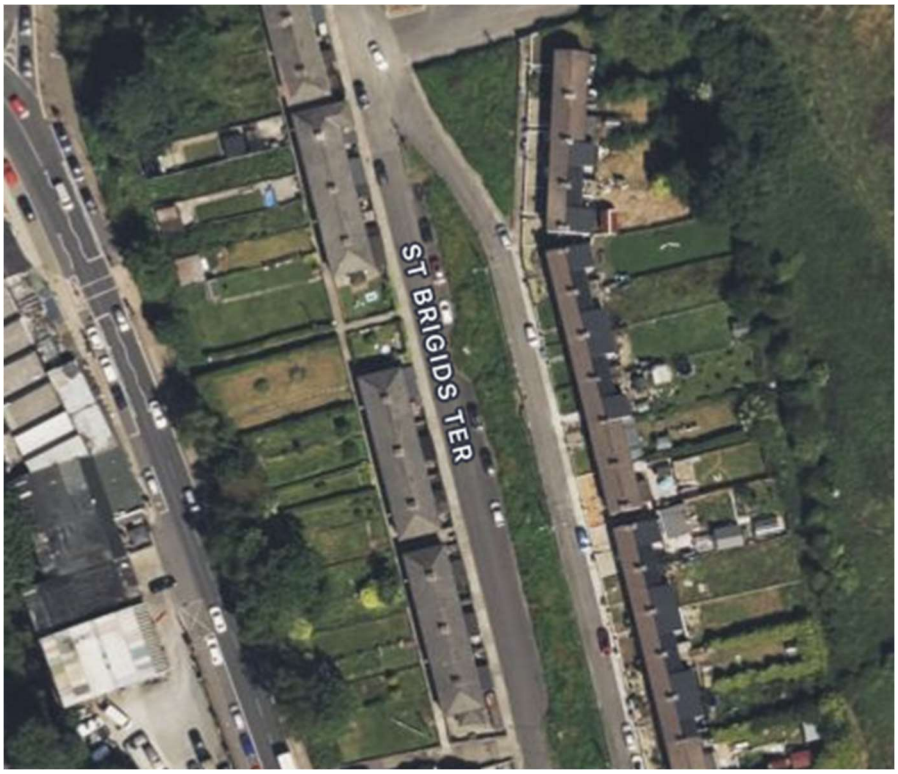
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

AT

ST. BRIGIDS TERRACE,

CAVAN

CO CAVAN



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Cavan County Council

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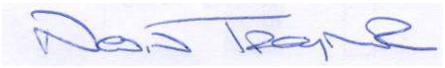
Authorised By:	 ***Nevin Traynor*** *BSc. Env, H. Dip I.T, Cert SHWW, EPA/FAS Cert.* *Environmental Consultant*

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1.0	Draft	10th January 2025	Lorna Smith	Nevin Traynor
2.0	Final	17th January 2025	Lorna Smith	Nevin Traynor

This report refers, within the limitations stated, to the condition of the site at the time of the report. No warranty is given as to the possibility of future changes in the condition of the site. The report as presented is based on the information sources as detailed in this report, and hence maybe subject to review in the future if more information is obtained or scientific understanding changes.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Traynor Environmental Ltd. has prepared the following Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') Screening Report for the proposed development at St. Brigid's Terrace, Cavan, Co Cavan on behalf of Cavan County Council ('the Applicant').

Cavan County Council have indicated their intention to undertake a residential development at St Brigid's Terrace, Cavan Town. The proposed own-door development scheme is known as Phase 3 of an overall masterplan comprised of 4no. phases. The site consists of seven derelict and vacant properties which are to be demolished to make way for twenty energy-efficient and modern homes, bringing new life into the town core. The site is earmarked for *Existing Residential* development within the Cavan Development Plan 2022 – 2028. The proposal responds to the need for residential homes in the area.

The development consists of:

i) Demolition of 7 no. vacant properties No. 13 to No. 19 St. Brigid's Terrace;
ii) Development of 20 no. own-door residential units spilt over 2no blocks:
  a. Block A is two-storey high and consists of 4 no. 2-bed apartments, located at ground floor level and 4no. 1-bed apartments, located at the first-floor level,
  b. Block B is three-storey high and consists of 6 no. 2-bed duplex units, located at lower ground and ground floor level and 6 no. 1 bed apartments, located at the first floor level.
iii) Car parking and bicycle parking provision;
iv) Pedestrian access steps connecting Dublin Road and St. Brigid's Terrace;
v) Public lighting
vi) Connection to public sewer and watermain
vii) Erection of boundary treatments and retaining structures and all associated site works.

The indicative site is outlined in red on Figure 1.1 (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The proposed development is described in further detail in Section 3 below.

Figure 1.1: Site Location Map

The purpose of this report is to provide the information required under Schedule 7A, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. This information will enable a screening determination in respect of the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment Report ('EIAR') for the proposed development.

There is a mandatory requirement for an EIAR to accompany a planning application for some types of development that meet or exceed the "thresholds" specified in Schedule 5 to the Planning and Development Regulations. In addition to the mandatory requirement, there is a case-by-case assessment necessary for sub-threshold developments as they may be likely to have significant effects on the environment. If a sub-threshold development is determined to be likely to have significant effect on the environment, then an EIAR will be required.

The second reason for this report is to document the studies undertaken by the Applicant, and the design team, to consider whether the development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The proposed development and component parts have been considered, as documented in Section 2, against the thresholds for EIA as outlined in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). The proposed development is a sub-threshold development and is not mandatory for EIA. Traynor Environmental Ltd have undertaken an assessment of the effects on the environment from the proposed development and has concluded that there are no likely significant environmental effects which would warrant preparation of an EIAR. The assessment is documented in Section 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0 and covers each aspect of the environment in accordance with guidance including Population and Human Health; Biodiversity; Land, Soils, Geology, Hydrogeology, and Hydrology; Air Quality and Climate; Noise and Vibration; Landscape and Visual Impact; Cultural Heritage, and Archaeology; Traffic and Transportation; Material Assets, and Waste.

1.1 EIA SCREENING LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

The legislation and guidance listed below has informed this report and the method to EIA Screening:

- Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports. (2022). Environment Protection Agency.
- Environmental Impact Assessment Screening, OPR Practice Note PN02 (Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021).
- European Union (Planning & Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018.
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects – Guidance on Screening. (2017). European Commission.
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects - Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. (2017) European Commission.
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment. (August 2018). Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.
- Advice Notes for preparing Environmental Impact Statements. (Draft, September 2015). Environment Protection Agency.
- Interpretation of definitions of project categories of Annex I and II of the EIA Directive. (2015) European Commission.
- European Union Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU.
- Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).
- Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)

The national requirements to provide an EIA with a planning application are outlined in *Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended* ('the Act') and *Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended* ('the Regulations'). In addition to the national legislation there are requirements set out in the EIA Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU); for relevant purposes, the EIA Directive has been transposed into Irish planning legislation through amendments to the Act and the Regulations.

This includes: the criteria set out Schedule 7 of the Regulations; the information set out at Schedule 7A; any further relevant information on the characteristics of the development and its likely significant effects on the environment submitted by the

applicant; any mitigation measures proposed by the applicant; the available results, where relevant, of preliminary verifications or assessments carried out under other relevant EU environmental legislation, including information submitted by the applicant on how the results of such assessments have been taken into account, and; the likely significant effects on certain sensitive ecological sites.

The screening process followed in this report is in accordance with the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as amended by 2014/52/EU and as transposed by the Act and the Regulations and follows the format as per Section 3.2 of the EPA Guidelines (2022). The potential for significant effects of the proposed Project has been considered against the criteria under Schedule 7 of the *Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended.*

In producing this report due regard has been paid to other EIA guidance including the European Commission's 2017 *EIA of Projects Guidance on Screening* as well as the published *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and* the OPR Practice Note PN02 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening.

Preliminary Screening for EIA

The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) provide for the preliminary examination for EIA. The Departmental Guidelines (August 2018) state as follows in relation to such a preliminary examination:

"For all sub-threshold developments listed in Schedule 5 Part 2, where no EIAR is submitted or EIA determination requested, a screening determination is required to be undertaken by the competent authority unless, on preliminary examination it can be concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. This is initiated by the competent authority following the receipt of a planning application or appeal.

A preliminary examination is undertaken, based on professional expertise and experience, and having regard to the 'Source – Pathway – Target' model, where appropriate. The examination should have regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 to the 2001 Regulations'.

1.2 SCREENING METHODOLOGY

The screening process followed in this report is in accordance with the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as amended by 2014/52/EU and follows the format as per Section 3.2 of the EPA Guidelines (2022).

The key steps to screen for an EIA are set out in Section 3.2 of the EPA Guidelines are as follows:

1. Is the development a type that that requires EIA?
2. Is it of a type that requires mandatory EIA?
3. Is it above the specified threshold?
4. Is it a type of project that could lead to effects? and/or
5. Is it a sensitive location? and/or
6. Could the effects be significant?

The information required to be submitted to make a determination on EIA Screening is set out in Schedule 7A of the Regulations of 2001 (see also Annex IIA of the EIA Directive).

However, it is important to note that Schedule 7A states '*The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3* [of Schedule 7A] *shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7*.' Having regard to this for the purposes of compiling the relevant information on the likely effects of the proposed development and to address points 4 to 6 above, an evaluation of the characteristics of the project, the sensitivity of the location of the proposed development, and the potential for significant impacts has been made with regard to Schedule 7 of the Regulations.

Schedule 7 of the Regulations of 2001 sets out the criteria to determine whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The criteria are broadly set out under the three main headings:

1) *Characteristics of proposed development* (Section 3.0)
   - *a) the size and design of the whole of the proposed development,*
   - *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,*
   - *c) the nature of any associated demolition works,*
   - *d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water, and biodiversity,*
   - *e) the production of waste,*
   - *f) pollution and nuisances,*
   - *g) the risk of major accidents, and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge, and*
   - *h) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).*

2) *Location of proposed development* (Section 4.0)
   - *a. the existing and approved land use,*
   - *b. the relative abundance, availability, quality, and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water, and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,*
   - *c. the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:*
     - *i. wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths.*
     - *ii. coastal zones and the marine environment.*
     - *iii. mountain and forest areas.*
     - *iv. nature reserves and parks.*
     - *v. areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive and.*
     - *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.*
     - *vii. densely populated areas.*
     - *viii. landscapes and sites of historical, cultural, or archaeological significance.*

3) *Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts (Section 5)*

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—

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

h. the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

However, it is important to note that Schedule 7A states '*The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 [*of Schedule 7A*] shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7*.' The main body of this report (Sections 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0) will cover Schedule 7A fully, but it has been set out to present the information under the headings provided for in Schedule 7 in order to assist the Planning Authority in its screening assessment.

1.3 CONTRIBUTORS TO THE EIA SCREENING REPORT

This EIA Screening Report has been informed by information in the AA screening report and information received from Craft Studio Architects. This EIA Screening Report should be read in conjunction with the plans and particulars submitted with the proposal.

1.4 Statement of Competency

The report was compiled by Nevin Traynor (B.Sc. Environmental Science & Technology (Sligo IT, 1999) of Traynor Environmental Ltd who has 24 years' experience in Environmental Impact Assessment. His project experience includes the management and productions of Environmental Impact Statements (EISs)/EIARs, particularly within the Commercial/Industrial and Housing Sector. Nevin Traynor of Traynor Environmental is deemed to be a "competent person" as per criteria outlined by the EPA.

2.0 SCREENING EVALUATION

2.1 IS THE DEVELOPMENT A PROJECT

The first step in screening is to examine whether the proposal is a project as understood by the EU Directive. For the purposes of the EU Directive, 'project' means: "*the execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, or other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources.*"

The EPA Guidance (2022) states that if a proposed project is not of a type covered by the Directive, there is no statutory requirement for it to be subject to environmental impact assessment. In determining if the proposed project is of a type covered by the Directive it may be necessary to go beyond the general description of the project and to consider the component parts of the project and/or any processes arising from it.

If any such parts or processes are significant and, in their own right fall within a class of development covered by the Directive, the proposed Project as a whole may fall within the requirements of the Directive.

Each element of the proposed development has been examined and the development clearly meets the definition of a Project as understood by the EU Directive.

2.2 IS THE DEVELOPMENT A PROJECT THAT REQUIRES A MANDATORY EIA

The next step is to determine if the proposed development is of a *project type* that requires mandatory EIA (i.e., is the proposed development of a project type in which a threshold does not exist). The types of projects to which thresholds do not apply are types that are considered to always be likely to have significant effects.

The type of projects for which an EIA is mandatory is set out in Schedule 5 Part 1 and Part 2 of the Regulations. An EIA is deemed mandatory under Section 172 of the Act to accompany a planning application for development for the types of projects set out in Schedule 5. This list was developed from Annex I and Annex II of the EIA Directive. The EPA Guidance (2022) requires an assessment beyond the general description of the project and to consider the component parts of the project and/or any processes arising from it.

In considering the wider context and the component parts of the project of the proposed development the thresholds of relevance to the proposal from Part 2 of Schedule 5 are set out below:

> *10. Infrastructure projects –*
>
> *(b)(i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units.*
>
> *(b)(iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.*
>
> *(In this paragraph, 'business district' means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use).*

For the project types of Class 10 (a) to (m) an EIA is mandatory only if the project equals or exceeds, as the case may be, a limit, quantity or threshold set out.

2.3 IS THE PROJECT ABOVE THE THRESHOLD FOR EIA

An EIAR is required to accompany an application for permission of a class set out in Schedule 5 Part 1 and Part 2 of the Regulations which equals or exceeds, as the case may be, a limit, quantity or threshold set for that class of development. A development that does not exceed a limit, quantity or threshold set for that class of development in Schedule 5 of the Regulations is known as a 'sub-threshold development'.

The proposed development and component parts have been considered against the thresholds outlined in Schedule 5, Part 2, Class 10 (a) to (m). The most relevant project type in the context of the proposed development are Class 10 (b)(i) and Class 10 (b)(iv) noted in Section 2.2 above.

Under Class 10 (b) (i) the threshold is '*more than 500 dwelling units*. Under Class 10

(b) (iv) the appropriate threshold is considered to be '*10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area' as* the site location is not within a business district but is within a built-up area. The conservative and pragmatic approach is to consider the area to have a predominant land use for residential use rather than business use.

The proposed development comprises of the change of use of a former public house known as 'Flynn's,' to 4no. Apartments. The proposed development site is not equal to, nor does it exceed the limit, quantity or threshold set out in Class 10(b) (i) and (iv); therefore, an EIA is not mandatory.

2.4 CONCLUSION – SUB THRESHOLD DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is 'of a type set out in Part 2 of Schedule 5 [in the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended)] which does not equal or exceed, as the case may be, a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development'. The development is outside the mandatory requirements for EIA and is considered to be sub-threshold for the relevant project type.

An EIA Report is still required to accompany a sub-threshold development which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7. Therefore, the final step in the screening process is to consider whether the development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore require an EIAR to be submitted and EIA carried out.

Directive 2014/52/EU requires the developer to provide information on the characteristics of the project and its likely significant effects on the environment, to allow the competent authorities to make a determination on the requirement for an EIA. The information required is set out in the Directive and transposed Schedule 7A of the Regulations.

The remainder of this report presents the information required by Schedule 7A to demonstrate the likely effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.

The following Sections 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0 will provide information on the characteristics of the proposed development, the location and context, and its likely impact on the environment. These sections present the information required under Schedule 7A of the Regulations, broadly set out in the structure Schedule 7 to ensure that each aspect for consideration is robustly addressed.

3.0 CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This section addresses the characteristics of proposed development by describing the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and a description of the location of the proposed development.

3.1 Size and Design of the Proposed development

The site in question is approximately 0.33ha and it is located in Cavan Town, in the townland of Townparks; approximately 200m south of Main St. The existing derelict houses and their front gardens face onto the Dublin Road and the rear of the dwellings extend east to St Brigid's Terrace. The houses are at a much higher level than the Dublin Road, and they are accessed from the Dublin Road by a series of steps.

The land use surrounding the site is mixed residential/commercial. To the east and south of the site, there are urban and sub-urban areas of Cavan, and the dominant habitats associated with these residential and commercial areas include buildings and artificial surface and amenity grassland and gardens. Beyond Cavan, agriculture is the primary land-use and the dominant habitats associated with these areas include improved and semi-improved agricultural grasslands, along with wet grasslands, hedgerows and treelines.

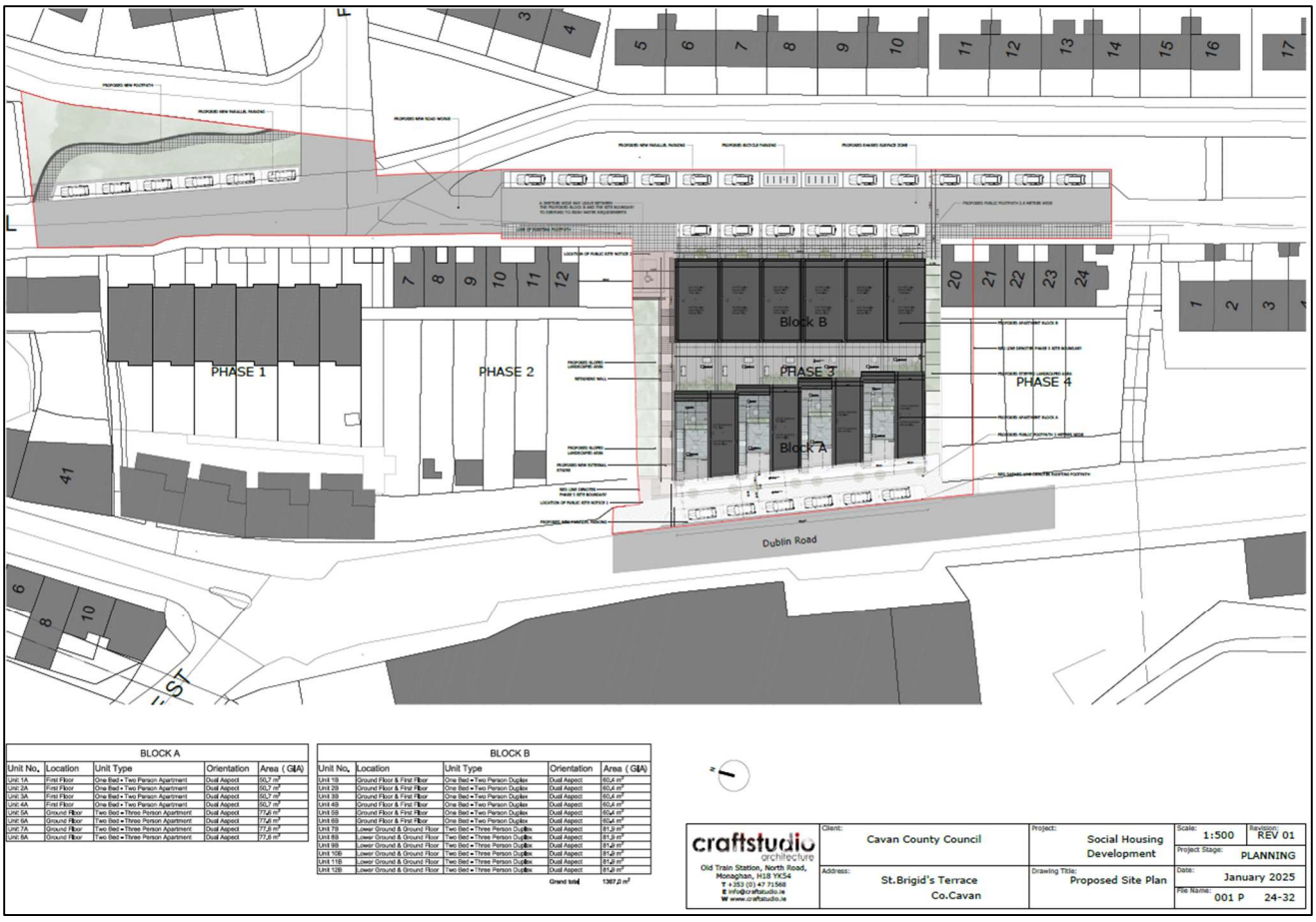


Figure 3.1 –Site Plan

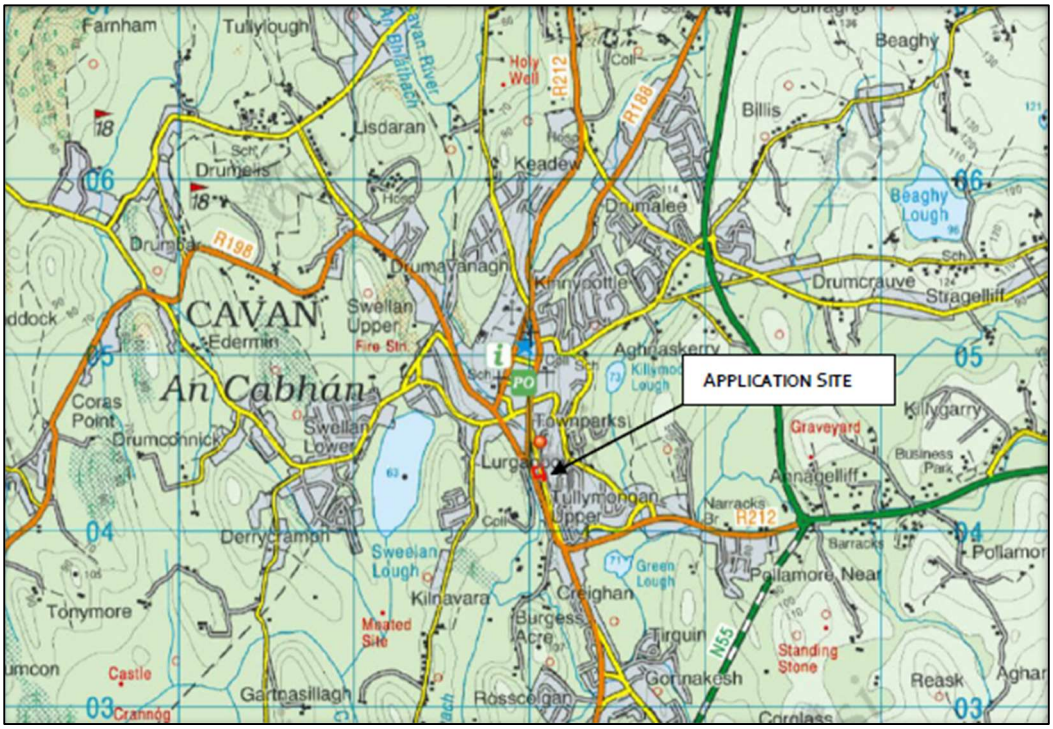


Figure 3.2- Site Location Map (Site is Pinned)

3.2 CUMULATION WITH OTHER EXISTING OR PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

This section outlines the potential cumulation with other existing or permitted developments. As part of the assessment of the impact of the proposed development, account has been taken of any relevant developments that are currently permitted, or under construction and substantial projects for which planning has been submitted within the surrounding areas, as well as existing local land uses. A preliminary assessment of potential cumulative effects on the environment is facilitated via the Source-Pathway-Receptor (SPR) model which is a multi-step process. The SPR methodology is a tool that ensures the most cautious means of assessment at the preliminary stages of a proposed development. The use of this tool ensures that all possible impacts are identified at a very early stage thus enabling further studies, mitigation measures or ameliorative actions to be put in place. The inherent use of the precautionary principle within the SPR methodology means that all potential for environmental impacts can be identified at a preliminary stage without any need for detailed studies, but rather upon available desktop information.

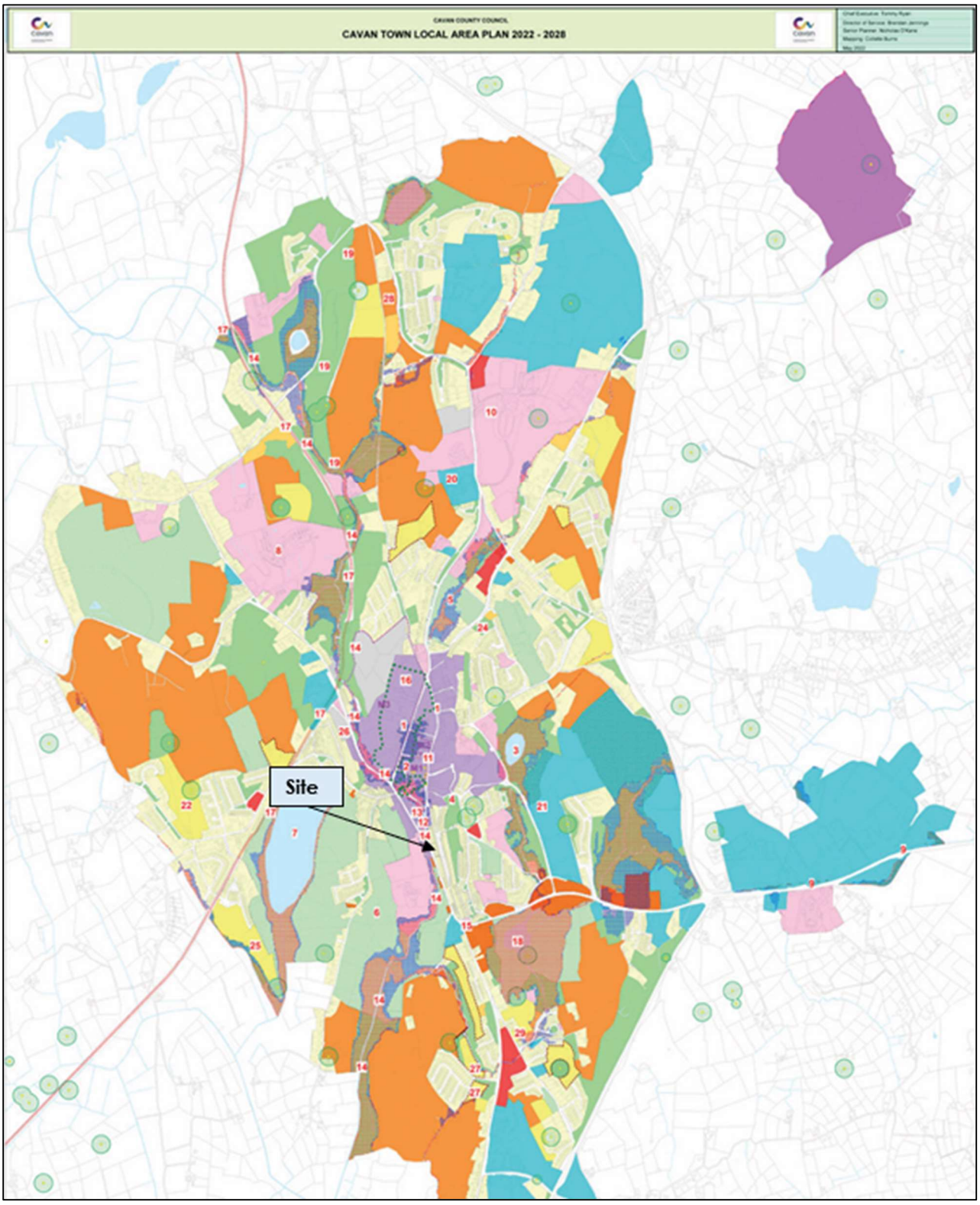
In order for there to be a potential cumulative effect all three elements of the SPR elements need to be present. If there is no pathway or functional link (direct or indirect) between the proposed development and a receptor, there is no potential for effect. Additionally, if there is no receptor within the area of a potential impact, there is similarly no effect as it does not cause harm to the environment due to the lack of a receptor.

There is no specific guidance available for a generic zone of influence to focus the assessment of existing land use and/or permitted projects that may result in cumulative effects. The research area has been established using expert judgement and based on the accessibility of data and taking into consideration the potential zone of influence of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed development.

In considering the potential effects of the proposed development (Section 5), it can be established that the closer to the works, there is a greater the potential for impacts. The most significant environmental impacts are likely to be confined within 50-150 m of the proposed development. The project being considered, is not expected to have Regional, National, or International, or Transboundary impacts.

The site is zoned in the Cavan County Development plan as "Existing Residential."

Figure 3.2 – Cavan County Development Plan Zoning Map



3.2.1 Population

Table 3.1 compares population change in the State and Cavan between the 2016 and 2022 census.

Table 3.1. Population Changes 2016 – 2022

Population Change 2016 – 2022			
Location	**2016**	**2022**	**% Change 2016 - 2022**
State	4,761,865	5,123,536	+7.6 %
Cavan County	76,176	81,201	+1.2%
Cavan Town	10,914	11,741	+1.2%

3.2.2 Permitted Development

The Site is within the administrative jurisdiction of Cavan County Council.

The planning history for the Site of the Proposed Development was reviewed from data sources including:

- Cavan County Council planning website, https://cavancoco.ie.
- An Bord Pleanála website, http://www.pleanala.ie/.
- EIA Portal, as provided by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local

3.3 NATURE OF ANY ASSOCIATED DEMOLITION WORKS

Demolition works at the site will involve the demolition of 7 no. vacant properties No. 13 to No. 19 St. Brigid's Terrace with an area of 275m^2

Figure 3.3 Buildings to be Demolished.

3.4 USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES (LAND, SOIL, WATER, BIODIVERSITY)

This section describes the proposed development in terms of the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water, and biodiversity. In the overall context of County Cavan, the proposed development there will not be a significant consumption of natural resources during construction and operation. The main use of natural resources will be land, soil, and water.

Other resources used will be construction materials which will be typical raw materials used in the construction of housing units. The scale and quantity of the materials used will not be such that would cause concern in relation to significant effects on the environment.

3.4.1 Land and Soil

The proposed development will require the excavation and removal of soils and materials for the purposes of excavation for foundations, landscaping, access roads and services.

It is proposed to reuse soil excavated on site, however should soil be removed off site, prior to being exported off-site, shall be classified as inert, non-hazardous or hazardous in accordance with the EPA's Waste Classification Guidance – List of Waste & Determining if Waste is Hazardous or Non-Hazardous document dated 1st June 2015 to ensure that the waste material is transferred by an appropriately permitted waste collection permit holder and brought to an appropriately permitted or licensed waste facility. Materials that can be reused will be notified to the EPA as a by-product. This ensures that waste and other materials removed from the site will have no significant effect on the environment.

There will be a requirement for deliveries of imported stone, and other construction materials. As the proposal is for apartment units the construction material which would normally be associated with, for example an apartment complex or standard housing development, will be much less as most of the construction is prepared off site.

3.4.2 Water Consumption

The demolition, construction or operation of the scheme will not use such a quantity of water to cause concern in relation to significant effects on the environment.

During the demolition and construction of the scheme, water will be required for welfare facilities, this will be provided by tanker. The demolition and construction phase will not use such a quantity of water to cause concern in relation to significant effects on the environment. Once the development is completed and the development is occupied there will be a domestic water requirement for showers, toilets, and cooking.

It is proposed all foul water from the new dwellings in a suitably sized sewer network and discharge it to the existing foul sewer located on the Dublin Road.

3.4.3 Biodiversity Resources

Investigations into the implications on existing biodiversity including species and habitats has been undertaken through the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report prepared by Noreen McLoughlin MSc.

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs/pNHAs) are national designations under the Wildlife Act 1976, as amended. A Natural Heritage Area (NHA) is designated for its wildlife value and receives statutory protection. A list of proposed NHAs (pNHAs) was published on a non-statutory basis in 1995, but these have not since been statutorily proposed or designated. The proposed development site is not located within any NHA or pNHA. There are a number of pNHAs in the vicinity of the proposed development site.

The accompanying AA Screening Report has assessed the potential for significant impacts of the construction and operational phases of the proposed development on Natura 2000 sites and habitat loss/alteration, habitat/species fragmentation, disturbance and/or displacement of species, change in population density and changes in water quality.

There are two Natura 2000 designated sites within 15km and the Zone of Influence of the application site. The qualifying site of interest, Lough Oughter an associated loughs is discussed in further detail below. These designated areas and their closest points to the proposed development site are summarised in Table 3.2 and a map showing their locations relative to the application site is shown in Figure 3.3.

Table 3.2 – Natura 2000 Sites Within 15km of the Application Site

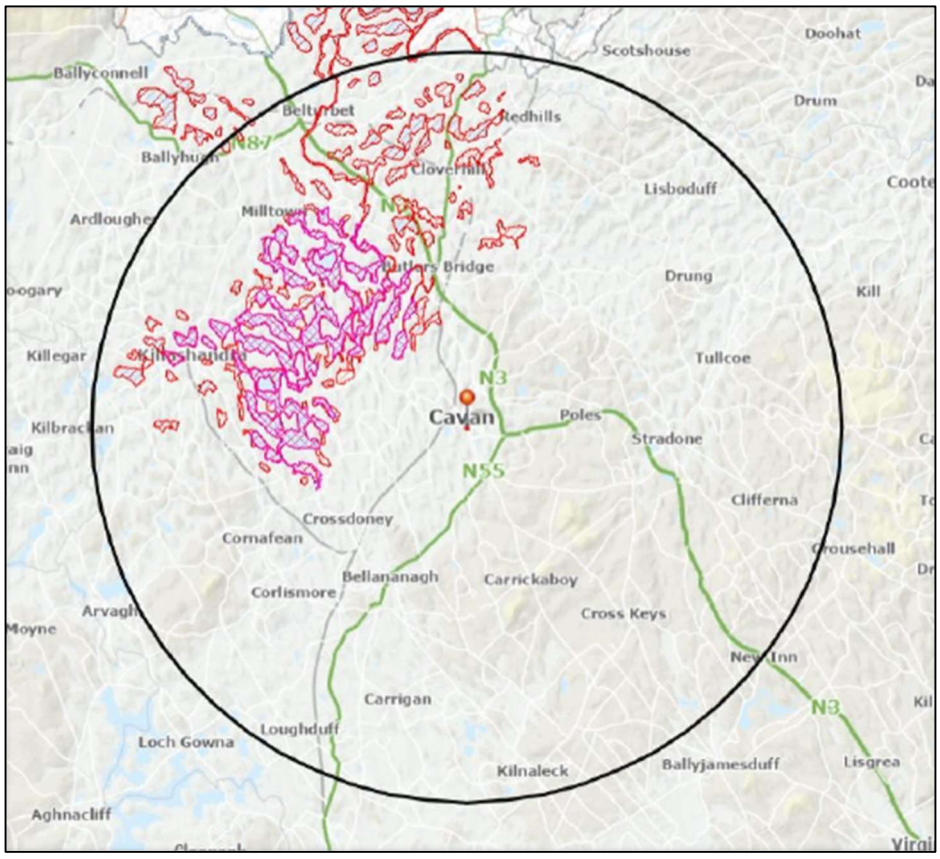
Site Name & Code	Distance from Site	Qualifying Interests	Screened In / Out
Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC 000007	3.7km north-west at its closest point	• Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition*-type vegetation • Bog woodland • Otter *Lutra lutra*	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SPA.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SPA and significant effects arising from pollution during construction or operation can be ruled out.*
Lough Oughter SPA 004049	3.8km north-west at its closest point	• Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) • Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) • Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) • Wetlands & Waterbirds	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during construction or operation can be ruled out.*

Site Summary

Lough Oughter and its associated loughs occupy much of the lowland drumlin belt in north and central Cavan between Upper Lough Erne, Killeshandra and Cavan town. The site is a maze of waterways, islands, small lakes and peninsulas including some 90 inter-drumlin lakes and 14 basins in the course of the Erne River. The area lies on Silurian and Ordovician strata with Carboniferous limestone immediately surrounding.

This site is a candidate Special Area of Conservation for natural eutrophic lakes and bog woodland, two habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive and for the otter, a species listed on Annex II of the same Directive. The site also contains areas of dry woodland, marsh, reedbed and wet pasture. The Lough Oughter area contains important examples of two habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive and supports a population of the Annex II species, otter. The site as a whole is the best inland example of a flooded drumlin landscape in Ireland and has many rich and varied biological communities. Nowhere else in the country does such an intimate mixture of land and water occur over a comparable area, and many of the species of wetland plants, some considered quite commonplace in Lough Oughter and its associated loughs, are infrequent elsewhere

Figure 3.3. The Application Site (Pinned) in relation to the Natura 2000 Sites. SACs – Red Hatching; SPAs – Pink Hatching.



The habitats recorded on site are described below, no Annex I habitats were recorded within the proposed development site. The site habitats have been defined using Fossitt's 'A Guide to Habitats in Ireland'. The application site does not lie within or adjacent to any area that has been designated for nature conservation purposes.

It is concluded in the AA Screening that:

"It can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site. An appropriate assessment is not, therefore, required"

3.5 PRODUCTION OF WASTE

The waste producer is responsible for waste from the time it is generated through until its legal disposal (including its method of disposal.) Waste contractors will be employed to physically transport waste to the final waste disposal / recovery site. It is therefore imperative that the residents, commercial tenants, and the proposed facilities management company undertake on-site management of waste in accordance with all legal requirements and employ suitably permitted/licensed contractors to undertake off-site management of their waste in accordance with all legal requirements. This includes the requirement that a waste contactor handle, transport, and reuse/recover/recycle/dispose of waste in a manner that ensures that no adverse environmental impacts occur as a result of any of these activities.

3.6 POLLUTION AND NUISANCES

There are potential short-term nuisances such as dust, noise, as well as the potential for pollution of surface water/ groundwater associated with construction activities. The demolition and construction activities shall only take place in accordance with standard construction times or permitted times, for example 08:00 to 18:00 Mondays to Fridays inclusive, between 08:00 to 13:00

hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and public holidays. No activity, which would reasonably be expected to cause annoyance to residents/users in the vicinity, will take place outside of these hours.

During the operation of the proposed development the housing units will be managed effectively to avoid pollution and nuisances. It is deemed to be a negligible risk when the site is constructed and operational.

3.7 RISK OF MAJOR ACCIDENTS AND/OR DISASTERS

3.7.1 Landslides, Seismic Activity and Volcanic Activity

There have been no recorded landslide events at the site. Due to the local topography and the underlying strata, there is a negligible risk of a landslide event occurring at the site. There is a very low risk of seismic activity at the proposed development site. There are no active volcanoes in Ireland so there is no risk from volcanic activity.

3.7.2 Flooding/Sea Level Rise

The potential risk of flooding on the site was conducted by reviewing historical information, identifying sources of potential flood risk to the site, and using predictive information. The development can be classified as a minor development as per revised Section 5.28 of the Planning Guidelines deals with minor proposals, such as 'small extensions to houses, and most changes of use of existing buildings and or extensions and additions to existing commercial and industrial enterprises'. The Guidelines state that such proposals are 'unlikely to raise significant flooding issues, unless they obstruct important flow paths, introduce a significant additional number of people into flood risk areas or entail the storage of hazardous substances.' The Guidelines go on to explain that 'since such applications concern existing buildings, the sequential approach cannot be used to locate them in lower-risk areas and the Justification Test will not apply. However, a commensurate assessment of the risks of flooding should accompany such applications to demonstrate that they would not have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities. These proposals should follow best practice in the management of health and safety for users and residents of the proposal.

3.7.3 Major Accidents/Hazards

The potential interaction with sites registered under the Seveso Directive (Directive 82/501/EEC, Directive 96/82/EC, Directive 2012/18/EU) and the Chemicals Act (Control of Major Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 209 of 2015) (the "COMAH Regulations"), which implement the latest Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU) has been considered in respect to notified installations and their proximity to the proposed development site.

There are two Seveso establishments within 15km of the development site. The closest Seveso site is Farragh Proteins, Monnery Upper, Crossdoney, Co. Cavan is located 6.12km west of the site. Lakeland Dairy Food Services Ltd, Church Street, Killeshandra, Co. Cavan located 11.57km northwest of the site.

3.7.4 Minor Accidents/Leaks

There is a potential impact on the receiving environment as a result of minor accidents/leaks of fuel/oils during the construction. A full Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) will be prepared prior to commencement.

3.8 RISKS TO HUMAN HEALTH

The EC 2017 Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report outlines that human health is a very broad factor that is highly project dependent. The guidance states: The notion of human health should be considered in the context of the other factors in Article 3(1) of the EIA Directive and thus environmentally related health issues (such as health effects caused by the release of toxic substances to the environment, health risks arising from major hazards associated with the Project, effects caused by changes in disease vectors caused by the Project, changes in living conditions, effects on vulnerable groups, exposure to traffic noise or air pollutants) are obvious aspects to study.

The EPA guidance explains that the scope of population and human health is project dependent but should consider significant impacts likely to affect aspects such as: convenience (expanded range of transport options); nuisance/ disturbance from lighting; displaced settlement patterns (residential); employment opportunities; settlement patterns; land use patterns; access for tourism, amenity, health impacts and/or nuisance due to noise, dust, or water pollution; and health and safety.

The characteristics of the proposed development, in terms of the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution) have been considered. The primary potential impacts of the proposed development on human health would be increased air pollution, noise, traffic, visual impact, or pollution of groundwater/nearby watercourses as a result of the proposed development.

The subject site is located in an area zoned in the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028 as:

- Existing Residential

It is anticipated that an increase in residential housing at this location would not have a significant negative impact on local parks, local tourism or shopping amenities that would pose a risk to human health. The increase in local population would only serve to continue the existing usage of such facilities. A CEMP will incorporate best practice construction methodologies for the control of dust generation, traffic, and noise, as well as the management of impacts on groundwater or nearby surface water during the construction phase. Any impacts associated with construction dust generation, traffic, and noise will be short term. These measures associated with the construction phase are best practice measures and are in no way included to avoid or reduce any potential harmful effects to any European sites.

During the Operational Phase, the proposed development design includes an appropriately designed stormwater network, which considers the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. It is proposed all foul water from the new dwellings in a suitably sized sewer network and discharge it to the existing foul sewer located on the Dublin Road.

4.0 LOCATION AND CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 EXISTING AND APPROVED LAND USE

The site is located on the southern outskirts of Cavan town, approximately 0.52km south of the town centre. As stated in the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028 Zoning Map the site is zoned as Existing Residential.

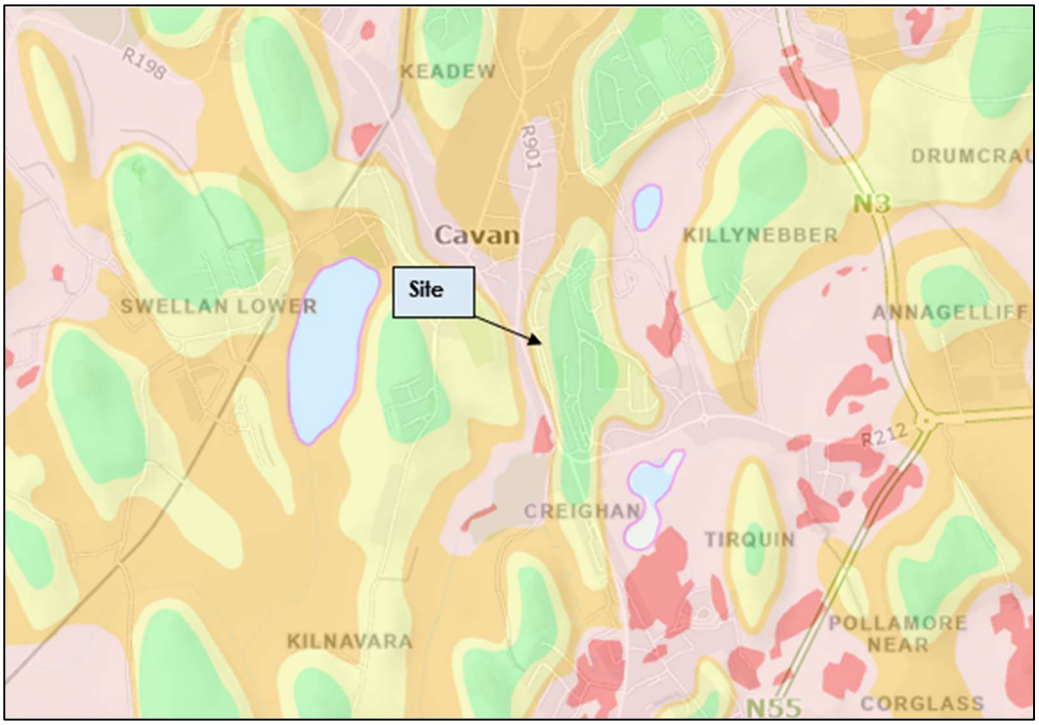
4.2 RELATIVE ABUNDANCE, AVAILABILITY, QUALITY AND REGENERATIVE CAPACITY OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE AREA AND ITS UNDERGROUND

4.2.1 Hydrogeology

According to GSI, the Groundwater Vulnerability represents the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological characteristics that determine the ease at which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities. The vulnerability of the groundwater depends on the time travel of infiltrating water, the quantity of contaminants that reach the groundwater and the contaminant attenuation capacity of the geological materials through which the water and contaminants infiltrate. The final vulnerability rating of an area is determined by the permeability and thickness of the subsoils underlying the groundwater, and the type of Recharge sources (diffuse or point source).

Therefore, areas where the infiltrating water and contaminants move faster from land to groundwater with high permeability are more vulnerable. According to the GSI the vulnerability classification for the proposed development site is 'Moderate'(M). The groundwater vulnerability map for the proposed development site is presented below in Figure 4.2.

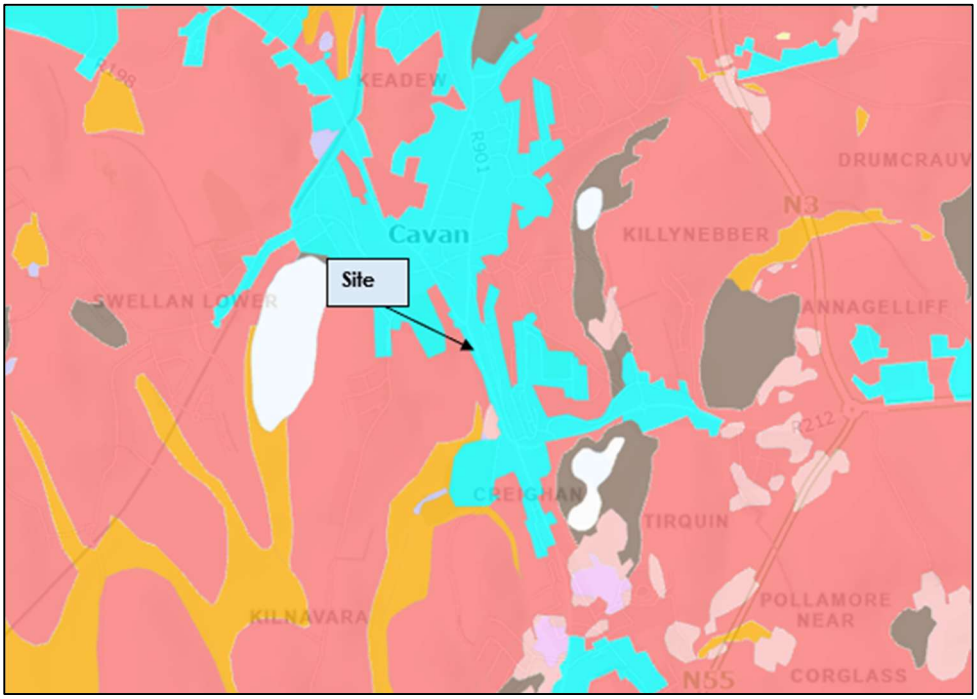
Figure 4.2: Groundwater Vulnerability



4.2.3 Soils

The "Teagasc Soils" from the GSI Mapping indicates the predominant soil type underlying the proposed development area to be made ground. The Soil Cover map for the site is presented below Figure 4. 3.

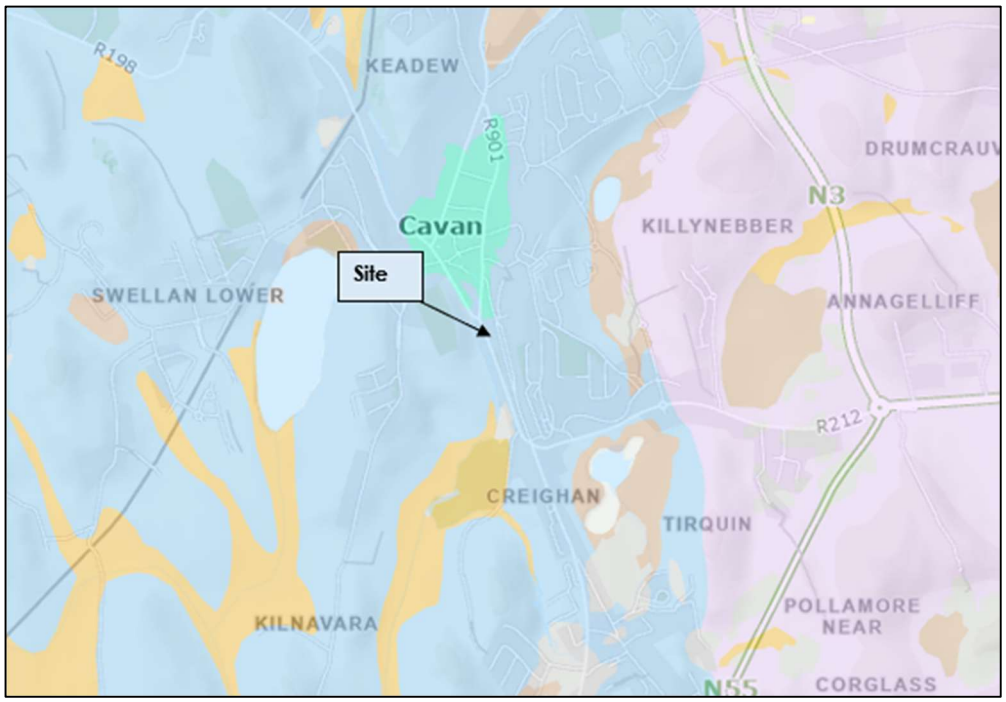
Figure 4.3: Soil Cover



4.2.4 Quaternary Sediments

The quaternary geological period extends from about 1.5 million years ago to the present day and is sub divided into two epochs: the Pleistocene epoch, which covers the Ice Age period, and extends up to 10,000 years ago and the Holocene Epoch, which extends from that time to the present day. Information available on the GSI online Mapping ("Quaternary Sediments") indicate that the proposed development site is underlain predominantly by 'Till derived from limestones.' (refer to Figure 4.4).

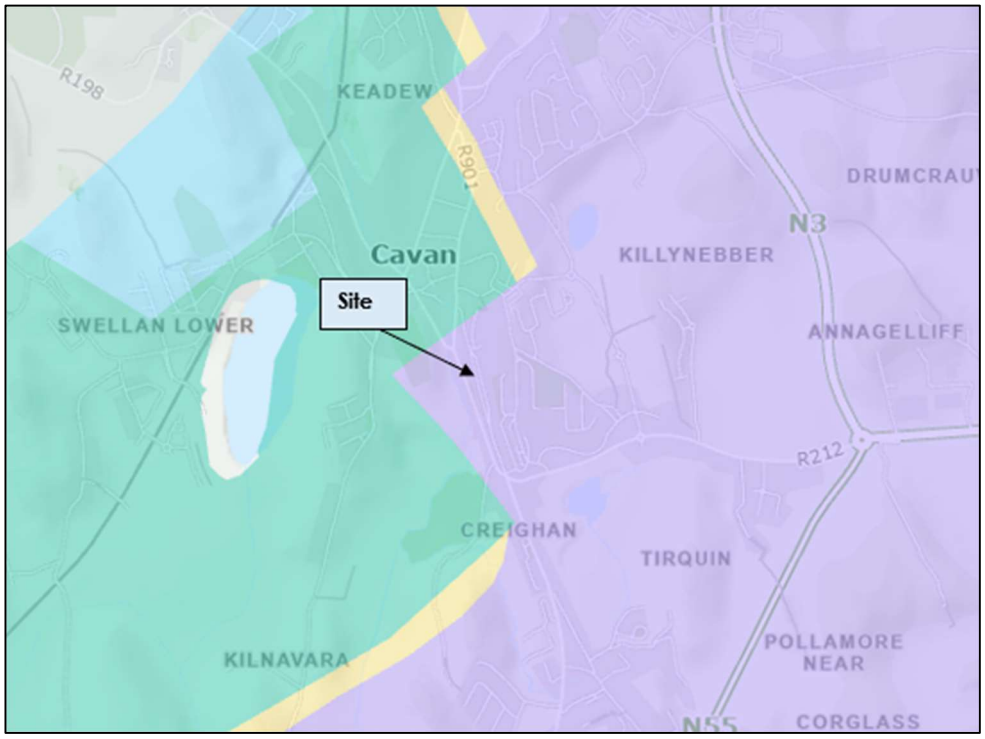
Figure 4.4: Quaternary Sediments



4.2.5 Bedrock Geology

The information obtained from the GSI Map indicates that the proposed development site is predominantly underlain by "Ordovician Metasediments" (OM). The Bedrock geology for the proposed site is presented below in Figure 4. 5.

Figure 4.5: Bedrock Geology



4.2.6 Hydrology

The application site lies within the Erne Area (36) and Catchment (36), the Cavan (Cavan_SC_010) Sub-Catchment. There are no watercourses within or adjacent to the application site. The closet watercourse to the site is the Cavan River (IE_NW_36CO20300) which is 26m west of the site. The site is separated from the Cavan River by the Dublin Road and a number of existing buildings. There is no hydrological connectivity between the application site and the Cavan River. The site is also circa 600m east of Swellan Lough, but no hydrological connectivity between the lake and the application site exists.

The Cavan River flows west of Cavan town in a northerly / north-westerly direction until it flows into Coalpit Lough, then Derrygid Lough and then the Annalee River.

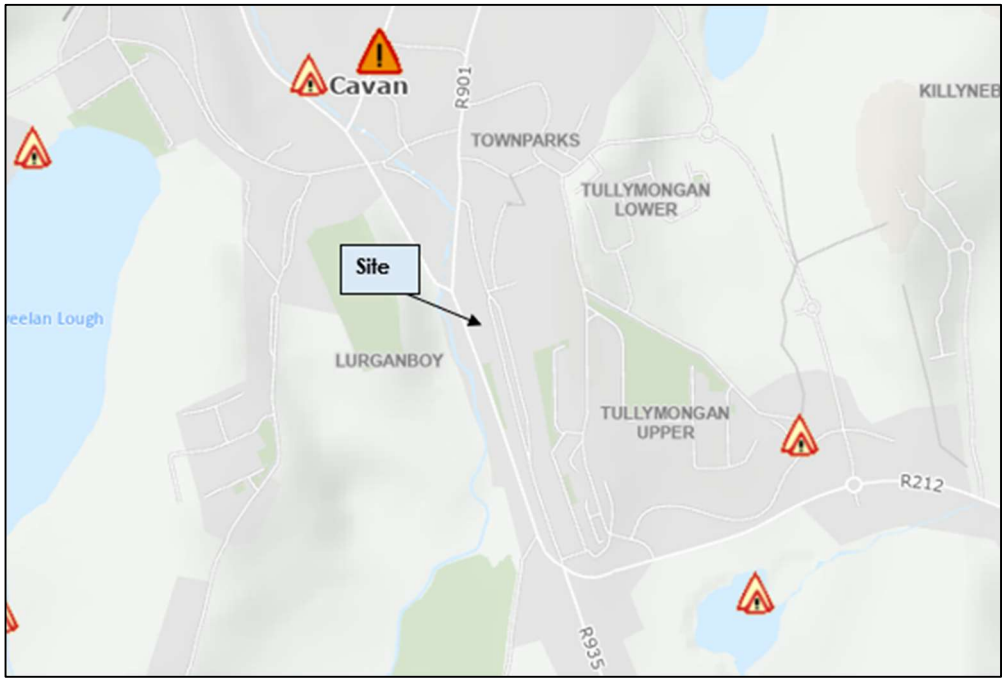
The EPA have classified the ecological status of the Cavan River and its tributaries at points close to the application site as poor. The EPA have not assigned any ecological status to Swellan Lough. Under the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), this is unsatisfactory and all watercourse must achieve good status by 2027 (end of 3rd cycle of the WFD). The application site is within the Cavan Ground Waterbody (IE_NW_G_061) and the EPA describe the overall status of this waterbody as good. This groundwater body is considered to be *Not At Risk*. Groundwater vulnerability throughout the site is classed as 'M' Moderate.

Flood Risk

The OPW's online National Flood Hazard Mapping Database provides information on reported floods, in the form of reports, photographs and newspaper articles. The database provides information on historic flooding events. No flooding events are recorded within the site area.

The historic flood event data map for St. Brigid's Terrace, Cavan, Co Cavan area obtained from the OPW flood mapping website is shown in figure 4.7. The map provides no evidence of any actual historical flood incident occurring at the site.

Figure 4.7. OPW National Flood Hazard Map



4.2.8 Biodiversity

An examination of the website of the National Biodiversity Data Centre, revealed that there are two protected mammal species identified within the relevant 1km square (H4204) of this proposed development, the Pipistrelle *(Pipistrellus pipistrellus)* and the Common Frog *(Rana temporaria)*.

4.3 Absorption Capacity of The Natural Environment

The proposed development due to its size and localised nature will not have any effect on wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths, coastal zones and the marine environment, mountain and forest areas, and nature reserves, or densely populated areas.

The development site is not located within the Conservation Area and is not located within or adjoining a Native Woodland Trust. The proposed development site is adjoined to the north and south by two separate sites listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. The environmental sensitivity of the proposed location in respect of Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive has been addressed in the AA Screening Report.

5.0 TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

This section sets out the likely significant effects on the environment of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 (as set out in Sections 4 and 5 above), 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 (as amended).

The quality, magnitude and duration of potential impacts are defined in accordance with the criteria provided in the Guidelines on Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA, 2022) this criterion is duplicated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Description of Effects

Characteristic	Term	Description
Quality of Effects It is important to inform the non-specialist reader whether an effect is positive, negative, or neutral	Positive	change which improves the quality of the environment (for example, by increasing species diversity, or improving the reproductive capacity of an ecosystem, or by removing nuisances or improving amenities).
	Neutral	No effects or effects that are imperceptible, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error.
	Negative/Adverse	A change which reduces the quality of the environment (for example, lessening species diversity or diminishing the reproductive capacity of an ecosystem, or damaging health or property or by causing nuisance).
Describing the Significance of Effects 'Significance' is a concept that can have different meanings for different topics – in the absence of specific definitions for different topics the following definitions may be useful (also see Determining Significance).	Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.
	Not significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
	Slight Effects	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
	Moderate Effects	An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.
	Significant Effects	An effect, which by its character, magnitude, duration, or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.
	Very Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration, or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment.
	Profound Effects	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics
Describing the Extent and Context of Effects Context can affect the perception of significance. It is important to establish if the effect is unique or, perhaps, commonly, or increasingly experienced.	Extent	Describe the size of the area, the number of sites, and the proportion of a population affected by an effect.
	Context	Describe whether the extent, duration, or frequency will conform or contrast with established (baseline) conditions (is it the biggest, longest effect ever?)
Describing the Probability of Effects Descriptions of effects should establish how likely it is that the predicted effects will occur so that the CA can take a view of the balance of risk over advantage when making a decision	Likely Effects	The effects that can reasonably be expected to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.
	Unlikely Effects	The effects that can reasonably be expected not to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.

Characteristic	Term	Description
Describing the Duration and Frequency of Effects Duration 'is a concept that can have different meanings for different topics – in the absence of specific definitions for different topics the following definitions may be useful.	Momentary Effects	Effects lasting from seconds to minutes
	Brief Effects	Effects lasting less than a day
	Temporary Effects	Effects lasting less than a year
	Short-term Effects	Effects lasting one to seven years.
	Medium-term Effects	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years
	Long-term Effects	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years
	Permanent Effects	Effects lasting over sixty years
	Reversible Effects	Effects that can be undone, for example through remediation or restoration
	Frequency of Effects	Describe how often the effect will occur. (Once, rarely, occasionally, frequently, constantly – or hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, annually)

5.1 POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH

5.1.1 Construction Phase

The potential impacts of the proposed development on population human health and populations would be nuisances such increased air pollution (dust), noise, traffic, and visual impacts of the construction phase. The likely potential impact of the proposed development with respect to population and human health during the construction and demolition phase can be considered to be **negative, moderate to significant and short-term.**

The potentially significant short-term impacts (due to air pollution (dust), noise, traffic) during the construction phase will be mitigated in accordance with a CEMP submitted prior to commencement, and through implementation of binding hours of construction.

The demolition and construction phase of the proposed development will provide for the temporary employment of construction workers, which will provide benefits for local businesses providing retail or other services to construction workers and potential additional employment in the area.

The residual impact of the proposed development with respect to population human health during the construction phase after the implementation of mitigation measures set out in this report, is **Neutral, not significant, and short-term.**

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of population and human health impacts during the demolition and construction phase. Therefore, the requirement for subthreshold EIA does not arise.

5.1.2 Operational Phase

The proposed development will not result in any off-site exceedance of the relevant ambient air quality standards. The proposed development will not generate significant outward noise.

There are no planned direct discharges to water or land, although the risk of accidental discharge or spills exists. A number of design measures are proposed to prevent the contamination of groundwater during the operational phase. The design of the proposed development has due regard for the sensitivity of the surroundings and is not likely to adversely impact on local

populations. The proposed development comprises a residential development which is not expected to significantly add to the current noise level of the surrounding environment. Noise and Vibration impacts are discussed further.

The residual impact of the proposed development with respect to populations and human health during the operational phase is **positive, not significant, and long-term.** Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of population and human health impacts during the operational phase. Therefore, the requirement for subthreshold EIA does not arise.

5.2 LAND, SOILS, GEOLOGY, HYDROGEOLOGY, HYDROLOGY

5.2.1 Demolition & Construction Phase

Potential for increased sediment and runoff from excavation, soil handling, removal, and compaction

The site preparation, excavations and levelling works required to facilitate construction of foundations, access roads and the installation of services will require excavation of soil, stones, and bedrock (if encountered). Soil will be kept onsite where possible, if any material is to be exported it needs to be brought off site by an approved collector or moved with the benefit of an Article 27 declaration. Any material, which is exported from site, if not correctly managed or handled, could impact negatively on human beings (onsite and offsite) as well as water and soil environments.

In the event that soil is required to be taken off site, prior to removal, all excavated materials will be visually assessed for signs of contamination such as staining or strong odours. Should any unusual staining or odour be noticed, samples of this soil will be analysed for the presence of contaminants in order to ensure that historical pollution of the soil has not occurred. Should it be determined that any of the soil excavated is contaminated, this will be disposed of by a licensed waste disposal contractor.

Excavated soil will arise during the demolition and construction period and will be stored (if required) on site prior to being removed by a specialist contractor.

Stockpiles of soil and construction aggregate can have the potential to cause negative impacts on air and water quality. The effects of soil stripping and stockpiling will be mitigated through the implementation of appropriate earthworks handling protocol during construction. It is anticipated that any stockpiles will be formed within the boundary of the site and there will be no direct link or pathway from this area to any surface water body. Overburden material will be protected from exposure to wind by storing the material in sheltered parts of the site, where possible.

In respect of the foregoing, the residual impact as a result of the potential for increased sediment and runoff from excavation works on, land, soils, geology, hydrogeology, and hydrology during demolition and construction is considered to be **negative, imperceptible, and short-term.**

Potential for contamination from Accidental Spills and Leaks

There is potential for water to become contaminated with pollutants associated with construction activity. Contaminated water which arises from construction sites can pose a significant short-term risk to water quality for the duration of the construction if contaminated water is allowed to percolate to the aquifer or accidental discharges into surface water.

Machinery activities on site during the construction phase may result in run-off of contaminated waters into surface water networks or ground water. Potential impacts could arise from accidental spillage of fuels, oils, paints, cement, etc. which could impact surface water if allowed to run off into surface water systems and/or receiving water courses or groundwaters.

The potential impacts during the construction phase are required to be mitigated by ensuring best practice construction with respect to storage of any hazardous substances (fuels, chemicals and other construction materials that may pose a risk to the environment). A project specific CEMP will set out the best practice construction methodology to manage the risk of accidental spills and leaks. Given the scale and localised nature of the proposed development, and the lack of impact pathways between the Site and surface water bodies there is no likelihood of significant effects on water quality.

In respect of the foregoing, the residual impact in respect of the potential for impacts related to contamination from accidental spills on, soils, geology, hydrogeology, and hydrology during construction is considered to be **negative, imperceptible, and short-term.**

Dewatering, Run-off, and Sediment Loading

There is the potential for contaminated surface water run-off from site preparation, levelling, landscape contouring and excavations during the construction phase may contain increased silt levels or become polluted from construction activities. Silt water can arise from excavations, exposed ground, stockpiles, and access roads. Construction water containing large amounts of silt or other contaminants such as hydrocarbons has the potential to cause negative, and short-term impacts receiving surface water bodies, or surface water networks, if not adequately mitigated.

The Contractor appointed to undertake the works will be required to develop a Construction Management Plan in line with their obligations under the Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 as amended.

The CEMP should detail measures to help ensure that the receiving surface water drainage network is sufficiently protected for the duration of the proposed works. Where dewatering is required during the construction phase, dirty water will be fully and appropriately attenuated, through silt bags, before being appropriately discharged to ensure that no silty or contaminated water from the construction works will be discharged to any stormwater network.

In respect of the foregoing, the residual impact in respect of the potential for impacts related to dewatering on soils, geology, hydrogeology, and hydrology during construction is considered to be **negative, imperceptible, short-term.**

5.2.2 Operational Phase

Direct and Indirect Discharges Management

Wastewater Treatment

When the existing buildings are demolished, all existing foul drainage infrastructure onsite will be removed. It is proposed to collect all the foul water from the new dwellings in a suitability sized sewer network and discharge it to the existing foul sewer located in the Dublin Road.

Surface Water Treatment

When the existing building are demolished all drainage infrastructure onsite will be removed. It is proposed to use gullies, downpipes, and a suitably sized network to collect all the surface water from the proposed roof areas and discharge it to the existing storm water network in both the St Brigid's Terrace Road and the Dublin Road. It is proposed to use permeable paving on all new car parking spaces. Permeable paving systems will reduce peak discharges into the drainage system and treat run off by providing a 70-90% removal efficiency rate for hydrocarbons and 60-95% removal of suspended solids thereby improving the quality of water being discharged.

Conclusions

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of land, soil, geological, hydrogeological, and hydrological impacts during the demolition, construction, and operational phases. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.3 BIODIVERSITY

5.3.1 Construction Phase

The potential impact from the proposed development on biodiversity with particular attention to species and habitats protected under the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive has been considered as a part of the AA Screening Report by Noreen McLoughlin MSc Ecologist. The AA Screening Report for the site has confirmed that the site is not under any wildlife or conservation designation. Furthermore, no rare, threatened or legally protected species are known to occur on the site.

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of biodiversity impacts during the construction phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise. Please refer to the accompanying AA Screening.

5.3.2 Operational Phase

The accompanying AA Screening Report by Noreen McLoughlin MSc Ecologist has assessed the potential for significant impacts of the operational phases of the proposed development on Natura 2000 sites and habitat loss/alteration, habitat/species fragmentation, disturbance, and/or displacement of species, change in population density and changes in water quality.

The development during operation is considered to have no impact on the biodiversity in the area due to the distance from the site to the nearest SACs and site does not lie within or adjacent to any area that has been designated for nature conservation purposes. There are no habitats of biodiversity value on the application site.

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of biodiversity impacts during the operational phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

It can be concluded objectively that this proposed development does not need to proceed to Stage II of the Appropriate Assessment process. There will be no impacts upon the integrity, or the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites identified. The habitats and species associated with this site will not be adversely affected.

5.4 AIR QUALITY AND CLIMATE

Air Quality

The Air Quality Standards (AQS) Regulations describe the air quality zoning adopted in Ireland as follows:

- Zone A (Dublin Conurbation)
- Zone B (Cork Conurbation)
- Zone C (16 Cities and Towns with population greater than 15,000); and
- Zone D (Rural Ireland: areas not in Zone A, B and C).

The proposed development is in Zone D. Based on published air quality data for the Zone D area in the vicinity of the subject site, it may be concluded that the air quality at the subject site may be characterised as being good with no exceedances of the Air Quality Regulations 2011 limit values of individual pollutants.

The quality of existing air quality at the subject site must be maintained and improved where possible as a result of the proposed development to ensure that local human health and the ecological environment is not adversely affected.

The EPA manages the National Ambient Air Quality Network. This network sets legislative limits and target values for the protection of human health and vegetation. Air quality in Ireland is generally good, however, there are concerning localised issues that are impacting negatively on the air we breathe. Air quality monitoring results in 2021 showed that fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$)

mainly from burning solid fuel in our homes, and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) mainly from road transport, remain the main threats to good air quality. EPA monitoring shows that $PM_{2.5}$ and NO_2 levels are within the current EU legal limits, however these pollutants exceed the World Health Organisation (WHO) Air Quality guidelines (AQGs) for health.

5.4.1 Construction Phase

Construction stage traffic and embodied energy of construction materials are expected to be the dominant source of greenhouse gas emissions as a result of the construction phase of the development. Construction vehicles, generators etc., may give rise to some CO_2 and N_2O emissions. However, due to the short-term nature of these works, the impact on climate will **not be significant, and short term**.

Nevertheless, some site-specific mitigation measures can be implemented during the construction phase of the proposed development to ensure emissions are reduced further. In particular the prevention of on-site or delivery vehicles from leaving engines idling, even over short periods. Minimising waste of materials due to poor timing or over ordering on site will aid to minimise the embodied carbon footprint of the site.

The greatest potential impact on air quality during the construction phase of the proposed development is from construction dust emissions and the potential for nuisance dust and PM_{10}/$PM_{2.5}$ emissions. While construction dust tends to be deposited within 350 m of a construction site, the majority of the deposition occurs within the first 50 m based on Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) guidance (2011).

The scheme has potential for dust impacts during construction due to the separation distance between the site and the nearest sensitive receptors. Therefore, during construction, there is potential for dust impacts on these sensitive receptors which would be considered in the absence of mitigation **negative, significant, and short-term**.

The pro-active control of fugitive dust will ensure the prevention of significant emissions, rather than an inefficient attempt to control them once they have been released. The main contractor will be responsible for the coordination, implementation and ongoing monitoring of the dust minimisation measures. The key aspects of controlling dust are listed below.

In summary the measures which will be implemented will include:

- During very dry periods when dust generation is likely, construction areas will be sprayed with water.
- Exhaust emissions from vehicles operating within the site, including trucks, excavators, diesel generators or other plant equipment, will be controlled by the contractor through regular servicing of machinery.
- Vehicle speeds will be limited in the construction site.
- Surrounding roads used by trucks to access to and egress from the site will be cleaned regularly using an approved mechanical road sweeper. Roads will be cleaned subject to local authority requirements. Site roads will be cleaned on a daily basis, or more regularly, as required.
- Vehicle wheels will be checked wash facilities will be provided to remove excess mud from wheels. These facilities will be located at the exit from the site and away from sensitive receptors, where possible.
- The technique adopted for all works shall minimise the release of dust into the atmosphere.
- Daily visual inspections will be carried out at locations around the site boundary as required.
- These inspections will monitor the effectiveness of dust mitigation measures.

In the event of dust nuisance occurring outside the site boundary, movements of materials likely to raise dust would be curtailed and satisfactory procedures implemented to rectify the problem before the resumption of construction operations. The residual effects on air quality and climate will be **moderate, negative, short term** during the construction phase.

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of air quality and climate impacts during the construction phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.4.2 Operational Phase

In relation to the operational phase of the proposed development, the proposed development will not result in any significant emissions of air quality pollutants or greenhouse gases once operational. Therefore, the potential impact to air quality from the operational phase of the proposed development is expected to be imperceptible.

Therefore, no site-specific mitigation measures are required. Current EPA guidance states that a development may have an influence on global climate where it represents "a significant proportion of the national contribution to greenhouse gases" (EPA, 2003). The "Guidelines on The Information to Be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports" (2022) states that impacts relevant to adaptation to climate change should be assessed and that projects should be assessed in terms of their vulnerability to climate change. Therefore, the impact to climate from the operational phase of the proposed Project is expected to be imperceptible in terms of national CO_2 emissions and Ireland's agreed limit under the Kyoto Protocol (Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1997, 1999) and the EU Effort Sharing Agreement ("20-20-20" Targets).

The proposed Project will not result in any impacts relevant to adaptation therefore the project will not be vulnerable to climate change. Based on the above the potential effects on Air Quality are **neutral, imperceptible, and long term** for the operational phase. Therefore, the residual impact of the proposed Project on ambient air quality is deemed to be imperceptible.

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of air quality and climate impacts during the operational phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.5 NOISE AND VIBRATION

5.5.1 Construction Phase

During the demolition and construction phase there is potential for temporary impacts on the nearest residential, educational, commercial, and industrial properties due to noise emissions from the plant equipment required for construction. The magnitude of noise generated will be dependent on several factors including the proximity of noise sensitive receptors, construction methods employed, the selection of plant and construction programming. A variety of items of construction methods and plant items will be required during the various phases of the construction project. Noise will be generated primarily from the onsite construction activity however noise can be generated during haulage of construction and waste materials to and from site.

The potential for noise and vibration effects in the absence of mitigation can be characterised as negative, **moderate to significant, and short term** for the construction phase.

There is no published statutory Irish guidance relating to the maximum permissible noise level that may be generated during the demolition and construction phase of a project. The application of avoidance measures, such as binding hours of construction, along with implementation of appropriate noise and vibration control measures, will ensure that noise and vibration impact will not be excessively intrusive. Any impacts will be short term in duration for the construction phase. The minimisation measures below ensure nuisance noise arising from site clearance and construction activities is prevented where possible and managed in accordance with best practice and any subsequent planning conditions relevant to the proposed development.

The relevant mitigation measures:

- Hours will be limited, during which noisy site activities are permitted 08:00am to 18:00hrs Monday to Friday and 08:00am to 13:00hrs on a Saturday. No work to be carried out on a Sunday or bank holiday.
- Channels of communication will be established between the Contractor/Developer, Local Authority and Residents.
- A Site Representative will be appointed responsible for matters relating to noise.
- Typical levels of noise will be monitored during critical periods and at sensitive locations.
- Plant Equipment will be selected with low inherent potential for the generation of noise.
- All site roads will be kept even so as to mitigate the potential for vibration from lorries.
- Barriers will be erected as necessary around items such as generators or heavy-duty compressors.
- Noisy plant will be sited as far away from sensitive properties as permitted by site constraints.
- Engines, vehicles, and equipment will be switched off when not in use.
- Significant sources of noise will be enclosed.
- Plant will be used and serviced regularly in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Machinery having rotating parts will be serviced according to supplier recommendations to prevent friction induced sound.
- Materials should be lowered, not dropped, as far as practicable and safe.

All personnel must be made aware that noisy construction activities resulting in significant noise levels must be minimised and made aware of the above control measures. During the construction stage the following codes and regulations will be adhered to:

- BS 5228:2009 Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites, Part 1, and Part 2.
- SHWW (General Application) Regulations 2007 – 2016, Part 5 Noise and Vibration

Noise and vibration effects on the environment following the implementation of standard construction mitigation measures, the residual impact can be characterised as **negative, slight to moderate, and short term** for the construction phase.

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of noise and vibration impacts during the construction phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.5.2 Operational Phase

The operation of the proposed development will remain consistent with the type of activity and buildings in the vicinity of the proposed development site. The proposed development will give rise to additional road traffic on public roads, additional traffic from residential developments can give rise to slight to moderate impacts in respect of noise.

The residual effects on noise and vibration are **neutral, imperceptible, and long term** for the operational phase.

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of noise and vibration impacts during the operational phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.6 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

5.6.1 Construction Phase

The change of use of the site from that of a residential area to that of a construction site, will give rise to short term and substantially localised effects on landscape character. This effect will be seen through the introduction of new housing units, machinery, ancillary works, and associated hoarding, etc. Measures will be undertaken to mitigate any potentially adverse construction-related effects on immediately adjoining neighbours, particularly on the residents, commercial and industrial on the adjacent lands. Operation of a well-managed organised and planned construction site, with adequate control of construction traffic and working activity, will be undertaken which is key to avoiding and minimising impact.

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of landscape and visual impacts during the construction phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.6.2 Operational Phase

The proposed development is consistent with the land use zoning designation**.** In keeping with this context, the proposed development, once complete, should integrate visually with the existing landscape and will not give rise to any significant landscape and visual effects. The design and layout of the proposed development is appropriate in terms of the existing site character, zoning, and context.

The residual impact on landscape and visual impact during construction will be long term, and range from **imperceptible to moderate, neutral to positive.**

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of landscape and visual impacts during the operational phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.7 CULTURAL HERITAGE, AND ARCHAEOLOGY

5.7.1 Construction Phase

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) do not record any monuments on the site.

The proposed development works will be **neutral, imperceptible, and short term.**

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of cultural heritage and archaeological impacts during the construction phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.7.2 Operational Phase

The operational phase of the proposed development is not predicted to have any impact on archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage.

In this regard any impacts upon cultural heritage and archaeological are considered to be **neutral, imperceptible, and long term.**

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of cultural heritage and archaeological impacts during the operational phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.8 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

5.8.1 Construction Phase

During the construction phase of the proposed development, there will be additional traffic movements to/from the site from construction personnel, security staff, professional staff (i.e., design team, utility companies), excavation plant, dumper trucks and deliveries/removal of materials (waste/spoil). In order to transport construction material to the site in the most efficient and environmentally sensitive manner appropriate routes need to be identified. The site can be accessed from St Brigid's Terrace and the Dublin Road.

It is not expected that the proposals will result in a material deterioration of existing road conditions and will encourage travel by more sustainable means and as a result there are no significant traffic or transportation related reasons that should prevent the proposed development proceeding.

After the implementation of mitigation measures the potential impact on Traffic and Transportation are **negative, short term and not significant** for the construction phase.

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of traffic and transportation impacts during the construction phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.8.2 Operational Phase

The proposed scheme will see an increased level of traffic coming to and from the site when compared to the existing situation. The proposed scheme can be accessed from St Brigid's Terrace and the Dublin Road.

The potential impact on Traffic and Transportation during the operational phase are **negative, long term and not significant** for the operational phase.

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of traffic and transportation impacts during the operational phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.9 MATERIAL ASSETS, INCLUDING WASTE MANAGEMENT

The proposed development will have an impact upon other material assets such as 'built services and infrastructure such as electricity, telecommunications, gas, and water supply.

5.9.1 Construction Phase

Utilities

Electrical connections will be made by suitably qualified personnel following consultation with the relevant authorities and will be cognisant of subsequent construction works. High voltage connections will be established for heavy duty equipment and site facilities, as required. All electrical works, including connection to the ESB network will be carried out by a suitably qualified contractor. The power and electrical supply requirements during construction are relatively minor, and there is no potential impact anticipated on existing users.

Water supply required for welfare facilities, dust suppression and general construction activities will be sourced from the existing public supplies. Although before connections are established to the water supply it may need to be trucked onto site. As with electrical works, this will be carried out by a suitably qualified contractor. It will be necessary to service the site with a reliable and safe water supply.

Site welfare facilities will be established to provide sanitary facilities for construction workers on site. The main contractor will ensure that sufficient facilities are always available to accommodate the number of employees on site. When the existing buildings are demolished, all existing foul drainage infrastructure onsite will be removed. It is proposed to collect all the foul water from the new swellings in a suitability sized sewer network and discharge it to the existing foul sewer located in the Dublin Road.

Electrical connections will be made by suitably qualified personnel following consultation with the relevant authorities and will be cognisant of subsequent construction works. The power and electrical supply requirements during construction are relatively minor, and there is no potential impact anticipated on existing users.

In respect of the foregoing, the predicted impacts upon material assets (utilities) are considered to be ***neutral, imperceptible,*** and ***short term***.

Waste and Waste Management

There will be some waste materials produced in the demolition and construction of the proposed scheme which will be disposed of using licensed waste disposal facilities and contractors. The scale of the waste production in conjunction with the use of licensed waste disposal facilities and contractors does not cause concern for likely significant effects on the environment.

Other than waste generated from materials necessary for the construction of the building the proposed development will not produce significant volumes of waste.

All waste arising during the construction phase will be managed and disposed of in a way that ensures compliance with Waste Management Act 1996 as amended and associated amendments and regulations and the Waste Management Plan. In the event, there is excess material with no defined purpose, it will be transported to an authorised soil recovery site or notified to the EPA as a by-product when it will be beneficially used.

It is considered that the proposed development will not have any significant impact in terms of resources or waste generation.

A carefully planned approach to waste management will ensure that the impact on the environment will be ***short-term, neutral,*** **and *imperceptible*.**

Conclusion

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of material asset impacts during the demolition and construction phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.9.2 Operational Phase

Utilities: Foul Sewer, Stormwater and Potable Water

When the existing buildings are demolished, all existing foul drainage infrastructure onsite will be removed. It is proposed to collect all the foul water from the new swellings in a suitability sized sewer network and discharge it to the existing foul sewer located in the Dublin Road.

As discussed in previous sections, it is proposed to use gullies, downpipes, and a suitably sized network to collect all the surface water from the proposed roof areas and discharge it to the existing storm water network in both the St Brigid's Terrace Road and the Dublin Road. It is proposed to use permeable paving on all new car parking spaces. Permeable paving systems will reduce peak discharges into the drainage system and treat run off by providing a 70-90% removal efficiency rate for hydrocarbons and 60-95% removal of suspended solids thereby improving the quality of water being discharged. Please refer to Drawing 24-130-100 for the surface water sewer layout and Appendix A for surface water calculations.

The proposal will have an impact on servicing and utilities infrastructure in the area, requiring connections to water, electricity, supplies, as well as connecting to the existing road network. Due to the location of the site, the development is well placed to benefit from in-situ infrastructure provision and will therefore constitute a sustainable use at the location.

In respect of the foregoing, the predicted impacts upon foul sewer, stormwater and potable water are considered to be ***neutral, imperceptible,*** **and** ***long term.***

Waste and Waste Management

The proposed development will give rise to a variety of waste streams during the operational phase, i.e., when the project is completed, and fully operational. Most of the waste will be generated by the residents during the fully operational stage.

An Operational Waste Management Plan will be prepared at tender stage, which will outline measures to maximise the quantity of waste recycled by providing sufficient waste recycling infrastructure, waste reduction initiatives and waste collection and waste management information to the residents of the development.

During the operational phase, a structured approach to waste management as set out will promote resource efficiency and waste minimisation. Provided the mitigation measures are implemented and a high rate of waste prevention, reuse, recycling, and recovery is achieved, the predicted impact of the operational phase on the environment will be ***long-term, neutral,*** **and** ***imperceptible.***

Conclusion

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of material asset impacts during the operational phase. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.10 POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM INTERACTIONS

This section discusses the potential interactions and inter-relationships between the environmental factors discussed in the preceding sections. This section covers both the construction and operational phase of the proposed development. In accordance with the guidance not only are the individual significant impacts required to be considered when assessing the impact of a development on the environment, but so must the interrelationships between these factors be identified and assessed.

The majority of the interactions that are considered to have a neutral effect (i.e., no effects or effects that are imperceptible, within the normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error).

There is a potential interaction between land, soil geology, hydrogeology and hydrology, and biodiversity due to the potential for poorly managed surface water run-off during the construction phase of the proposed development. There is a potential for interactions between air quality during construction activities on human health via dust generation. There is a potential for interactions between noise and vibration during construction activities on human health. However, these potential interactions are short-term and associated with the construction phase. A CEMP which will be prepared at detailed design stage should outline minimisation measures to ensure that pollution and nuisances arising from site clearance and construction activities is prevented where possible and managed in accordance with best practice and any subsequent planning conditions relevant to the proposed development.

During the operational phase, there is a potential interaction between land, soil geology, hydrogeology and hydrology, and biodiversity due to the potential for poorly managed surface water run-off, and foul water discharge during the operational phase of the proposed development. The designed Drainage will ensure that this interaction is neutral, and not significant.

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in respect of interactions between environmental factors during the construction or operational phases. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

5.11 POTENTIAL CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

As part of the assessment of the proposed development, the likelihood of potential cumulative impact of the proposed development has been considered with any future development (as far as practically possible) and the cumulative impacts with developments in the locality (including planned and permitted developments).

The review did not cover insignificant small extensions/applications, changes of use, retention, and other minor alterations in the vicinity of the proposed development. These proposed and consented development have been, where relevant, considered as a part of the overall project impact. Cumulative impacts are those impacts that relate to incremental / additive impacts of the planned development in addition to historical, present, or foreseeable future actions. Cumulative impacts can be thought of as occurring through two main pathways: first, through persistent additions or losses of the same materials or resource, and second, through the compounding effects as a result of the coming together of two or more effects.

Each project currently permitted in the wider area is subject to planning conditions which include appropriate mitigation measures to minimise environmental impacts. Provided that mitigation measures for other developments are implemented as permitted, there will be no significant cumulative effects.

Any future development will be required to incorporate appropriate mitigation measures (e.g., noise management, dust management, traffic management, management of water quality in run-off water, landscape, etc) during the construction phase as such any cumulative development will not have a significant effect on human health, material assets, land, soils, geology, hydrogeology, and hydrology.

Any future development proposed on the surrounding lands should be cognisant with the zoning and will be subject to EIA and/or planning conditions which include appropriate mitigation measures to minimise environmental impacts.

Having regard to the foregoing, there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and the surrounding developments being constructed concurrently in respect of cumulative impacts during the construction or operational phases. Therefore, a requirement for sub-threshold EIA does not arise.

6.0 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this EIA Screening Report has been to consider whether there is a requirement for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) with the information required under Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, to enable Cavan County Council to determine in light of the criteria set out under Schedule 7 of those regulations whether the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The proposed development and component parts have been considered against the thresholds outlined in Schedule 5, Part 2 Class 10 (a) to (m). The most relevant project type in the context of the proposed development is Class 10 (b) (i) and (iv).

10. Infrastructure projects

(b) (i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units

(iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.

On the basis of the evaluation set out in Section 2.0 an EIA for the proposed Project is not mandatory. The proposed project is considered to be a sub-threshold development. The information necessary to enable this screening assessment has been provided in this report and the methodology used has been informed by the available guidance, legislation, and directives.

Traynor Environmental Ltd has considered the proposed development and assessed the potential for significant environmental effects and the need for an EIAR is documented in Sections 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0. It is considered that:

Compliance with best practice measures at Construction Stage will prevent potential short-term nuisances (such as dust, noise and vibration, and traffic) and risks from the storage of any hazardous substances (fuels, chemicals and other construction materials that may pose a risk to the environment). These measures associated with the construction phase are best practice measures and are in no way included to avoid or reduce any potential harmful effects to any European sites.

Compliance with a Resource and Waste Management Plan at Construction and Operational Stage will ensure best practice methodologies employed for the control, management, monitoring, and disposal of waste from the site.

There is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment from the proposed development in respect of cultural heritage and archaeological impacts during the construction or operation phase.

There will be no impacts upon the integrity, or the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites identified.

It is concluded having regard to the nature, scale, and location of the subject site, that there is no likelihood of significant effects as a result of the proposed development on the environment (direct, indirect, or cumulatively with other development) and therefore it is considered that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is not required in this instance.