

Roscommon County Council



Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report for Outdoor Performance & Public Space at Somers Park, Castlerea



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1. Introduction

This is an EIA screening report for the proposed Outdoor Performance & Public Space at Somers Park, Castlerea. The purpose of the report is to screen the proposed development to establish whether it requires Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and as a result if an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) should be prepared in respect of it.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Statement has also prepared as a separate document.

The screening process includes an assessment of the details of the proposal with reference to the relevant EIA legislation including the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended by Planning and Development Regulations 2015), the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU) and relevant EU Guidance including *Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive*, EU, 2015 and *Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening*, EU, 2017.

The EIA screening covers:

- i. Description of the proposed development
- ii. The legislative basis for EIA
- iii. Screening considerations
- iv. Conclusions

2. The Proposed Development

The site is located in Somers Park, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon. The site boundary is shown in Figure 1 below. Roscommon County Council proposes to undertake capital works at Somers Park, Castlerea, to develop its use as an Outdoor Performance & Public Space.

The proposal includes works to develop a multi-disciplinary and access-for-all outdoor arts and cultural events in Somers Park consisting of high quality paving, two performance spaces, one of which will be covered with a canopy type structure, Public Lighting & Pop up power supply locations, Age Friendly & Wheel Chair Accessible Seating and Picnic Benches.

The existing walkway, mature trees and exercise equipment will be retained as will a substantial grass area around the perimeter.

This scheme will enhance the offering at Somers Park and make provision for multi-disciplinary and access-for-all outdoor arts and cultural events in Castlerea town and the surrounding area.

The scheme will also provide scope to have increased recreation amenity space which will have the potential to act as a communal space for staging events, festivals, homecomings etc.

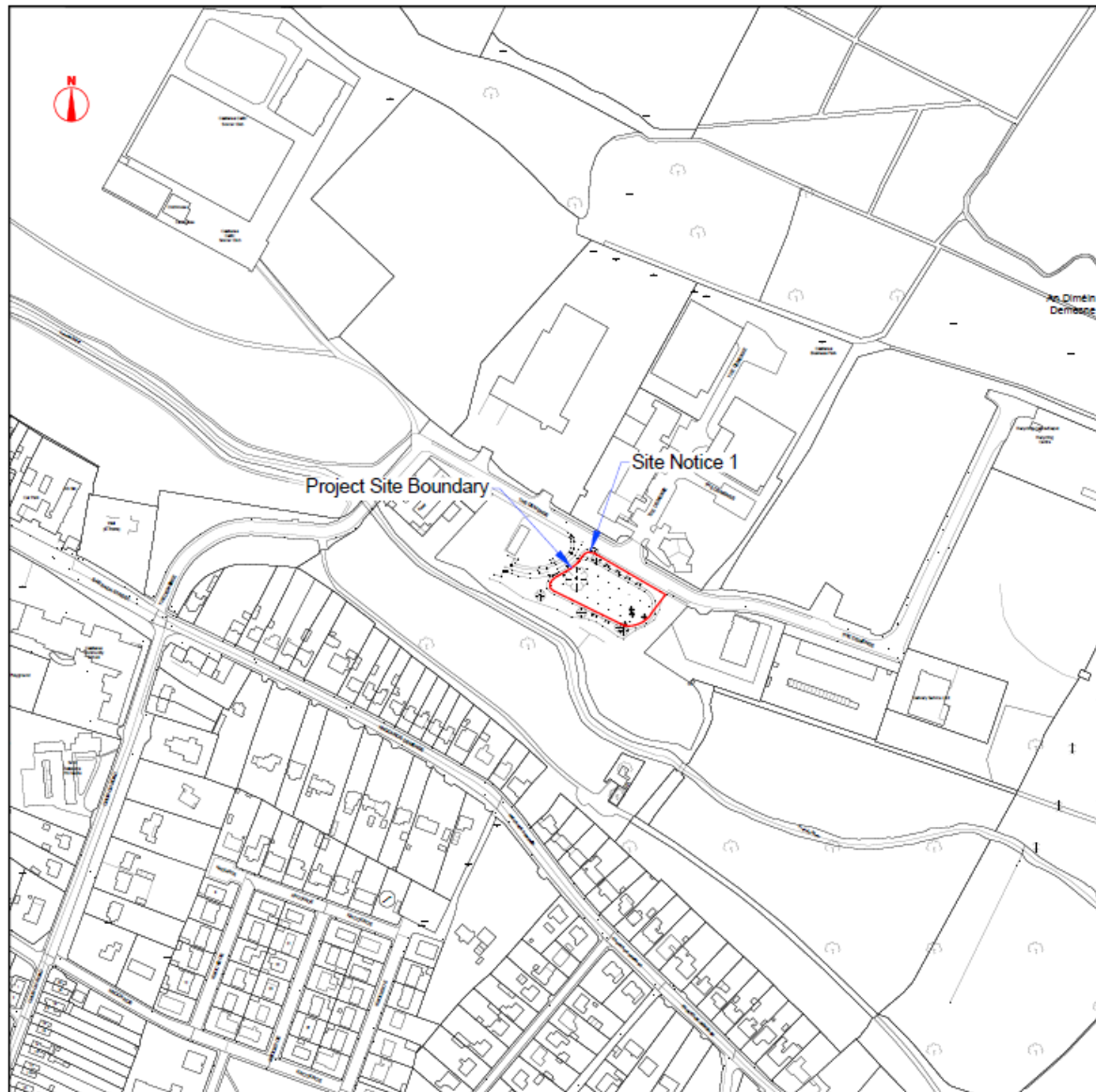


Figure 1: Location of Proposed Development – Somers Park, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon

3. Legislative Basis for EIA

EIA requirements derive from the EIA Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU). The amended Directive came into force on 16th May 2017 and regulations transposing it into national legislation have been enacted. No changes to the prescribed project types or thresholds are required under the amended Directive so the types and thresholds set out in the 2001 Regulations (as amended) remain in effect.

EIA legislation as it relates to the planning process has been largely brought together in Part X of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2018 and Part 10 and Schedules 5, 6 and 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018. Part 1 of Schedule 5 to the Planning and Development Regulations lists project types included in Annex I of the Directive which automatically require EIA.

Part 2 of the same Schedule, lists project types included in Annex II. Corresponding developments automatically require EIA if no threshold is given or if they exceed a given threshold. Developments which correspond to Part 2 project types which are below the given threshold must be screened to

determine whether they require EIA or not. This is done by consideration of the criteria set out in Schedule 7.

4. Screening Considerations

Class of Development

Firstly, it is necessary to determine whether the project is of a type (or 'class') that requires an EIAR. Having regard to the nature of this project it is determined that it does not correspond to any of the prescribed types listed in Annex I. However, it could be considered to correspond to the Infrastructure Projects type set out in Annex II, as discussed below.

Infrastructure Projects

Schedule 5, Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 includes this project type:

10. Infrastructure projects

(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.)

The EU Guidance on 'Interpretation of definitions of project categories of Annex I and II of the EIA Directive' (2015) interprets 'urban development' as taking 'account of, inter alia, the following:

i. Projects with similar characteristics to car parks and shopping centres could be considered to fall under Annex II (10)(b). This could be the case, for example, of bus garages or train depots, which are not explicitly mentioned in the EIA Directive, but have similar characteristics to car parks.

ii. Construction projects such as housing developments, hospitals, universities, sports stadiums, cinemas, theatres, concert halls and other cultural centres could also be assumed to fall within this category. The underlying principle is that all these project categories are of an urban nature and that they may cause similar types of environmental impact.

iii. Projects to which the terms 'urban' and 'infrastructure' can relate, such as the construction of sewerage and water supply networks, could also be included in this category.

The overall area of the proposed development is c1.58 ha, i.e. lands encompassing Chapel Street and Main Street, including the former courthouse, which are all located within the town centre or business district as it corresponds to the two-hectare threshold which applies in the case of a business district as set out in the above referenced Schedule 5, Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended).

Therefore, the proposal is a prescribed project type, but is considered below the threshold for a mandatory EIAR as set out in Schedule 5, Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001.

Sub-threshold Development

As the proposed development corresponds to an Annex II project type, but does not meet the prescribed thresholds above, it can be considered to be a 'sub-threshold' development.

Having regard to the 'wide scope and broad purpose' of the Directive, it is appropriate to consider if it is likely to cause significant environmental impacts by reference to the relevant criteria for determining same, as set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations.

Given the scale of the proposed development it is unlikely to cause significant effects to a degree that would warrant a sub-threshold EIA. However, in order to provide a comprehensive assessment, this screening proceeds to consider it against the Schedule 7 criteria nonetheless.

Schedule 7 specifies 'Criteria for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment' under the following three headings:

1. Characteristics of Proposed Development
2. Location of Proposed Development
3. Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The table below sets out these considerations using both the main and sub-criteria which are specified in Schedule 7.

SCHEDULE 7 CRITERIA		Relevance	Commentary
1. Characteristics of Proposed Development The characteristics of proposed development, in particular:	The size of the proposed development.	No	The proposed development extends to an area of approximately 0.25ha. within the current extents of Somers Park.
	The accumulative impact of the proposed development.	No	There are no significant works taking place in the vicinity of the site. Any works proposed as part of the public realm improvement scheme, taken in conjunction with any recent surrounding works, would result in the accumulative impacts being anticipated as negligible given the nature and scale of the proposed public realm improvement development.
	The use of natural resources.	Potential	The proposed development does include the use of natural resources to ensure that the materials used in the project are in keeping with the natural surroundings.
	The production of waste.	No	Waste produced during the construction process are anticipated to be insufficient to cause significant effects. The materials will be brought to a licensed construction and demolition recycling centre for reuse.
	Pollution and nuisances.	No	The impacts including noise and dust during the construction period will be kept within acceptable standards and such impacts are anticipated to be relatively short term and negligible.

	The risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used.	No	The potential impacts are anticipated to be negligible given the nature of the proposed development.
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SHEDULE 7 CRITERIA		Relevance	Commentary
2. Location of Proposed Development The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, having regard in particular to:	The existing land use	No	There is minimal change in existing land use associated with this proposed development.
	The relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area	No	The impacts are anticipated to be negligible given the scale of the proposed development.
	The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:		
	Wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;	No	The impacts are anticipated to be negligible given the scale of the proposed development. There is no anticipated loss of habitat therefore associated with this element of the overall project.
	Coastal zones	No	N/A
	Mountain and forest areas	No	N/A
	Nature reserves and parks	No	N/A
	Areas classified or protected under legislation, including special protection areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC	No	The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted as part of this Part VIII application concludes that the proposed development is not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects on designated European sites.

	Areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the EU have already been exceeded	No	N/A
	Densely populated areas	No	The impacts are anticipated to be negligible given the scale of the proposed development.
	Landscapes of historical, cultural archaeological significance	No	N/A

SCHEDULE 7 CRITERIA		Relevance	Commentary
3. Characteristics of Potential Impacts The potential significant effects of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 above and having particular regard to:	The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population)	No	The impacts are anticipated to be insufficient given the scale of the proposed development.
	The nature of the impact	No	The impact of the proposal will, in the short term be negative during the construction phase, but will be positive in the long term once the development is complete.
	The transboundary nature of the impact	No	Not considered relevant.
	The magnitude and complexity of the impact.	No	The impacts are anticipated to be insufficient given the scale of the proposed development.
	The probability of the impact.	No	There are no significant environmental effects anticipated.
	The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact,	No	There are no significant environmental effects anticipated.

	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	No	There are no significant environmental effects anticipated.
	The possibility of effectively reducing the impact	No	There are no significant environmental effects anticipated

5. Conclusion

The proposed development falls within the scope of the Infrastructure project type prescribed in the Directive or Regulations. However, it is considered to be sub-threshold in nature.

Having considered the nature, scale and location of the proposal; having regard to the characteristics and location of the proposed development, and having regard to the characteristics of potential impacts it is considered that the project is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental impacts.

It is also noted that a separate Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has concluded that there will be no negative impacts on the qualifying interests or species of any Natura 2000 site within a 15km radius of the proposed development.

Having regard to the foregoing it is concluded that there is no requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment to be carried out for the proposed Outdoor Performance & Public Space at Somers Park, Castlerea and therefore, there is no requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment Report to be prepared.