

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

1. Introduction

The EIA Directive 85/337/EEC, as amended aims to determine the likely significant effects of a project on the environment. EIA Screening determines whether an EIA is required for a specified project. Projects requiring mandatory EIA are listed in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. In the case of development, which is under these thresholds, planning authorities are required under Article 103 of the 2001 Regulations, (as amended) to request an EIS where it considers that the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

Screening involves appraisal of impacts from the proposed development according to three main criteria: -

- Characteristics of the project
- Location of proposed project
- Characteristics of potential impacts.

Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), outlines the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by a proposed development. These are: human beings, flora and fauna, soil and geology, water, air & climate, landscape, material assets, cultural heritage and the inter-relationships between the range of environmental criteria.

The proposed project to construct a walkway will involve clearance of scrub and vegetation, installation of walkway, post and wire fencing and lighting columns.

The walkway will facilitate access to a tranquil riverside setting for recreational and cultural activities as the walkway runs parallel to the Charlestown Stream and circles around archeological sites of interest before linking into the grounds of Charlestown GAA club.

Table 1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Is the size and design of the proposed development works significant?	No. The proposed local authority development is a 500m walkway between 2 -3 m in width running parallel to the Charlestown Stream. Access to the proposed walkway is already in place. Construction materials were chosen on the basis of having minimum environmental impact.
Is there potential for impacts from project in cumulation with other existing and/or approved project?	No. While there are a number of projects within the town boundary it is not expected that there are to be any in accumulative effects.
Use of natural resources in particular land, soil water and biodiversity?	Limited excavations (< 300mm) will be required to achieve formation level for the walkway. Where possible construction materials will be sourced from local suppliers. Loss of biodiversity will be limited to scrub clearance in the west of the walkway.
Will wastes be produced during construction and operation?	Yes. Very limited amounts of construction waste will be generated as part of the works. Quantities of clause 804 material will be accurately calculated in advance to prevent waste. Any waste materials will be minimised and disposed of via licensed or permitted waste sites.
Will the works and operation create and significant amount of pollution or nuisance?	No. It is considered that the construction phase of the development will result in a temporary increase in air and noise pollution due to increased vehicle movements associated with delivery of materials, excavations and laying of the walkway. Given the sub-urban setting, the disturbance effects will not be significantly above background levels, confined to daytime and temporary in nature. Operational effects are not considered to be significant. Light pollution will be minimized through the use of downward facing LED lamps
Risk of major accidents and or disasters relevant to the project including those caused by climate change in accordance with scientific knowledge?	None
Risks to human health (Water contamination, air pollution)	No risk to human health. Surface water or groundwater contamination is unlikely as a result of the development. The open nature of the site will ensure that any emissions to air will be rapidly assimilated.

Table 2 Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Human Beings	The proposed walkway will confer positive benefits on the local community. Being within the town boundary, a short distance from the town centre, it will allow ready access to those without transport. It will provide the community with safe access to the Charlestown stream and its riparian habitats, conferring positive physical and mental health benefits. It will link up 2 existing sporting facilities namely Charlestown Outdoor Swimming Pool and Charlestown GAA grounds.
Flora and Fauna	<p>Localised impacts on flora and fauna are expected to occur due to conversion of grasslands and scrub within the footprint of the development into an artificial surface. Scrub clearance will take place outside the bird nesting period (1st September to March 1st)</p> <p>The construction phase will cause slight disturbance but will be limited both in terms of intensity of activity and duration.</p> <p>The development will not present a barrier to the foraging activity of local fauna during the operational phase. Lighting may cause slight disturbance but it will be designed to reduce light spillage thereby mitigating effects on insect activity and other wildlife.</p>
Soils and Geology	The project will result in the disturbance to the current geological resources (soil & subsoil). All excavated geological materials will be retained onsite.
Water	Works will be setback from the river channel and no instream works are proposed. The walkway will act as a buffer zone for the River in future and the existing cattle access location will be removed conferring a positive benefit from a water quality perspective. The current ecological status (2013-2018) is moderate and the significant pressures are nutrient inputs from Agriculture and Hydromorphology (altered habitats due to channelisation and drainage).
Air and Climate	As stated, this development in a sub-urban setting with slight temporary negative effects during construction activity. There are no anticipated long-term impacts on air and climate. The lighting scheme proposed will be highly efficient LEDs with light sensitive timer switches.
Noise and Vibration	Temporary increase in noise levels expected during daytime hours due to construction of walkway. No impact anticipated during operational phase of the development.
Landscape	Due to the nature and scale of the development is not predicted to impact any scenic areas designated by Mayo County Council
Material Assets	The development will provide a positive impact on County Mayo's social and leisure assets by providing safe access to a tranquil riverside environment for relaxation and exercise. It will stimulate interest in biodiversity for local school children and wider community. This project may provide an important site from which to hold community basis awareness programmes which could lead to beneficial effects through increased

	awareness of this freshwater ecosystem which forms an integral part of Charlestown's natural heritage.
Cultural Heritage	<p>An Archaeological Assessment carried out by Dr. Bernard Guinan (Mayo County Council) identified 5 archaeological sites in proximity to the Riverwalk and these are listed below.</p> <p>MA063-005 (Ringfort-Rath) MA063-005001 (Souterrain) MA063-005002 (Children's burial ground)</p> <p>MA063-064 (Burnt Mound) MA063-065 (Burnt Spread)</p> <p>It is proposed to have an archaeologist present during all excavations.</p>
Interaction of the Foregoing	The proposed project will confer a positive impact on Human Beings and Material Assets. During construction, slight negative impacts are predicted on flora and fauna, soils and geology, air & climate, noise and vibration. Slight positive effects are anticipated for water and Landscape. The development does not alter significantly the use of the site and will be beneficial to the cultural heritage of the area.

Table 3 Discussion of Potential Impacts

Will a large geographical area be impacted as a result of the proposed works	No. Works will be restricted to 0.15 hectares .
Will a large population be impacted as a result of the proposed works	No. Any disturbance experienced during the construction works will be short in duration and limited to residents to the north.
Are there any trans frontier impacts likely to arise from the proposed works	None expected
Is the intensity and the complexity of the impacts associate with the proposed works considered to be significant	No
Is there a high probability that the impact will occur?	No significant impacts expected to occur
What is the expected onset, duration frequency and reversibility of the impact	It is anticipated that the works will undertaken in Q4 2022. The completed walkway will be present for the foreseeable future.
Cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects	Not expected to be any other major projects in the general area likely to give rise to cumulative impacts.
Will it be difficult to avoid or reduce or repair or compensate for the effects	No significant impacts expected to occur

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