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2022

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report



Sycamore Crescent Housing Newcastle West, Co. Limerick



ASH Ecology & Environmental

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report – Sycamore Crescent Housing, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

A Screening for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken by Ash Ecology & Environmental Ltd (AEE) on behalf of Limerick City and County Council.

The development is for the Construction of a Housing Development comprising 31 units and all associated site development works and infrastructure provision at Sycamore Crescent Housing, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick (Grid Ref: 52.458690, -9.051240) and shown in Figure 1. The proposed site layout is shown as Figure 2.

There is also a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (MKO, August 2021) and Ecological Impact Assessment (AEE, May 2022) compiled for this development and should be read in conjunction with this report.

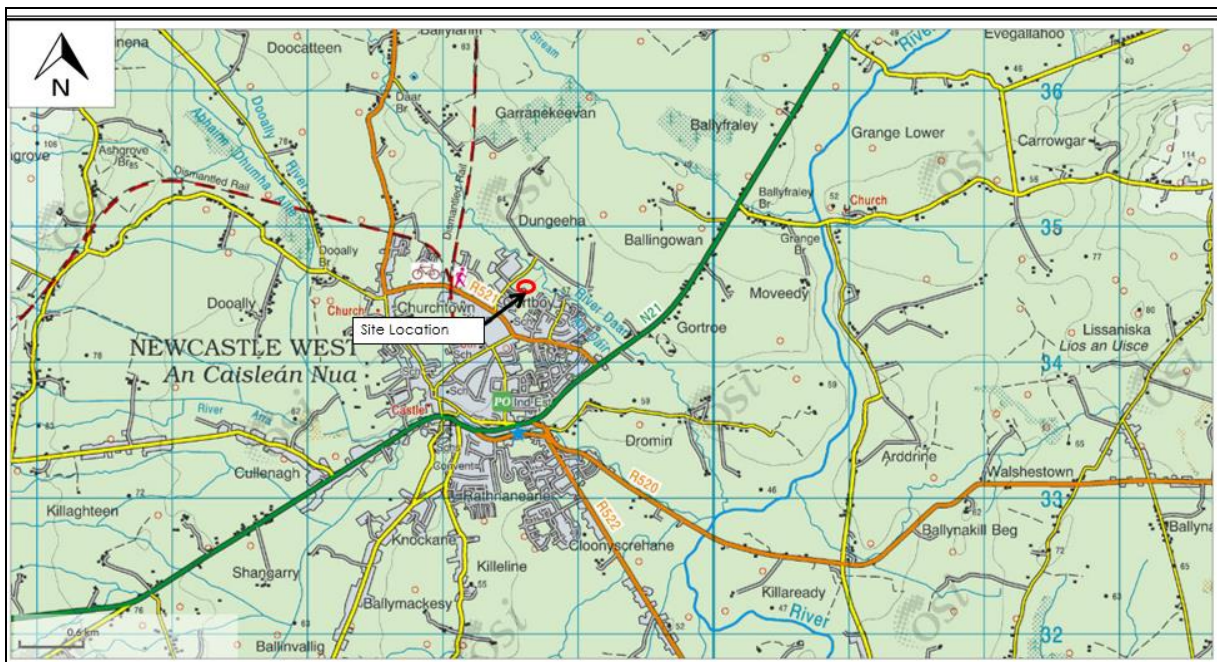


Figure 1 Site Location

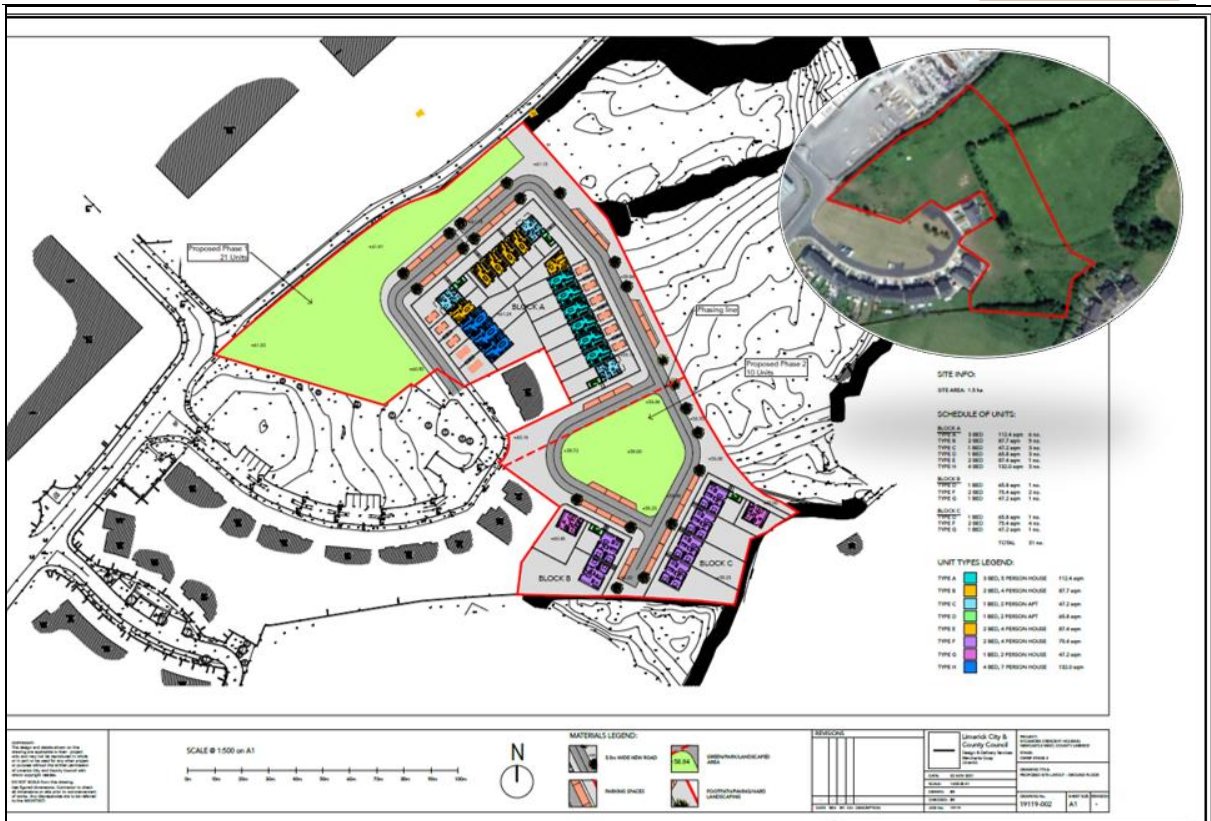


Figure 2 Proposed Site Layout

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) 30th 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.

An Ecological Impact Assessment was also compiled for this project (AEE, May 2022).

1.2 Competency of Assessor

This report has been prepared by Aisling Walsh whose qualifications include MSc in Biodiversity and Conservation (TCD), B.Sc. (Hons) Zoology (NUIG) and B.Sc in Applied Aquatic Science (GMIT) with relevant modules in Hydrology. Aisling is the Managing Director of Ash Ecology & Environmental Ltd and has over 15 years of experience providing environmental consultancy and environmental assessment services. She is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and also a Licenced Bat Ecologist. She has also provided input and reviewed Ecological and Environmental assessments for several EIS and EIAR including the hydrology and water quality assessment chapters of same. AEE is a registered practice of the CIEEM.

2.0 The Screening Process

2.1 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) 30th 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
 - f) designated by Member States pursuant to Directives 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC,
 - g) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality
 - h) standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is
 - i) considered that there is such a failure,
 - j) densely populated areas,
 - k) 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.

In summary Projects can be placed into one of the following categories:

- those that exceed the thresholds laid down and therefore have a mandatory requirement to prepare an EIS; and
- those projects that are sub-threshold and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether or not they are likely to have significant effects on the environment;

-
- projects that fall under Annex II (13) (a) of the Directive for Any change or extension of projects listed in Annex I or Annex II, already authorised, executed in the process of being executed.

2.2 Guidance

Screening is the process of deciding whether a development requires an EIAR. The particulars of the assessment procedure are adopted through European Directives and correlate to the provisions set out in the Planning and Development Act 2001 (as amended). An EIA is required to be carried out as part of an application whereby the proposed development exceeds the limitations of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). The methodology for screening generally considers the following documents:

- Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive (European Commission 2015);
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development (Environmental Protection Agency, 2003);
- 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.

The 'Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' (Environmental Protection Agency, Draft August 2017) provide a flow diagram of the screening process which is provided in the Figure 3 below.

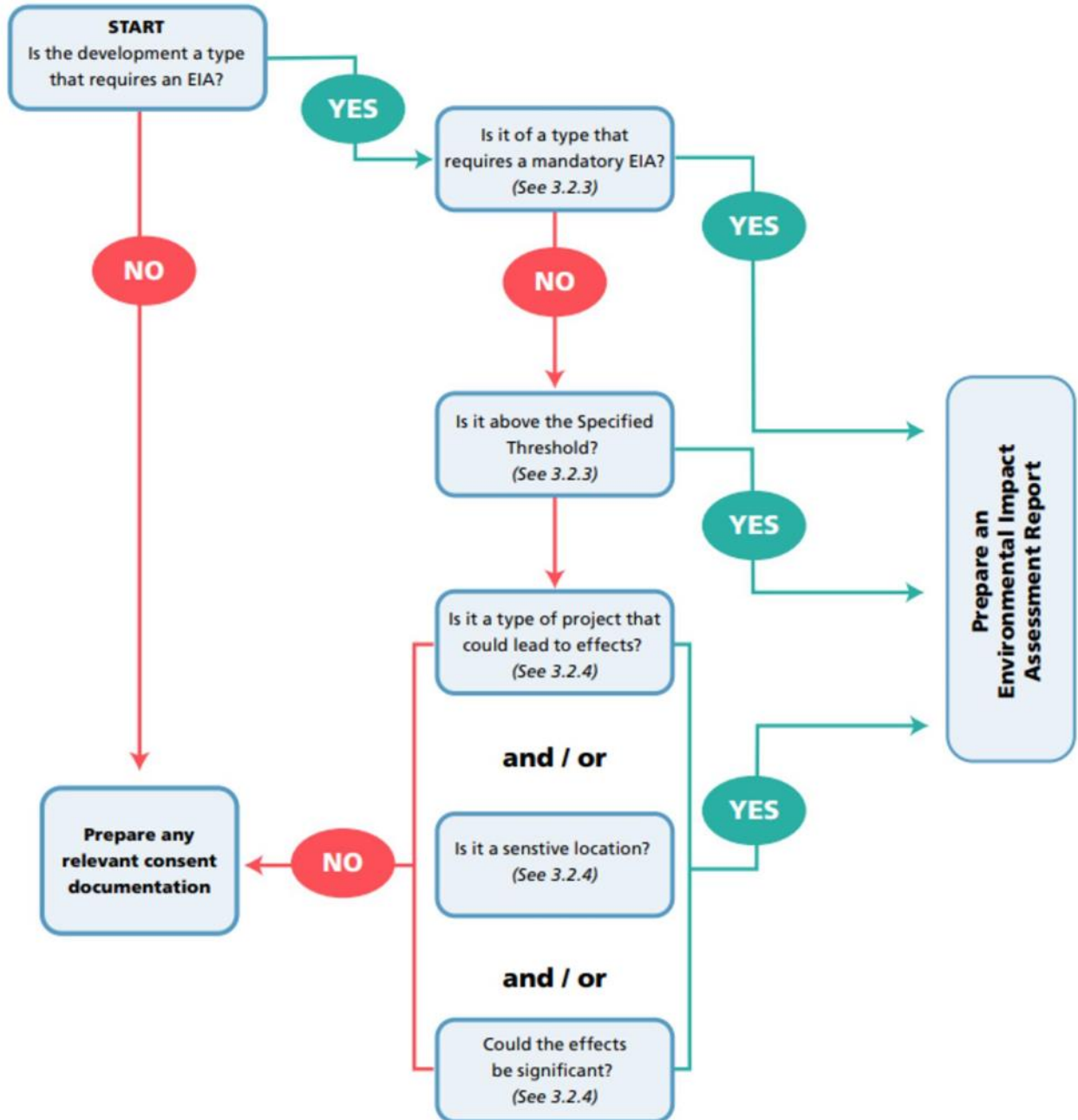


Figure 3 Flow Diagram of the Screening Process (Source: Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, Environmental Protection Agency, Draft August 2017)

2.3 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 EIA Screening Conclusion Statement.

3.0 Project Information Required by Annex II (A) of 2014/52/EU

3.1 Description of Project

3.1.1 Physical Characteristics of the Project

The proposed development site, measuring 1.5 ha, is located in the townland of Gortboy, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick. The site is located approximately 1.1km to the north of Newcastle West town centre and approximately 36km south-west of Limerick City, Co. Limerick. The site is bordered to the north by Desmond Business Park, by other existing residential developments to the south and west and agricultural fields/wet grassland to the east. Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA (004161) is located approximately 4.7km to the west of the proposed development and is the closest European Designated Site to the proposal. The site is accessed from the south via Station Road off the N21 Limerick Road.

The proposed development site is 1.5ha in size. The proposed site layout is shown as Figure 2. The proposed development will consist of the provision of 31 no. residential units as follows:

Block A

- 6 no. 3-bed 5 person house (112.4sqm)
- 8 no. 2-bed 4 person house (87.7 sqm)
- 3 no. 1-bed 2 person apartment (47.2 sqm)
- 3 no. 1-bed 2 person apartment (65.8 sqm)
- 1 no. 2-bed 4 person house (87.4 sqm)

Block B

- 1 no. 1-bed 2 person apartment (65.8 sqm)
- 2 no. 2-bed 4 person house (75.4 sqm)
- 1 no. 1-bed 2 person house (47.2 sqm)

Block C

- 1 no. 1-bed 2 person apartment (65.8 sqm)
- 4 no. 2-bed 4 person house (75.4 sqm)
- 1 no. 1-bed 2 person house (47.2 sqm)

The proposed foul water layout is attached as Figures 4 and proposed storm water drainage layout as Figure 4.

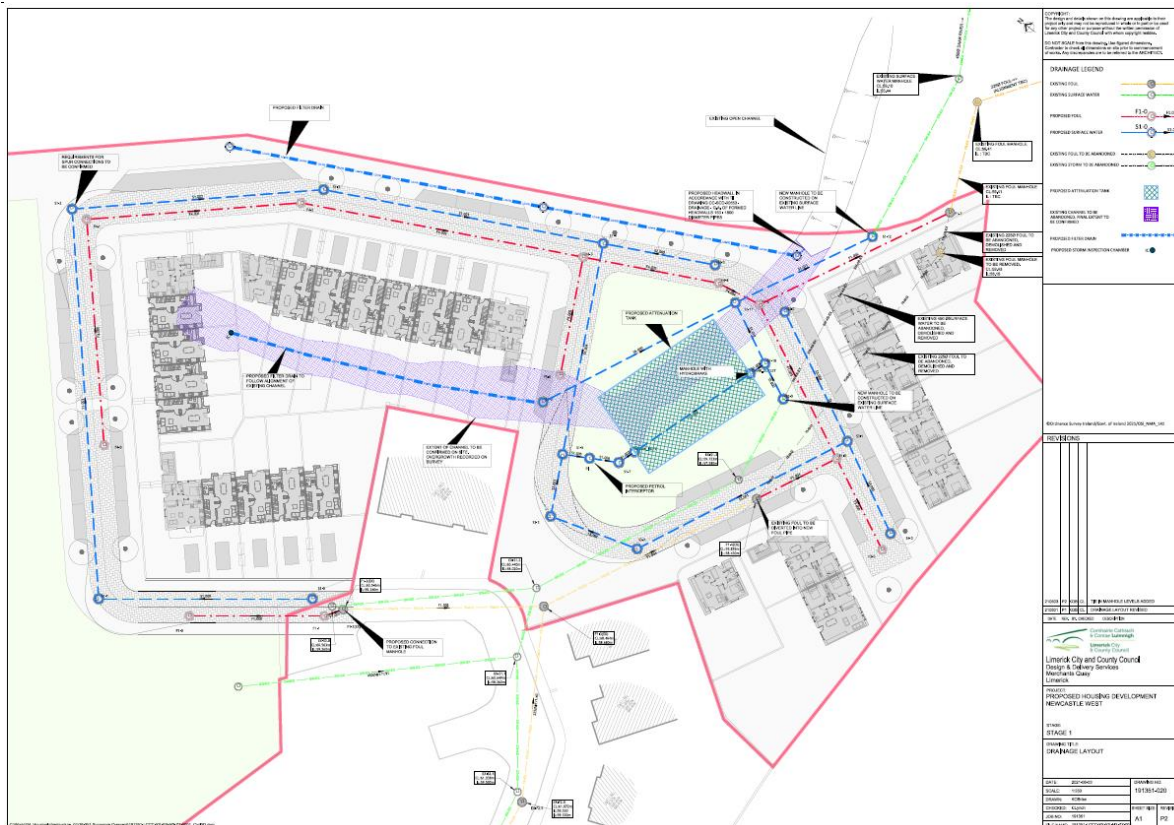


Figure 4 Proposed Drainage Layout

The development will consist of two Phases. Block A will be delivered in Phase 1 and Block B will be delivered in Phase 2.

Foul water from the proposed development will connect to the existing foul water network servicing the adjacent Sycamore Crescent to the west of the site. A pre-connection enquiry was lodged with Irish Water in relation to the proposed development. Irish Water confirmed that there is capacity to accept the proposed connection to the network.

Surface water run-off from all of the development's hard surfaces including roads and roofs, will connect to the existing public surface water drainage network servicing the adjacent Sycamore Crescent. On-site storage (attenuation tanks) and discharge to ground via filtration pits/swales will also be incorporated to minimise outflow from the site. All surface water will pass through a petrol interceptor prior to entering the attenuation tank and will be discharged at a controlled rate via a hydrobrake device. Permeable surface finishes will be used where possible to minimise runoff volumes. In addition to the above, 2 no. filter drains will also be installed within the site. One will be installed along the northern boundary of the site which will collect surface water from the field to the north of the site boundary. This will not include water from the development's hard surfaces. The second filter drain runs through the centre of the site and will connect to the public surface water network.

A Planning Stage Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be compiled for the environmental management measures proposed in Section 4.0.

Information on the site location, hydrology, geology hydrogeology and ecology of the area has been obtained from records held by the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI), Water Framework Directive Maps, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) databases and on-line resources of Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (myplan.ie).

Habitats (as per the aerial photography) were identified and classified according to Fossitt (2000)¹ and Smith *et al.* (2011)². The main habitats onsite are:

- Improved Grassland (GA1)
- Treelines (WL2)/Hedgerows (WL1)
- Scrub/Grassy Verges (WS1/GS2)
- Fencing (BL3)
- Drainage Ditches (FW4)

The River Daar (FW1) is located approx. 50m northeast of the site. A habitat map is shown as Figure 5.



Figure 5 Habitat Map with proposed Silt Fence position to prevent run-off to drains containing water.

¹ Fossitt, J. (2000). *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland*. The Heritage Council, Kilkenny.

² Smith, G.F., O'Donoghue, P., O'Hara, K. and Delaney, E. (2011) Best practice guidance for habitat survey and mapping. The Heritage Council, Kilkenny.

The hydrology of area is shown on Figure 6 below. The site is located within:

- Hydrometric Area '24 –Shannon Estuary South
- Water Framework Directive (WFD) Catchment 25D ,
- WFD Subcatchment 'Deel[Newcastlewest]_SC_040'
- WFD River Sub-Basin 'DEEL (NEWCASTLEWEST)_090'

The WFD Status for the local area is as follows:

- 2013-2018 WFD River Status of 'DEEL (NEWCASTLEWEST)_090' is 'Moderate'
- 2013-2018 WFD River Risk Status of 'DEEL (NEWCASTLEWEST)_090' is 'At Risk'
- 2013-2018 WFD Groundwater Body Status of 'Newcastle West' is 'Good'
- 2013-2018 WFD Groundwater Body Risk Status of 'Newcastle West' is 'Review'

The EPA point d/s of site on River Deel at Station 'Grange Br (D46)' Q3-4 Moderate Status in 2020 (2km northeast of site)

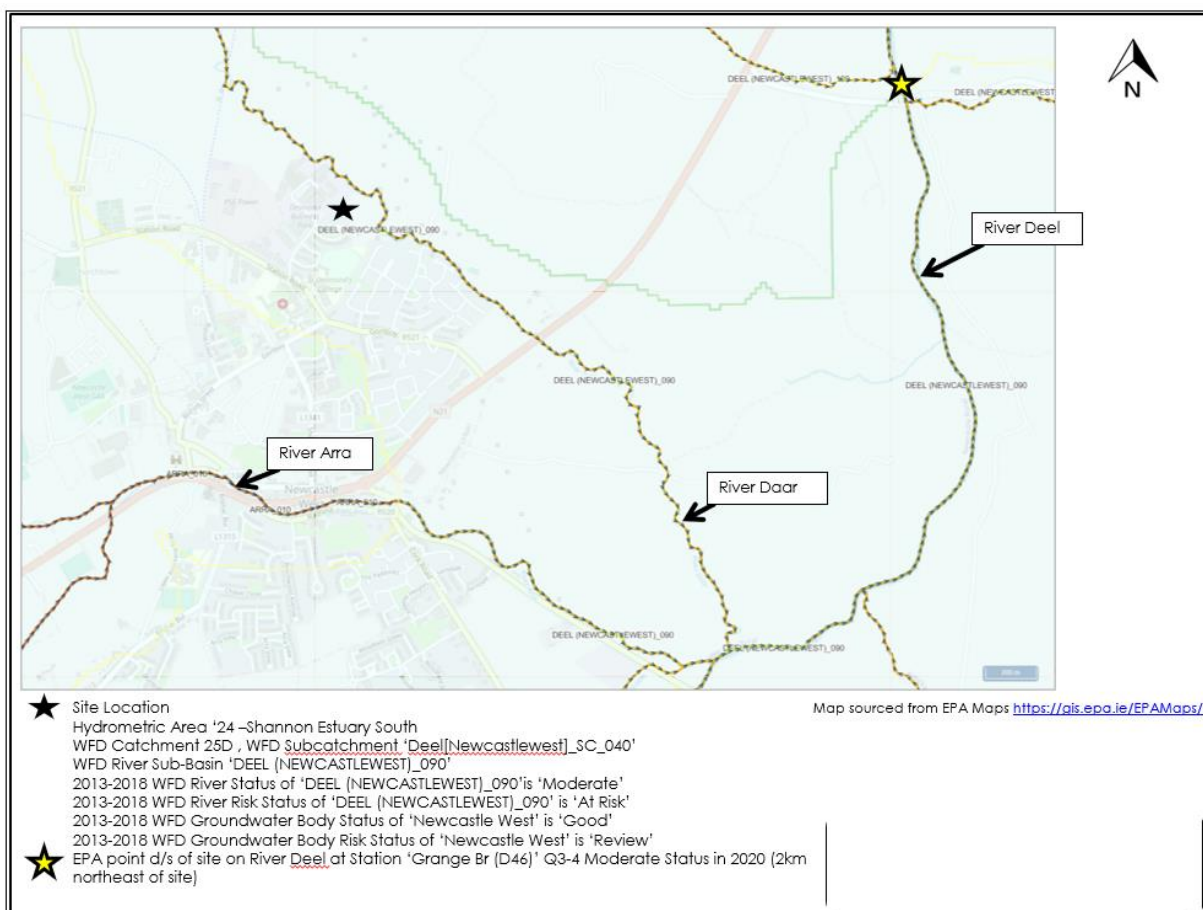


Figure 6 Water Quality Data

The CFRAM Fluvial maps for the site and immediate context show that the proposed site should be unaffected by potential flooding from the River Daar, see Figure 7.



Figure 7 CFRAM Flood Map

3.1.2 Location of the Project, with regard to Environmental Sensitivities of Geographic Areas likely to be affected

There is no high value habitat present at the proposed development site or any particularly vulnerable features of interest. The closest watercourse is the Daar River approx. 50m northeast of the site boundary. There are drains onsite that drain to this river. MKO (August 2021) concluded the following and therefore a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was not required.

"It is concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will not have a significant effect on any European Site."

Figure 8 and Figure 9 below shows the location of the proposed development in the context of the local Natura 2000 network within 15km of the development. There are a total of two SAC sites and one SPA site. The nearest Natura 2000 site to the proposed development is the Lower River Shannon SAC (Site Code 002165), located c. 8.7km west of the proposed development. Figure 10 overleaf shows the location of National Heritage Areas (NHAs) and pNHAs (Proposed Natural Heritage Areas) within a 15km radius of the proposed development site, a total of six. The closest is Glenastar Wood (Site Code 001431) c. 5.4km Northwest.

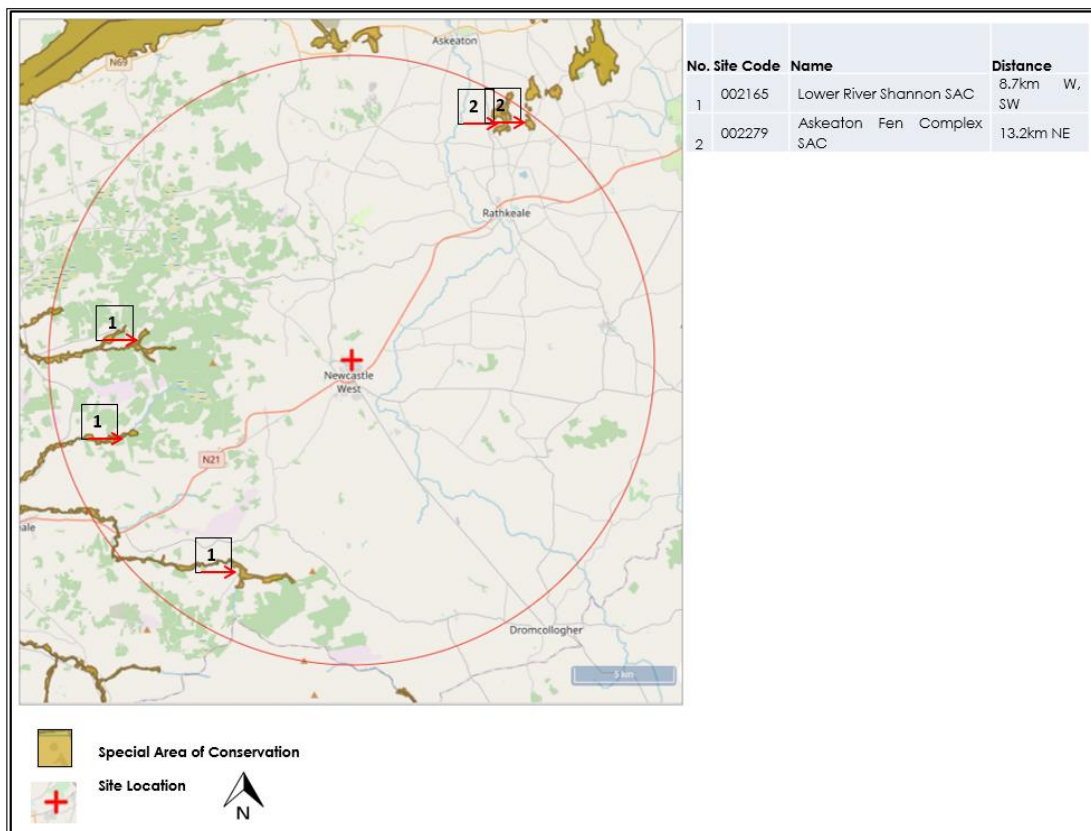


Figure 8 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within 15km of Site

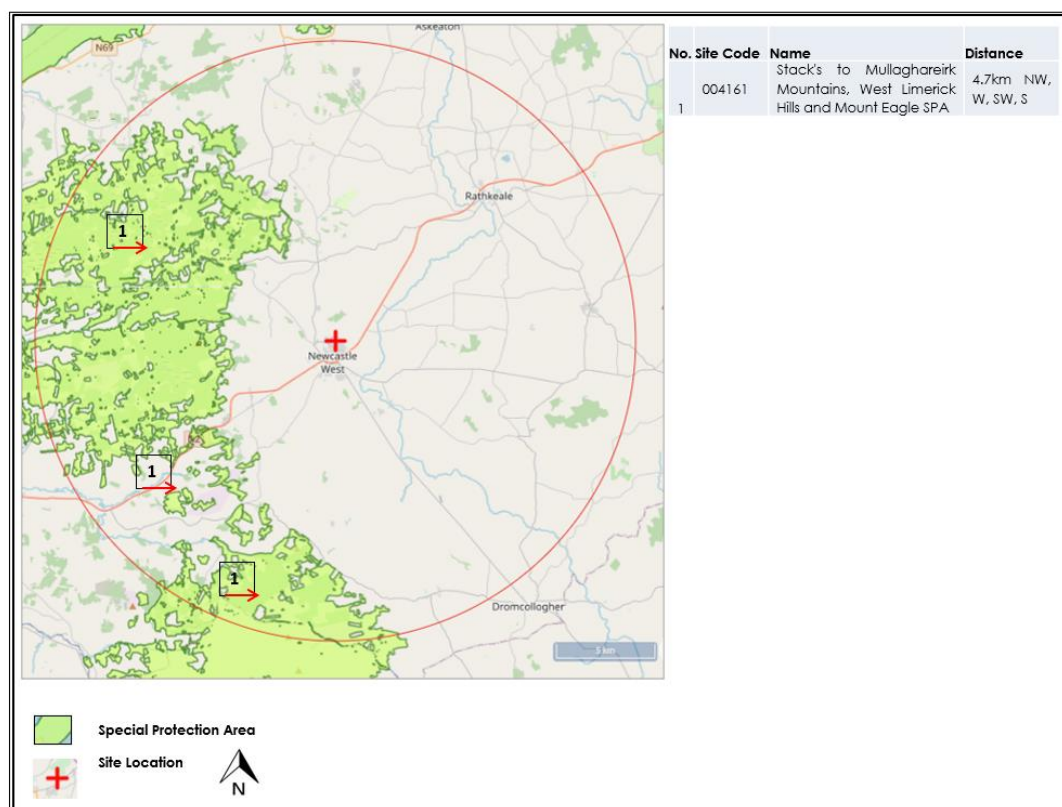


Figure 9 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within 15km of Site

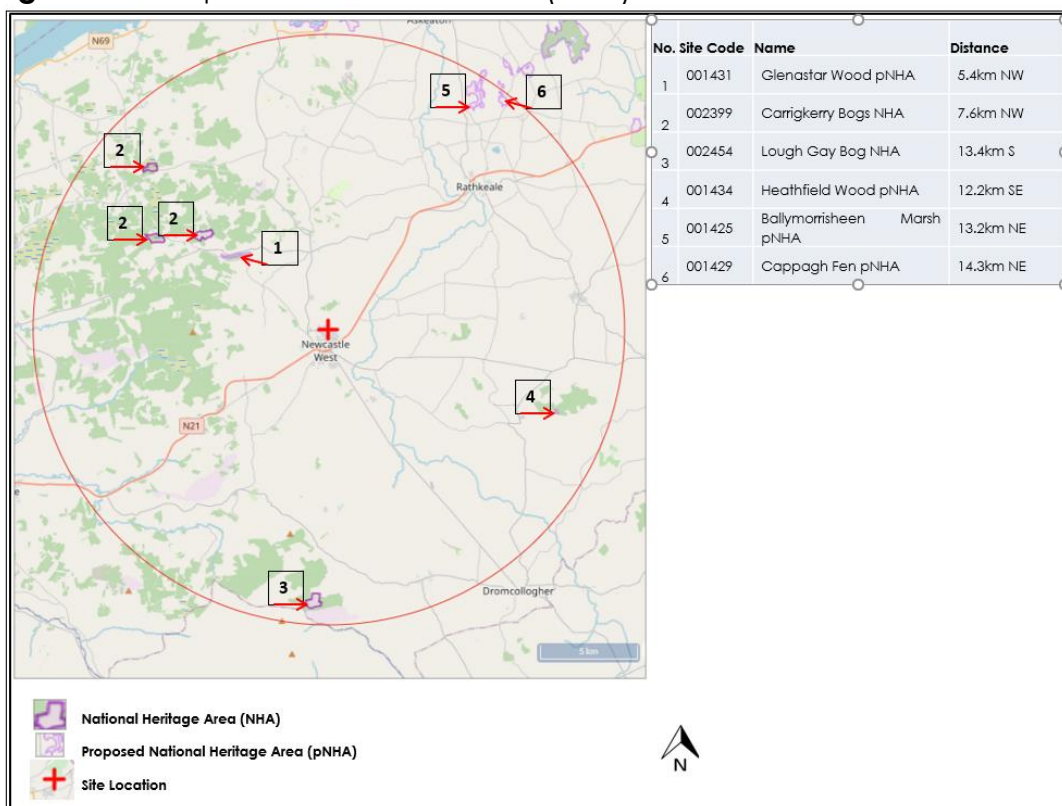


Figure 10 National Heritage Areas (NHAs) and Proposed National Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within 15km of Site

3.2 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 works and contaminated surface run-off;
- Noise and vibration disturbance and air pollution from dust generated from the construction;
- Introduction / spread of invasive species on site;
- Disturbance to nesting birds in scrub, hedgerows and treelines;
- Disturbance to bats if present in trees with Bat Roost Potential.
- Disturbance to Badgers if presence at the base of hedgerows within dense scrub.

Standard best practice procedures and methods are considered sufficient to mitigate construction related impacts e.g. checks for nesting birds, badger setts and bats prior to tree felling or scrub removal along with timing of works.

3.3 Description of any likely Significant Effects on the Environment

3.3.1 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, and potential for contaminated surface run-off from the site during construction.

Waste will be generated during the construction phase. Waste arising will be managed in accordance with a detailed waste management plan which will be undertaken by the contractor prior to the commencement of development. This will establish specific objectives and guidelines prior to construction but will be flexible to allow the plan to evolve and develop during the construction phase of the project.

Standard best practice procedures will be implemented throughout the proposed works. The removal of waste will be to a suitably licenced facility as required.

During the operational phase there will be non hazardous waste and packaging waste, WEEE, empty containers and landscaping waste.

3.3.2 Use of Natural Resources, in particular Soil, Land, Water and Biodiversity

Natural resources can be expected to be used for the housing development. The scale of the development will have an impact associated with removal of grass cover, trees/ hedgerows. Soil excavated for construction will be reused on site or removed off site for re-use elsewhere. The EclA (AEE, May 2022) outlines mitigation for biodiversity which will result in negligible impacts to biodiversity and is outlined in Section 4.0.

4.0 EIA Screening Process

4.1 Screening for Mandatory EIAR

The proposed development is located in agricultural land within an urbanised area of Newcastle West. The River Daar is located 50m northeast of the site which is a tributary of the River Deel

A Screening Report (MKO, August 2021) mitigates for negative impacts to water quality and impacts to Natura 2000 sites were ruled out.

The proposed development 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.

4.2 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. These criteria come under three broad headings; Characteristics of projects; Location of Projects; and Types and characteristics of the potential impact. Based on the information provided in accordance with Annex IIA and Annex III of the 2014 Directive, it is considered that a sub-threshold EIAR is not required for the proposed development, as adequate measures are in place to avoid, reduce or mitigate likely impacts, such that neither the construction nor operational phase of the overall development will have a significant negative impact on the environment.

The key issue is: *'are the likely effects 'significant' in the context of these criteria'?* An assessment pertinent to Schedule 7 of the Regulations is set out as follows in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

The potential impact by EIA topic is outlined in Table 4.

Table 1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

The characteristics of proposed development, in particular,	Assessment
a) the size and design of the whole of the proposed development,	The development is for the Construction of a Housing Development comprising 31 units and all associated site development works and infrastructure provision at Sycamore Crescent Housing, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick. The proposed development site is 1.5 ha,
b) cumulation with other existing development and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment,	<p>Impacts caused by one project, which may be considered minor and insignificant, can combine with other environmental impacts from existing or planned development. When taken in combination, these impacts could be likely to have significant effects on the environment.</p> <p>Existing development in the surrounding area predominantly comprises commercial uses, residential and open fields/agricultural.</p> <p>Subject to appropriate restrictions on the proposed development in relation to traffic movements, noise and dust emissions, mostly during the construction phase, it is considered that the potential for significant impacts on the environment from cumulative effects will not arise.</p>
c) the nature of any associated demolition works,	No demolition works required.
d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity,	<p>Natural resources on the site and in the surrounding area include:</p> <p>The nearest SAC (River Shannon SAC) is located 8.7km northeast of the site. The nearest SPA (Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA) is located approx. 4.7km northwest of the site.</p> <p>The Screening Report (MKO, August 2021) concluded there will be no likely significant effect on any European Site. The proposed development will be connected to the foul and surface water public sewers and it is therefore considered that there will be no potential for significant impacts on watercourses during the operational phase.</p>

The characteristics of proposed development, in particular,	Assessment
	<p>Similarly owing to the nature of the site, on a low biodiversity improved agricultural grassland, and provided mitigation for birds, bats and badgers are implemented, along with a landscaping plan that promotes net gain for biodiversity, then it is considered that there will be negligible negative impacts on soils, or flora and fauna. Soil excavated for construction will be reused on site or removed off site for re-use elsewhere.</p> <p>Any scrub, hedgerow or tree removal should take place outside the bird nesting season. Pre-clearance checks for badgers in scrub habitat should be completed (or ecologist will on site during site clearance).</p> <p>A pre-felling bat survey should also to be carried out to ensure no trees with bat roost potential features (e.g. heavy ivy) are occupied by bats at the time of felling. Felling should take place in September-October using a soft felling technique and left lie for 48 hours before mulching.</p>
e) the production of waste,	<p>Any construction waste will be managed by a qualified contractor, and all waste generated will be transported to a licenced tip. The Construction phase will be carried out in accordance with industry best practice, as per building and environmental regulations. Site procedures to avoid construction site run-off will be implemented via a series of silt fencing, see Figure 5 for proposed locations along drainage ditches that drain to the Daar River.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the development will not result in the production of waste greater than that associated with comparable developments, or to the extent that would have a significant impact on the environment. During the operational phase there will be non hazardous waste and packaging waste, WEEE, empty containers and landscaping waste.</p>
f) pollution and nuisances,	The proposed development has the potential to result in pollution and nuisances in the area

The characteristics of proposed development, in particular,	Assessment
	<p>during the construction phase due to dust and noise. Mitigation measures will be proposed in the CEMP to deal with these issues including proper construction methodology.</p> <p>It is considered that soil and water pollution impacts are insignificant and will not result in pollution or nuisance.</p> <p>It is anticipated that throughout the construction and operation of the development would not result in pollution and nuisances greater than that associated with comparable developments or to the extent that would have a significant impact on the environment.</p>
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, and,	As described above, the construction phase will be carried out in accordance with industry best practice, as per building and environmental regulations.
h) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).	<p>Risks to human health from the proposed development can principally arise from noise and dust emissions during construction principally.</p> <p>Subject to the implementation of the mitigation and best practice measures it is considered that these impacts would not be significant.</p>

Table 2 Location of the Proposed Development

Location of the Proposed Development The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, with particular regard to—	Assessment
a) the existing and approved land use,	The subject site is on land zoned for development and 'Existing Residential' and 'Residential Development Area' with an area of 'Open Space'. The subject site is not situated within an Architectural Conservation Area and there are no protected structures within the development site. ³
b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground	<p>Having regard to the receiving environment's character the proposed development will not significantly impact on the integrity of any main habitats (including soil, land, water and biodiversity). The proposed development is situated approximately 8.7km from the closest SAC, 4.7km from the closest SPA and 5.4km from the closest pNHA.</p> <p>The works are to be managed by a qualified contractor and the construction phase will be carried out in accordance with industry best practice, as per building and environmental regulations. Site procedures to avoid construction site run off will be noted in the CEMP. These works are not considered to have a significant effect on the environment with the mitigation outlined in the CEMP.</p>
<p>c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:</p> <p>(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;</p> <p>(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;</p>	<p>The subject site is located approximately 50m from the Daar River. With mitigation to prevent water pollution, e.g. the use of silt fencing, no impacts are foreseen. Water pollution prevention measures will all be outlined in the CEMP and implemented by the contractor.</p> <p>The development site is immediately outside the confines of the critical Flood Zones A and B as indicated on Figure 7.</p>

³ Newcastle West Local Area Plan 2014 – 2020 (extended until April 2024).

Location of the Proposed Development The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, with particular regard to—	Assessment
<p>(iii) mountain and forest areas;</p> <p>(iv) nature reserves and parks;</p> <p>(v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive and;</p> <p>(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;</p> <p>(vii) densely populated areas;</p> <p>(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.</p>	<p>It is considered that the development will not be likely lead to significant effects on the absorption capacity of same as the existing surface water management provisions will remain unchanged.</p> <p>The subject site is situated within a densely populated area with existing residential housing estates to the south of site. No human populations currently live on the site which comprises mainly of agricultural fields.</p> <p>The site is not situated within an Architectural Conservation Area and there are no protected structures within the development site.⁴</p>

⁴ Newcastle West Local Area Plan 2014 – 2020 (extended until April 2024).

Table 3 Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Types and characteristics of potential impacts The likely significant effects on the environment of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in paragraph (b)(i)(I) to (V) of the definition of 'environmental impact assessment report' in section 171A of the Act, taking into account—	Assessment
a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),	It is anticipated that the geographical extent and population likely to be affected are negligible.
b) the nature of the impact,	The nature of impact will be related to construction activity contained on site. The impacts of the development are not considered to be any greater than that associated with typical developments. Strict mitigation will be followed via a CEMP.
c) the transboundary nature of the impact,	Some minor nuisance impacts such as noise and vibrations may affect the immediate surrounds but will be limited and within existing site footprint.
d) the intensity and complexity of the impact,	The nature of impact will be related to construction activity contained on site. The impacts of the development are not considered to be any greater than that associated with typical developments.
e) the probability of the impact,	The nature of impact will be related to typical noise nuisance and creation of dust disturbances that are associated with typical developments of this type.
f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of	The construction impacts will not commence until all relevant permission

Types and characteristics of potential impacts The likely significant effects on the environment of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in paragraph (b)(i)(I) to (V) of the definition of 'environmental impact assessment report' in section 171A of the Act, taking into account—	Assessment
the impact,	<p>are obtained for the proposed development; the proposed works are expected to be short term. Works will be restricted to standard hours of operation. Any impacts from the construction phase are expected to be short-term and no permanent negative impacts are anticipated.</p> <p>The majority of impacts during the development will be associated with the construction stage. These impacts are likely to be temporary, reversible and 'once-off'.</p>
g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment, and	The proposed development does not give rise to cumulation with other development for the purposes of Section 172(1A)(b) of the Planning and development Act 2000, as amended
h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.	The majority of impacts during the development will be associated with the construction stage. These impacts are likely to be temporary, reversible and 'once-off'.

Table 4 Potential Impacts by EIA Topic

Topic	Comment on Potential Impacts
Population and Human Health	The potential impacts of the construction phase on human beings are not considered to be significant. During construction, there is the potential for temporary minor impacts related to traffic inconvenience, dust and noise to occur. However, the works will be short-term in duration. Standard best practice construction methodologies will limit disturbance to people in the area. Once completed, the proposed development will provide additional housing availability which provides a significant positive impact.
Biodiversity /Species and Habitats	The Screening report (MKO, August 2021) completed for the site concluded no potential direct or indirect impacts to species and habitats of Natura 2000 sites.
Lands and Soils	No significant impact; the development will be constructed in accordance with best practice environmentally sensitive methods and environmental management systems.
Water	<p>With best practice incorporated into the design and the construction works, the potential for significant run-off of pollutants is either eliminated or greatly reduced, and no significant residual impacts on water are anticipated i.e. drainage ditches which link to the River Daar.</p> <p>Flood mapping shows that the site of the proposed development is not at risk of flooding.</p> <p>Foul water will be discharged into the public mains. A connection enquiry with Irish Water was successful and there is capacity for same.</p>
Air & Climate	During construction, there is the potential for short-term minor negative impacts related to dust to occur, however this will be short term in duration and limited to the works area. Best practice construction site management will minimise emissions.
Noise and Vibration	Potential short-term noise impact may arise during construction activities however this will be managed through best practice measures. No significant impact is therefore anticipated.
Material Asset: Built Environment	The proposed development will connect to existing public services (watermains and

	utilities). Possible effects include short term interruption to existing services, damage to existing systems during construction and possible pollution. No significant impacts are anticipated with the proposed development
Material Asset: Transportation	There will be no significant long-term impact on local traffic movements due to the scale of the proposed housing development. During the construction phase, appropriate traffic management and signage will be in place to ensure safe access and egress from the site, and the safety of other road users.
Waste Management	No significant effects are anticipated. The development will involve limited excavation and land re-shaping. Possible effects include the re-use / recycle / disposal of excavated material as well as other waste generated on site i.e. construction waste, domestic waste once occupied. Any effects will be mitigated by the implementation of best practice in construction and demolition and operational waste management procedures.
Cultural Heritage	The proposed development will not give rise to any significant impacts on cultural heritage. This site is not located within an Architectural Conservation Area and does not contain protected structures/listed buildings.
Landscape	No significant effects are anticipated. The site proposed housing development is located within an existing urban area, and will not give rise to any significant landscape or visual impacts. There are no protected views or designated scenic routes pertaining to the site, and there will be no significant change in terms of site visibility.
Interactions	No significant effects are anticipated when considering interactions between all factors considered.

5.0 EIA Screening Result

The proposed development is evaluated to determine potential EIA requirements based on the characteristics of the development, site location sensitivity. The following conclusions are made:

- The proposed development will involve the construction of 31 no. dwelling units in a residential area of Syamore Crescent, Gortboy, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick and is compatible with the surrounding land use.
- A Mandatory EIA threshold of 500 dwelling units exists in legislation and the proposed development is significantly below this when viewed individually and cumulatively with adjacent projects;
- A Sub - Threshold EIA Screening Assessment examined the proposed development in terms of Characteristics of the Proposed Development, Location of Proposed Development and Characteristics of Potential Impacts.

The following conclusions are made:

- The characteristics of the proposed housing development are not of a nature and scale that will give rise to significant effects on the environment by way of its size or design.
- In terms of other environmental sensitivities, e.g. landscapes/sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance, the proposed development will not give rise to any significant effects, given its location.
- The characteristics of the potential impacts are not considered likely to have significant effects on the environment during construction or operational phase.

The above conclusions are made under the assumption that good construction site practices will mitigate any risk of pollution to the receiving environment.

6.0 Conclusion

The proposed project is not a development for which an EIA is mandatory. In terms of scale, the proposed housing development falls significantly below the threshold set out in Class10(b)(i) in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Regulations.

An EIA Screening exercise was carried out to determine the potential for the proposed development to have significant environmental effects or not. This exercise has been informed by a desk study of the site based on the best available information. The Appropriate Assessment Screening report (completed separately) for the site concluded that there will be no significant effect to Natura 2000 sites as a result of the proposed development, alone or in combination with any other permitted or proposed project. No significant negative effects on the environment have been identified during the construction or operational phase of the proposed development warranting the requirement to complete a subthreshold EIAR.

The above conclusions are made under the assumption that good design practice will be followed and good construction site practices will mitigate any risk of pollution to the receiving environment. Temporary disturbance in relation to noise levels, dust and traffic disturbance are typical of any construction phase, the proposed works will be confined to within the site of the proposed development and any potential impact on nearby sensitive receptors will be short-term and effectively managed through best practice measures. All mitigation outlined in this EIA, along with the CEMP and EclA will be followed.

It may be concluded that the proposed development site can therefore accommodate the development without significant impact and a detailed EIAR is not required.