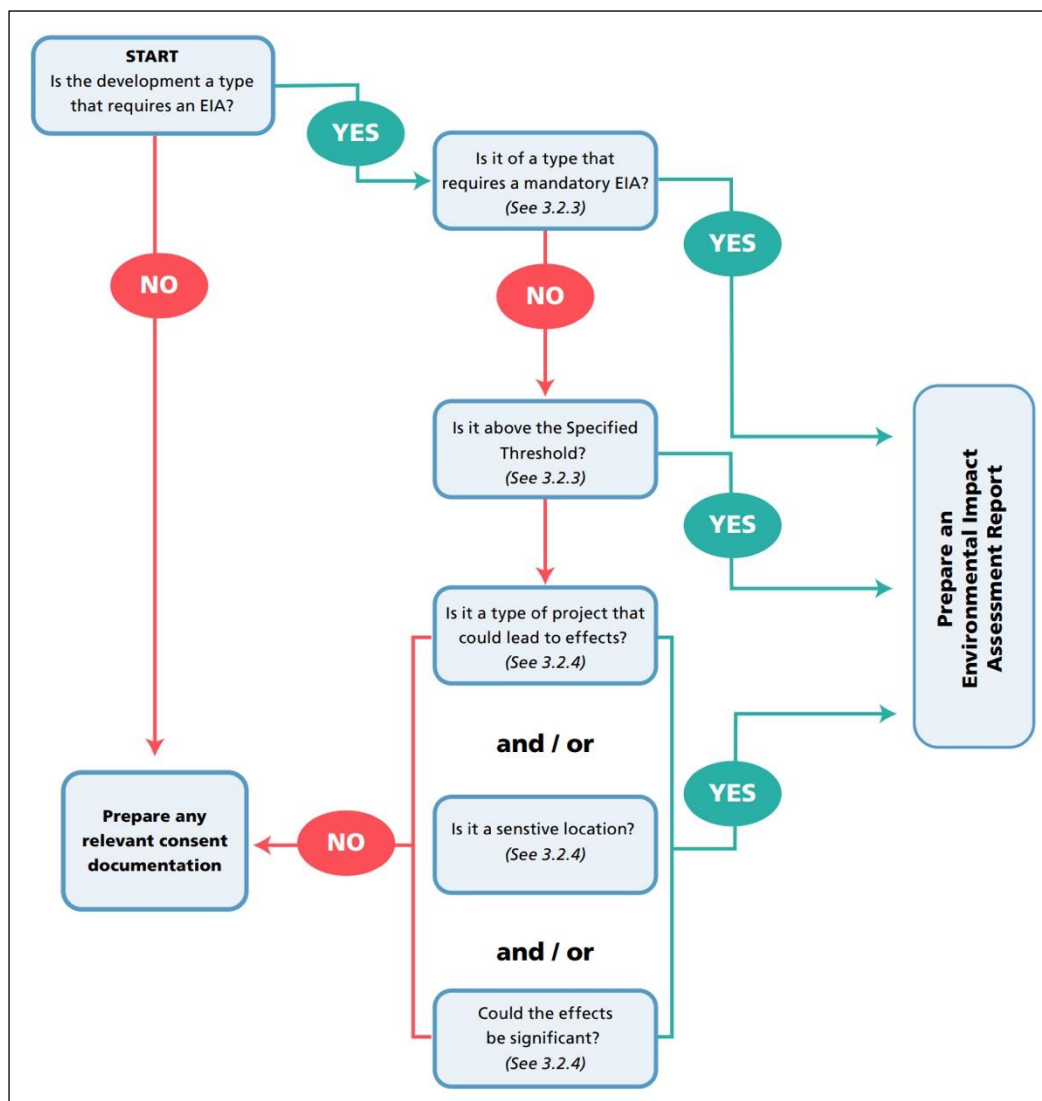


Figure 2 Step-by-step guide of the main steps involved in EIAR screening (from EPA, 2017).



## **4. PROJECT INFORMATION REQUIRED BY ANNEX II (A) OF 2014/ 52/ EU**

### **4.1 Description of Project**

#### ***4.1.1 Physical Characteristics of the Project***

The proposed project comprises the provision of cycling facilities on the R510 road between Raheen Roundabout and Quinn's Cross in the Raheen/Dooradoyle area in the south-east of Limerick City. The proposed section of road currently has high level of traffic and is unsuitable for cycling. Due to the high traffic volume on the road off-road cycle tracks will be constructed. The proposed project comprises three main parts: Raheen Roundabout, the mainline R510 and Quinn's Cross (MHL, 2019).

Raheen Roundabout is a busy junction with 4 arms, each with a single lane exit and 2 lane (flared or full) approaching the roundabout. There are uncontrolled, sub-standard pedestrian crossings on each arm. The proposed development involves improved pedestrian crossings at the roundabout arms. A 4m wide zebra crossing will be located between the roundabout and Courtfield Shopping Center on the R510. The proposed off-road cycle tracks on the R510 will be tied into the roundabout pedestrian crossings.

Currently the mainline of the R510 Road has an average carriage width of 9m with 2x2m wide footpaths at either side. The proposal is to reduce the carriage width to 6.2m with 2m wide footpaths on either side and construct off-road cycle tracks on either side of a minimum of 2m wide between the footpath and the carriageway. Sections of on-road cycle tracks will be included at junctions / entrances along the route along with raised toucan crossings and raised entry treatment and 2.5m wide dropped kerbs to the cycle tracks at several points along the route. There will also be pedestrian and cyclist links from ad Blackthorn Housing Estate to the proposed scheme.

There are existing cycle tracks on the roundabout at Quinn's Cross. The proposed cycle tracks on the R510 will tie into the existing roundabout tracks with a 2-way cyclist link to the Fr. Russell Road. It is not proposed to change the existing layout of Quinn's Cross Roundabout.

Some vegetation removal along the route is proposed to facilitate the proposed development, including trees at the north side of the road at Blackthorns Estate and at Oakfield Estate (new trees will be planted in these areas), and some trees on the south side of the road between St. Nessan's National School and Mungret Gate Housing Development too.

#### ***4.1.2 Location of the Project, with regard to Environmental Sensitivities***

Figure 3, 4 and 5 show the location of the proposed development site in relation to environmentally and / or geographically important areas in the locality.

The nearest Natura 2000 site to the proposed development is the Lower River Shannon SAC (002165) which is located c. 1.4km to the north-east (Ballynaclogh River). The nearest boundary of the River Shannon and River Fergus SPA (004077) to the proposed development is c. 1.5km north of the development site. There are no watercourses flowing through the proposed development site which would provide direct hydrological pathways to these designated sites. There should nonetheless be cognisance of storm water surface run-off and collection systems. The nearest NHAs are Loughmore Common Turlough NHA (000438), c. 600m west of Raheen Roundabout; and Inner Shannon Estuary – South Shore NHA (000435), just under 1km north of the proposed development site. There are no



archaeological constraints affecting the proposed development. The nearest historic sites LI013-131 and LI013-132 which are located in a field north of St. Nessian's School at the west side of the R510; these are both 'Redundant Records'. There is also a cluster of protected features to the west of Quinn's Cross associated with Baunacloka and Dromdarrig churches and graveyards and Skehacreggaun Holy Well. No protected structures will be affected by the development.

## **4.2 Description of Aspects of the Environment likely to be Significantly Affected**

The most likely negative effects on the environment, in the absence of appropriate mitigation measures in place, are:

- Potential accidental spillages during construction and contaminated surface run-off
- Noise and air pollution generated from the construction project
- Introduction of invasive species on site

Based on the scale and setting of the proposed works however, these impacts are not considered to be of a capacity to cause significant effects. The likely adverse impacts are expected to be minor, localised and temporary in nature.

The most significant positive effects on the environment will be the provision of improved cycling infrastructure on the busy R510 road. This will promote the use of cycling over motorised transport which will be positive for the local population and for the environment. It will also reduce the risk of accidents by improving road safety at the site.

## **4.3 Description of likely Significant Effects on the Environment**

### ***4.3.1 Expected Residues and Emissions and the Production of Waste***

Residues and emissions from the construction phase of the development will be related to construction waste and dust generation, emissions from construction plant, emissions from the laying of tarmac on the site and potential for contaminated surface run-off from the site during construction. The GSI Groundwater Vulnerability Status of the site is 'High' but due to the nature of the works excavation is expected to be relatively shallow and unlikely to intercept groundwater. The expected residues, emissions and waste are typical of such construction works and due to the relatively small scale of the project they are not considered to be of a level to result in any significant environmental impacts. They are generally considered to be 'not significant' 'short-term effects'.

No residues are likely during the operational phase of the proposed development. The proposed cycle scheme should help reduce emissions in the long-term by promoting cycling as a mode of transport.

### ***4.3.2 Use of Natural Resources, in particular Soil, Land, Water and Biodiversity***

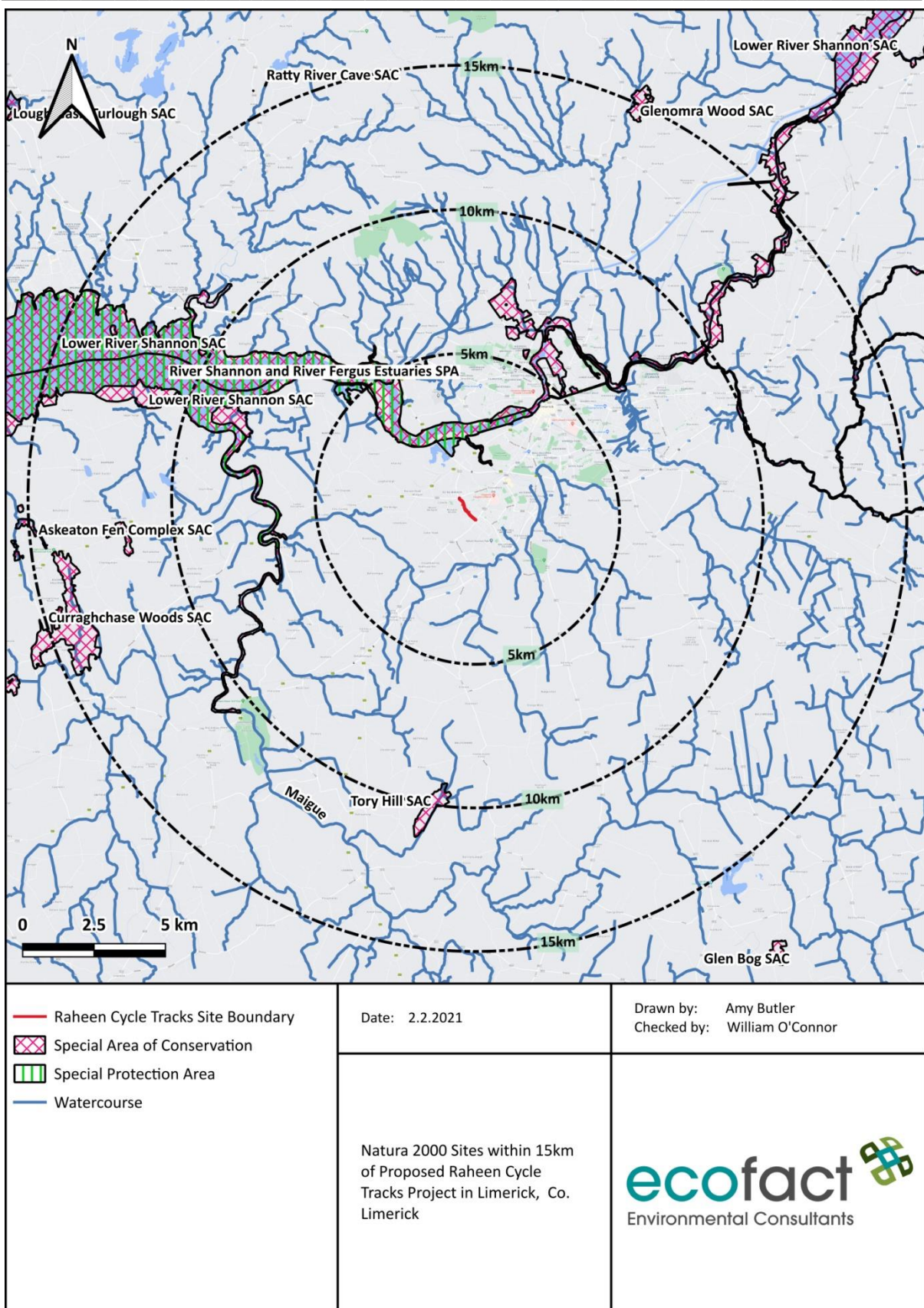
The proposed development is located along an existing busy road (R510) in a built-up, residential area. The development will be used for transport purposes and is currently not of particular value for any other specific purposes. Natural resources can be expected to be used for the construction of the development as sources of fuel and energy and track surface materials etc. No unusual or excessive use of natural resources is anticipated for the small scale project. The land cover of the proposed cycle tracks will be minor and, as mentioned, will be alongside existing urban and transport infrastructure. The site is not of particular ecological importance. It is noted that some trees will be removed for the





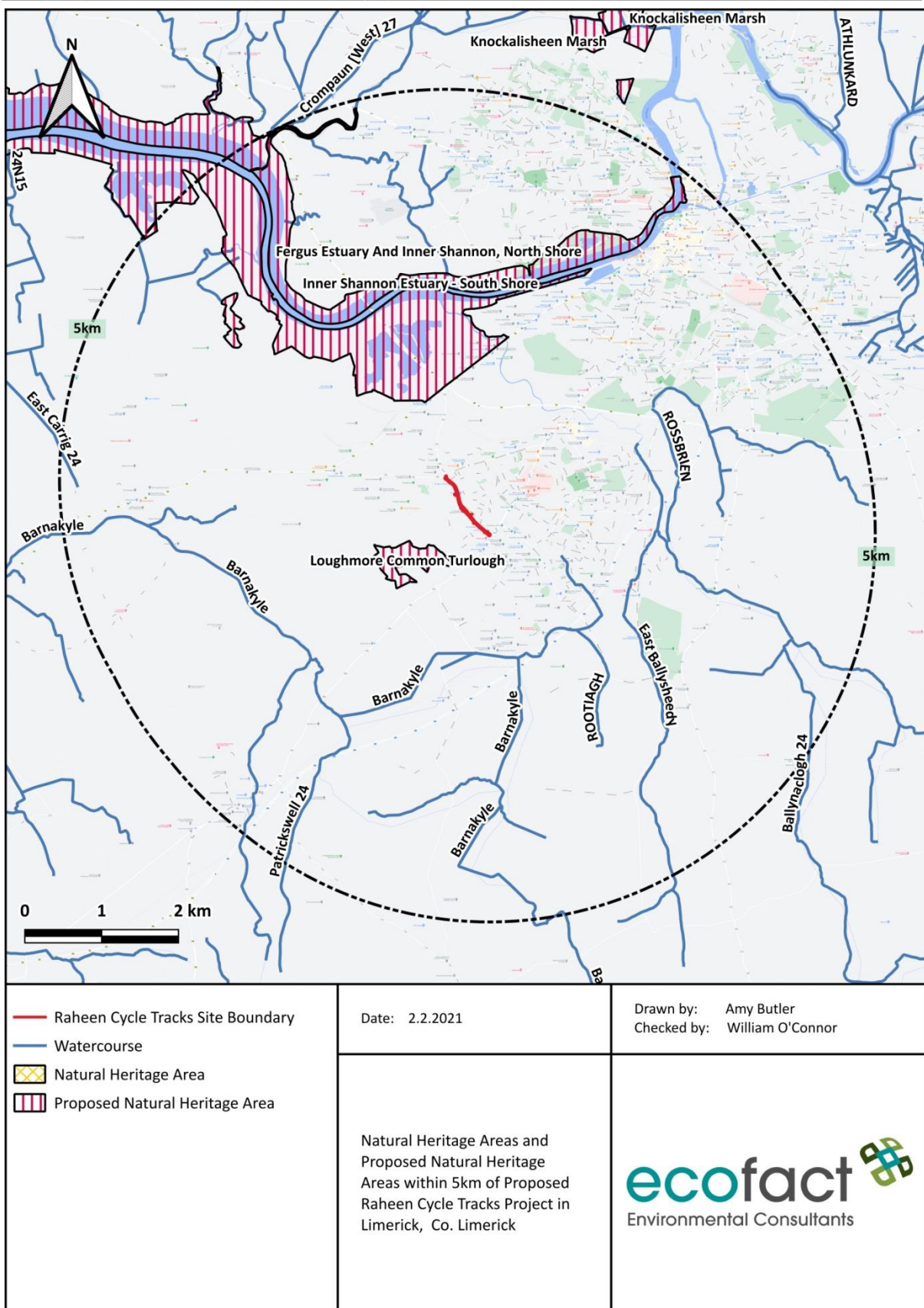
proposed development. The trees at the site are mostly immature trees, planted along the road side which are of little ecological significance given the urban setting and disturbance levels. It is noted that a dedicated tree survey of the scheme has not been conducted at this stage. There is one mature tree to be removed near the Mungret Gate entrance which is considered to have some potential for bats due to significant crevices in the tree where bats could potentially roost. However, due to the proximity to the new Mungret Gate Housing Development and limited connectivity in the surrounding environment it is unlikely that the tree is of significant importance for bat roosting at present.

Considering the limited extent of impacts and relatively low sensitivity of the environment, the potential effects on natural resources is not envisaged as being more than 'slight' in significance.

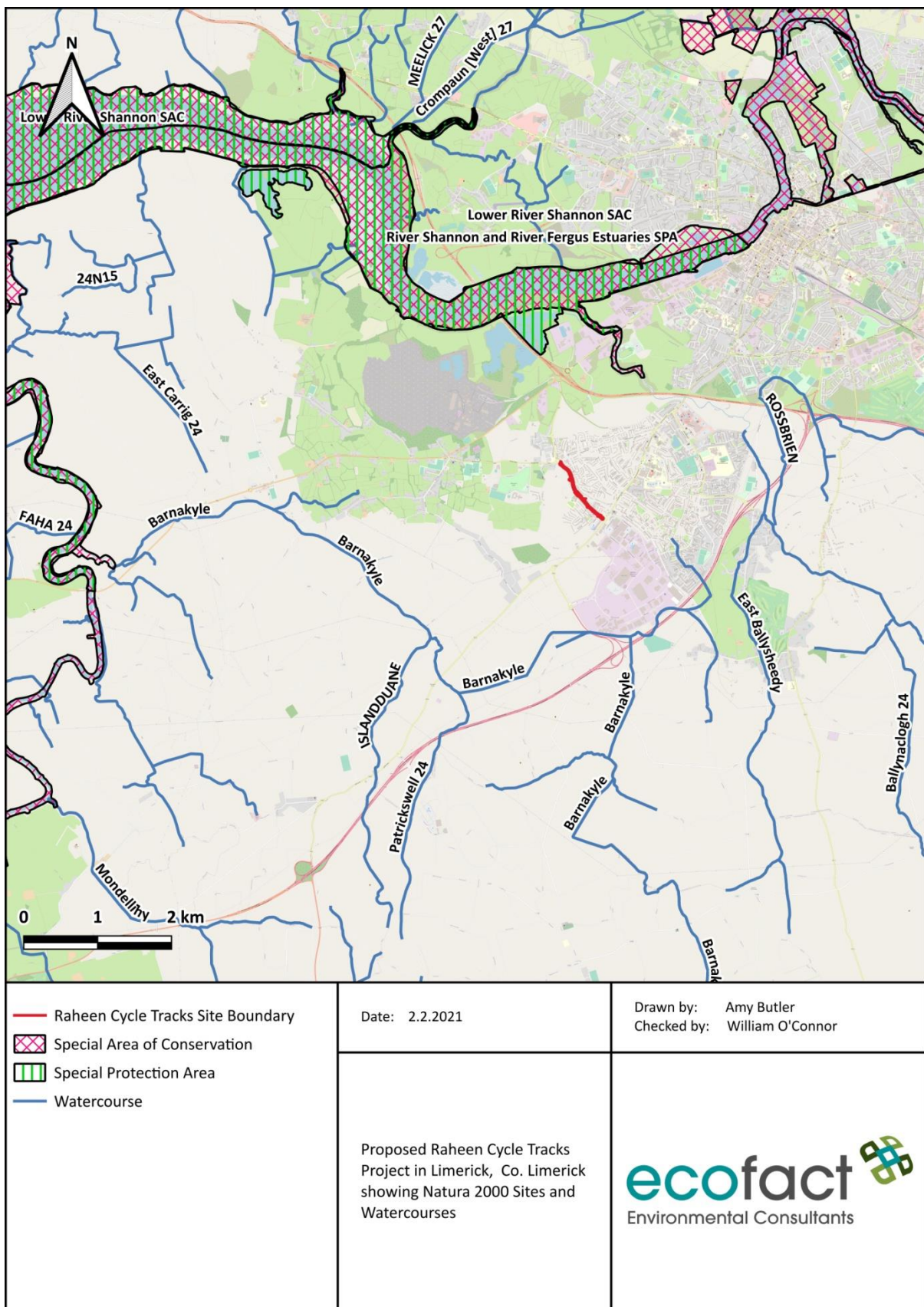


**Figure 3** Natura 2000 Sites within 15km of Proposed Cycle Scheme in Raheen, Co. Limerick.





**Figure 4** Natural Heritage Areas (None present) and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas within 5km of Proposed Cycle Scheme in Raheen, Co. Limerick.



**Figure 5** Location of Proposed Cycle Scheme in Raheen, Co. Limerick in relation to local watercourses and Natura 2000 Sites.





## 5. EIAR SCREENING

### 5.1 Screening for Mandatory EIAR

The proposed development is of a small sized development consisting of a 1.1km cycle scheme. This development is located within an urbanised area, in the suburbs of Limerick City. The site itself consists of an existing road in a busy area with current high traffic volumes along the road. The land-use in the study area is residential and commercial. There are no sensitive watercourses or Natura 2000 sites on the proposed development site.

The site has a small footprint and does not fall under any category in Schedule 5 (10) of the Planning and Development Regulations (2001) for Mandatory EIAR. Therefore, the proposed development does not trigger a requirement for mandatory EIAR.

### 5.2 Screening for sub-threshold EIAR

Development projects which are below the threshold of requiring an EIAR as set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) may still require an EIAR. Schedule 7 of the Regulations details the criteria that the planning authority must consider in determining whether a sub-threshold EIAR should be undertaken. This schedule is a direct transposition of Annex III of EU Directive 2011/92/EU. The EU Directive 2014/52/EU provides a revised Annex III and its transposition into national legislation is mandatory. Accordingly, Table 1, attached, provides screening statement of the proposed development against the Annex III criteria of 2014/52/EU. These criteria come under three broad headings; Characteristics of projects; Location of Projects; and Types and characteristics of the potential impact. According to the Directive "*The screening procedure should ensure that an environmental impact assessment is only required for projects likely to have significant effects on the environment*". A significant effect is "*an effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment*" (EPA, 2017). Based on the information provided in accordance with Annex IIA and Annex III of the 2014 Directive and having regard to the proposed project and the vulnerability or otherwise of relevant factors in the receiving environment, it is considered that a sub-threshold EIAR is not required for the proposed development, as neither the construction nor operational phase of the overall development will have a significant negative impact on the environment.



**Table 1** Screening for sub-threshold EIAR for the proposed cycle scheme development between Quinn's Cross and Raheen Roundabout in Co. Limerick.

Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts	Conclusion
<p><b>A Characteristics of proposed development</b> The characteristics of the proposed development, in particular</p>			
<p>- the size and design of the whole project</p>	<p>Small scale linear development of 1.1km cycle scheme along existing busy road in a built-up area. The project is not complex or large in scale. Potential impacts are expected to be localised and manageable and only likely to affect the immediate surrounds.</p> <p>Considered the proposed project size and design the effects are assessed as being slight and temporary.</p>	<p>During the Operational Phase the proposed development will comprise off-road cycle lanes alongside the existing R510. The operational phase of the proposed development is compatible with the surrounding environment.</p> <p>No significant impacts expected.</p>	<p>Some slight and temporary impacts during construction – No significant negative impacts.</p>
<p>- cumulation with other existing and / or proposed development</p>	<p>Very minor addition to the Mungret Gate Housing Development. There will also be another section of the cycle network improvement along Fr. Russell Road of a similar nature and small scale.</p> <p>The proposed project is considered to potentially have a not significant temporary effect in terms of cumulating impacts with other developments.</p>	<p>No adverse cumulative impacts are expected. The proposed scheme will be a positive addition to facilities in the developing residential area and cycle network.</p> <p>The development will be compatible with the surrounding infrastructure and will not have a significant adverse impact but rather a slight positive effect in the long-term / permanently.</p>	<p>Some not significant and temporary adverse impacts during construction but slight positive impact in operation – No significant negative impacts.</p>
<p>- the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity</p>	<p>Energy, including electricity and fuels, will be required during the construction phase. The construction process will require the provision of mineral aggregates for the cycle scheme surface. No out of the ordinary use of natural resources is likely during the construction process of the small scale development. Some vegetation and habitat will be lost as trees will be cut for the cycle scheme. The existing vegetation / habitat is not considered of particular ecological importance and some trees will be replaced by planting along the scheme further back from the roadside to allow for the proposed cycle tracks.</p> <p>The identified impacts on natural resources are considered to be slight and short-term.</p>	<p>The land used by the proposed development is very small in size, located along an existing road and not of particular value for other purposes.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>	<p>Some slight short-term adverse impacts during construction – No significant negative impacts.</p>



Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts	Conclusion
- the production of waste	<p>Waste will be generated during the construction phase related to removal of existing concrete / tarmac and road / pedestrian infrastructure and other general construction waste.</p> <p>These effects relating to waste are considered to be slight and temporary.</p>	<p>No increase in waste production is expected to arise from the operation of the proposed cycle scheme.</p>	<p>Slight and temporary impacts during construction – No significant negative impacts.</p>
- pollution and nuisances	<p>Nuisance impacts can be expected from the construction phase, relating to the production of dust, noise and vibrations. Works should be restricted to normal working hours to minimise disturbance impacts in the local area. There is no sensitive watercourse at the site and there is no significant flood risk (MHL, 2019) but some contaminated surface run-off could occur during construction.</p> <p>Therefore, slight temporary effects are anticipated relating to minor pollution and disturbance risks associated with the construction.</p>	<p>There is not expected to be any increase in pollution or nuisances from the operation of the proposed development. The cycle scheme may help to promote cycling over motorised transport and create suitable infrastructure to facilitate cycling thereby potentially reducing pollution and other nuisances caused by traffic.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts should be expected.</p>	<p>Slight and temporary impacts during construction – No significant negative impacts.</p>
- 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	<p>There is no unusual or particularly dangerous work required for the proposed project. The construction project is not considered complex or particularly risky. No major accidents are foreseen.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>	<p>The proposed cycle scheme is expected to improve safety of cycling in the area and reduce the risk of accidents.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are likely.</p>	<p>No significant negative impacts.</p>
- the risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution).	<p>The proposed works may generate some noise, dust or pollution from the construction process. However, no significant impacts are anticipated and it is expected that the impacts will be much localised.</p> <p>Due to scale for the proposed works the effects to human health are considered not-significant.</p>	<p>The proposed development is expected to be a positive addition to human health in terms of improving road safety and promoting a shift to cycling as a mode of transport over motorised transport which would be a benefit to human health in itself as well as potentially reducing air pollution from motor vehicles.</p> <p>A slight positive effect in the long-term/permanent is anticipated</p>	<p>Some not significant impacts from construction works but a slight positive in the long-term / permanently during operation – No significant negative impacts.</p>
<b>B Location of proposed development The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by proposed</b>			



Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts	Conclusion
<p>development, with particular regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the existing and approved land use</li> </ul>	<p>The proposed development is in an urbanised area. The predominant land-use is residential and with some commercial / retail centres also. The site comprises the corridor of an existing regional road. The proposed cycle facility running adjacent to the existing road would be in line with the existing land-use.</p> <p>Some not significant temporary effects may occur during the construction.</p>	<p>The proposed cycle tracks will be located alongside an existing busy road in a built up residential area. The development is compatible with the land-use of the area.</p> <p>No significant adverse impacts are likely. The expected long-term/ permanent effect of the development in terms of land use is positive and is in keeping with the existing environment. Effects are considered imperceptible.</p>	<p>Some not significant impacts from construction works and an imperceptible positive effect in the long-term / permanent during operation – No significant negative impacts.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the relative abundance, availability quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;</li> </ul>	<p>The site is located mainly on hard-surface road and some small strips of amenity green areas that line the road over. There are no habitats on the site that are considered to be of any particular importance. Some trees will be removed along the road. These are mostly immature trees of no significant ecological importance. One mature tree with bat potential is proposed to be removed just south of the existing Mungret Gate entrance. It is unlikely that this tree is of significant importance for bat roosting at present due to existing disturbance from the busy road immediately beside the tree with artificial street lighting as well as the ongoing Mungret Gate Housing development in close proximity, which has also reduced habitat connectivity in the general area. Therefore, any potential loss of natural habitat / resources is considered to have only a slight and short-term effect as no significantly important habitat is expected to be lost.</p> <p>The bedrock at the site is Visean Limestone and the GSI Groundwater Vulnerability Status is 'High'. Due to the nature of the works excavation</p>	<p>The land on which the proposed development is located is not of particular value in terms of natural resources but some trees will be removed to facilitate the development. The proposed development site is along an existing road in a built-up residential area. Additionally it is noted that tree planting further back from the road at Blackthorn and Whitethorns Estates are included in the current design.</p> <p>No significant impacts in relation to natural resources are likely.</p>	<p>Slight and temporary impacts during construction – No significant negative impacts.</p>





Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts	Conclusion
	<p>is expected to be relatively shallow and unlikely to intercept groundwater. Due to the extent of the works potential effects to groundwater are considered slight and temporary during construction.</p> <p>No other significant negative impacts are likely. Potential impacts are considered to be slight and short-term.</p>		
<p>the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying attention to the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;</li> <li>b) coastal zones and the marine environment;</li> <li>c) mountain and forest areas;</li> <li>d) nature reserves and parks;</li> <li>e) areas classified or protected under national legislation, Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;</li> <li>f) 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;</li> <li>g) densely populated areas,</li> <li>h) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.</li> </ul>	<p>(a) The proposed development is not located within any wetlands, riparian areas of river mouths. There is no registered watercourse flowing directly through the site. Maps from the OPW for both Fluvial and Coastal Flooding events were reviewed – there are no flooding issues associated with the study area (MHL, 2019). Natural watercourses under the control of OPW following the Arterial Drainage Act are also available for viewing. There is one such watercourse which passes under Fr. Russell Road. No significant impacts on wetlands, riparian areas or river mouths are expected, any effects would be imperceptible.</p> <p>(b) The proposed site is located to the south of the River Shannon Estuary and the associated Lower River Shannon SAC. The site is located at a distance from the estuary and SAC boundary and there is no direct hydrological connection to the estuary. Again, there are also no significant flooding concerns at the development site. No significant impacts on coastal zones and the marine environment are expected, any effects would be imperceptible.</p> <p>(c) The proposed development is not within or directly connected to any mountain or forest areas. There is no known pathway for impacts on any mountain or forest areas.</p>	<p>The purpose of the proposed development will act in line with the adjacent environment. There are no protected habitats / features of particular conservation concern at the site that are likely to be affected by the proposed development. Due to the existing environment and urban setting natural environment features are very limited, comprising of a small number of matures trees, treeline and hedgerow habitats along the edges of the road that may be of any some limited local ecological value.</p> <p>Any effects on the natural environment are considered imperceptible.</p>	<p>Imperceptible effects – No significant negative impacts.</p>



Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts	Conclusion
	<p>(d) The proposed development is not within or directly connected to any nature reserves or parks. There is no known pathway for impacts on any nature reserves or parks.</p> <p>(e) The subject site is not within any protected habitats. The nearest protected area is the Lower River Shannon SAC (002165). A separate 'Screening for Appropriate Assessment' report has been prepared for the proposed development (Ecofact, 2021).</p> <p>(f) There are no areas associated with the development 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.</p> <p>(g) The proposed development is located within a populated residential area. Properties in the proximity of the development site are residential with some commercial and educational facilities present also. Traffic levels are high at the site. Nuisance impacts relating to noise, vibrations and dust may impact the immediate locality on a short-term basis. Given the existing disturbance levels in the area the proposed works will not have a significant affect. Any effects would be not significant.</p> <p>(h) There are no national monuments or features of special architectural interest within the proposed site.</p>		
<p><b>C Type and Characteristics of potential impacts</b>  <b>The likely significant effects of projects on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set</b></p>			



Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts	Conclusion
<p>out under paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Annex, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in Article 3(1), taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)</li> </ul>	<p>The proposed development is a small scale development. The proposed project comprises a relatively minor cycle facilities development along an existing road. The site is located adjacent to residential estates and some commercial properties, and a school. During construction there will be some minor short term disturbances in the immediate proximity of the development, typical of works of this nature.</p> <p>The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact of the proposed development is considered to be not significant and short-term.</p>	<p>The proposed development comprises off-road cycle lanes along c. 1.1km of an existing busy road to improve the cycling facilities and safety on the route. It is a small scale development that is not expected to cause any significant adverse impacts in the area but rather be of benefit to the locality.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are likely. The impact of the development in terms of magnitude and spatial extent is considered to be a slight, long-term positive effect.</p>	<p>No significant negative impacts, as the development is small in scale relative to the existing infrastructure in the area and fits into the context of the surrounding environment. The short-term construction impacts will be not significant and the longer-term operational effect will be slight, positive.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the nature of the impact;</li> </ul>	<p>The nature of the impacts from the construction phase, are related to possible contaminated run-off and nuisance impacts through minor, localised noise and air pollution. There is no out of the ordinary or particularly harmful impacts anticipated.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are expected for the proposed construction project. Given the nature of the impacts the effects are considered slight and temporary.</p>	<p>The proposed development is a small scale development that is expected to have a positive impact at the site by improving road safety and promote cycling in the area.</p> <p>There are no adverse impacts of the proposed development's operation anticipated. Overall, moderate positive effects are anticipated in the long-term / permanently.</p>	<p>Some slight temporary impacts during construction, otherwise no significant negative impacts to the area as the development is compatible with the existing infrastructure of the area. Long-term / permanent the effects are expected to be moderate and positive.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the transboundary nature of the impact</li> </ul>	<p>There are no construction phase transboundary impacts anticipated.</p>	<p>There are no operational phase transboundary impacts anticipated.</p>	<p>No transboundary impacts.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the intensity and complexity of the impact</li> </ul>	<p>The intensity and complexity of the construction phase is minor and in keeping with modern construction projects.</p> <p>No significant negative impacts are likely. In terms of the intensity and complexity of the impact effects are considered not significant.</p>	<p>The operational phase of the proposed development is not expected to have any intense or complex adverse impacts. The development is expected to improve the current situation in terms of safe cycling facilities in the area.</p> <p>In terms of the intensity and complexity of the impact effects are considered slight and positive.</p>	<p>The development is not of an intensity and/or complexity level that would have significant negative impacts. It is likely to have a slight positive impact during operation.</p>



Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts	Conclusion
- the probability of the impact	It is likely that construction impacts will occur. These mainly relate to minor, localised nuisance impacts. Impacts are expected but are considered to be temporary and slight.	The operational phase of the project will inevitably impact the area but it is considered to be a positive impact. It is expected that the proposed development will improve road safety and promote cycling with the provision of improved facilities.	Some negative impacts are probable but are expected to be limited to the immediate proximity, short-term and imperceptible.
- the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.	<p>The construction impacts will commence when the relevant permission are obtained for the proposed development. The project is relatively small in scale and not complex in nature, therefore the proposed works are expected to be short term. Any impacts from the construction phase are expected to be short-term and no permanent negative impacts are anticipated.</p> <p>No likely significant negative impacts are envisaged. Effects will be temporary and slight negative effects during the construction process.</p>	<p>The proposed cycle tracks will in operation on an ongoing basis. The development is considered a long-term/permanent infrastructural development on the R510 road. It is considered an upgrade / improvement to the existing infrastructure.</p> <p>No permanent negative impacts are anticipated. Effects will be long-term to permanent and overall slight positive effects.</p>	Construction impacts will be temporary and slight. Adverse operational phase impacts are unlikely. Overall operational impacts are considered to be mostly positive on the existing infrastructure by improving cycling facilities in the area long-term / permanently.
- the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects;	The proposed cycle scheme is considered a very minor addition to other projects in the area, such as the Mungret Gate Housing Development the Fr. Russell Road cycle scheme of a similar nature as the current scheme. The potential cumulating impact of construction will be temporary and not significant.	The operational phase will be a positive addition facilitating proposed residential developments and connecting to other improved sections of the area's cycle network. It is not considered to contribute to any adverse impacts of other projects in the area. It is considered the proposed development will have a slight positive contribution in the long-term / permanently.	Mungret housing developments and Fr. Russell Rd. cycle scheme are considered but the proposed small scale development is unlikely to make a significant contribution to impacts in the area. Some not significant and temporary adverse impacts during construction but slight positive impact in operation is anticipated in terms of contribution to other developments.
- the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.	The typical construction impacts anticipated (e.g. noise, dust and traffic etc.) are considered to be of a small scale and much localised. They will have mostly slight and temporary effects. It is considered that they can also be easily managed and potentially avoided or further reduced with appropriate measures and practices implemented	At this stage the project is considered to have a generally positive slight effect. It is considered that the positive effects can potentially be enhanced also.	Potential impacts are mostly temporary and slight during construction and are considered to be easily managed / reduced. Operational impacts are mostly slight and positive





Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Construction Impacts	Operational Impacts	Conclusion
	during the construction.		but some mitigation could enhance or add other positive effects.



## 6. EIAR Screening Conclusion

This report has been prepared to allow the Competent Authority (CA) to prepare an EIAR Screening Conclusion Statement. The report has assessed the potential impact of the proposed development on the environment. The proposed development does not fall under any category within Schedule 5 (10) of the Planning and Development Regulations (2001) for Mandatory EIAR. The screening exercise has been completed in this report and the methodology used has been informed by the available guidance, legislation and directives.

The EIA Screening Assessment has determined that a sub-threshold EIAR is also not required for the proposed cycle scheme on the R510 between Quinn's Cross and Raheen Roundabout. The proposed development is considered to be of a relatively small scale and footprint. The location in the built-up residential setting of the Raheen/Dooradoyle area of south-east Limerick City is suitable for the proposed development. The proposed cycle scheme will run alongside an existing busy road and will be a positive improvement in terms of road safety and transport infrastructure to serve the local area and promote cycling as a mode of transport. Considered in the small scale and limited extent of the proposed development as well as the context of the project in an already built-up urban area of a considerable level of existing disturbance and other infrastructure it is not envisaged that the proposed cycle scheme will cause any significant negative impacts.

Overall, the characteristics and sensitivities of the site and receiving environment are not considered vulnerable to significant adverse effects from the proposed project. The impacts considered likely to arise during construction relate to nuisance disturbance impacts and some small risks of contaminated surface run-off. The identified adverse effects are assessed as being 'slight' in significance and 'temporary' in duration. The proposed development is located in an urban area with existing high levels of disturbance and is therefore not considered to be of much ecological value. A small amount of vegetation removal is involved in the proposed development along the edges of the existing road. Due to the urban setting and lack of suitability for wildlife at the subject site, negative impacts on wildlife are considered unlikely. Any minor affects on biodiversity or any other potentially valuable natural environmental features will not be significant and are considered at most to be 'Slight' 'Short-term' effects and therefore not trigger an EIAR.

A Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) has also been undertaken to consider potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites in the locality. The Screening for AA determined that there was no potential for significant impacts on any Natura 2000 site.

In general the negative impacts likely to arise are much localised and temporary nuisance impacts having a slight effect, and are not in the vicinity of particularly vulnerable environmental sensitivities. The identified potential adverse impacts are not assessed as significant. As per Directive 2014/52/EU "*The screening procedure should ensure that an environmental impact assessment is only required for projects likely to have significant effects on the environment*". Overall, the proposed development is likely to have a positive long-term / permanent impact in the locality by improving the road safety and infrastructure. The proposed development is not expected to have significant impacts on the environment. It is concluded that the proposed Quinn's Cross to Raheen Roundabout Cycle Scheme does not require a sub-threshold EIAR. However, it is highlighted although the potential impacts are not 'significant', and therefore do not trigger an EIAR (either mandatory or sub-threshold), it is acknowledged that some mitigation will be required to minimise the slight adverse impacts on the local scale.



It is noted that a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) or Outline CEMP has not been prepared for the proposed development at this stage which will be necessary to manage the nuisance construction impacts identified (contamination of surface run-off and dust and noise pollution). A traffic management plan or strategy will also be required to reduce potential traffic congestion in the vicinity of the proposed works. Although it is acknowledged that the proposed development site is not of significant importance in terms of wildlife or ecology, a biodiversity assessment of the site has not been undertaken and should be carried out to consider potential impacts on the local biodiversity as some vegetation removal is required. Subsequently some precautionary mitigation may be required, for example implementing best-practice procedures following the NRA (2006) *Guidelines for the Treatment of Bats during Construction of National Road Schemes* for tree removal works. This would inform optimal lighting and landscaping designs also, which should be drawn up and implemented for the proposed project to help minimise adverse impacts relating to vegetation / habitat loss / disturbance and potentially enhance the boundaries of the proposed scheme for wildlife.



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## PLATES



**Plate 1** Immature trees opposite the South Court Hotel at Raheen Roundabout.



**Plate 2** A mature hedgerow along the R510 opposite Courtfield Shopping Centre.

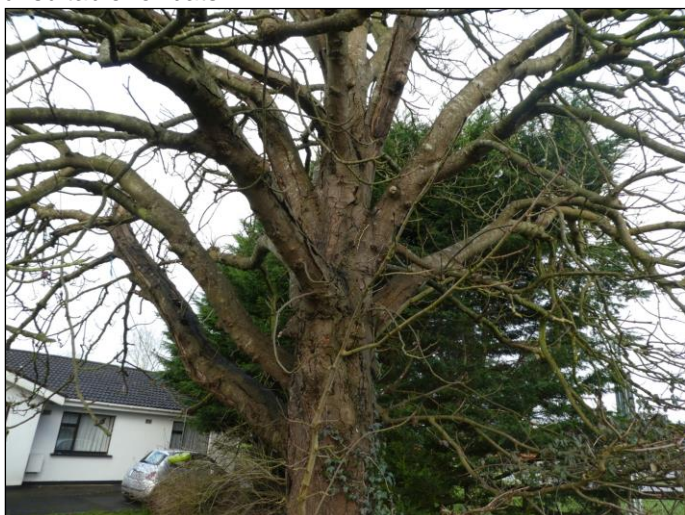


**Plate 3** Immature trees along the R510 opposite St. Nessian's National School.

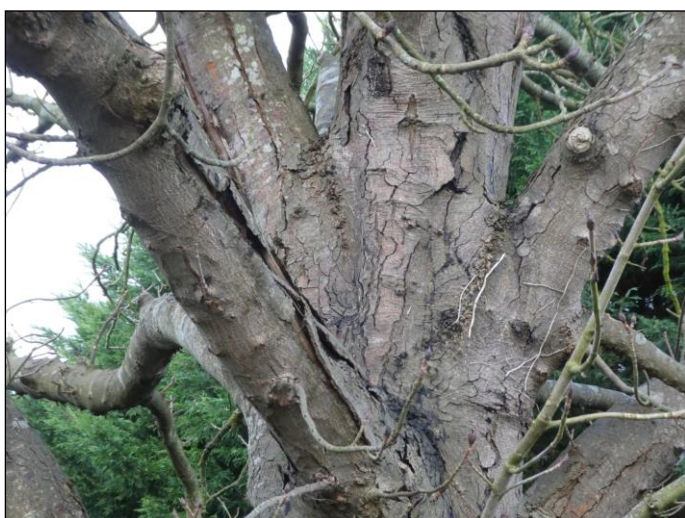




**Plate 4** A mature tree to be removed on south side of R510 near St. Nessian's School car park. The tree is located immediately beside a street lamp and there is no significant knot holes / crevices etc. – unsuitable for bats.



**Plate 5** Mature Horse-chestnut tree just south of Mungret Gate entrance to be removed.



**Plate 6** Significant crevices were noted in the mature Horse-chestnut tree that is to be removed near the Mungret Gate entrance.



**Plate 7** Mature tree to be removed from the south side of the R510 opposite The Grange. The tree is positioned immediately beside a street lamp and has a thin trunk with no significant crevices – unsuitable for bats.