

**Preliminary Environmental Impact
Assessment Screening Report**

for the proposed

**Strategic Regional Road Rehabilitation
Project R878, Laharn, Tralee**



**Environmental Assessment Unit
Kerry County Council
March 2026**

Contents

1. Introduction & Context	1
1.1 Legislative context.....	1
1.2 Methodology.....	3
2. Project Description and Location.....	4
3. Preliminary Screening Examination	6
4. Conclusion	8
4.1 Reasons for conclusion	8

1. Introduction & Context

The Environmental Assessment Unit (Planning and Sustainable Development Department) has been requested to assess whether or not the proposed project, should be subject to EIA Screening or EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment). The following report provides the information required to enable Kerry County Council to conclude whether an EIA screening determination or an EIA is required for the proposed project.

This project proposes to provide approximately 220m of 2m wide concrete footpath with 0.5-1m wide green verge on the eastern side of the R878 Regional Road and 320m of slip form kerbing on the western side of the same road. The works will take place north of Tralee Town in the townland of Laharn. No land take is required as all works are to be carried out within the curtilage of the existing road. Additionally, depending on available funding, a 40mm overlay may also be included in the works total area of 2,240m².

1.1 Legislative context

EIA legislation sets down the types of projects that may require an EIA. Annex I of Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, defines mandatory projects that require an EIAR and Annex II lists projects which can be subject to case-by-case analysis or thresholds to be determined by member states. The relevant threshold summaries of legislative requirements for EIA Screening for road-type developments (in Ireland) are set out below.

1.1.1 Requirement for mandatory EIA under the Roads Act, (1993) as amended

Section 50 (1) of the Roads Act (1993) (as amended by S.I. No. 279 of 2019) relates to road developments subject to Environmental Impact Assessment. The thresholds for mandatory EIA of a road development are set out in Section 50(1)(a) below. The prescribed types of proposed road development for the purposes of Section 50 (1)(a)(iv) are set out in Article 8 of SI 119 of the 1994 Roads Regulations and are also set out below.

Roads Act (1993), as amended

“50. (1) (a) A road development that is proposed that comprises any of the following shall be subject to an environmental impact assessment:

(i) the construction of a motorway;

(ii) the construction of a busway;

(iii) the construction of a service area;

(iv) any prescribed type of road development consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road.

SI 119 of 1994 Roads Regulations. Part V Environmental Impact Assessment (Article 8). The prescribed types of proposed road development for the purpose of subsection (1)(a)(iv) of section 50 of the Act shall be:

(a) the construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500 metres or more in length in an urban area;

(b) the construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length”

The proposed project is neither a motorway, busway, service area, nor does it consist of the construction of a new road of four or more lanes or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes of greater than 500m in length. In fact, the proposed scheme involves the reallocation of existing road space to improve pedestrian facilities, improved junctions and pavement. In addition, the proposed scheme does not involve the construction of a new bridge or tunnel greater than 100m in length. Therefore, a mandatory EIA is not required.

1.1.2 Sub-threshold development proposals and EIA requirements

Where a proposed development is ‘sub-threshold’ in nature, the planning authority shall decide whether the proposed development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Roads Act, (1993), as amended

Section 50(1)(b) states that where An Bord Pleanála considers that a proposed road development (other than development as listed in Section 50(1)(a)) consisting of the “construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road” would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, it shall decide that it will be subject to EIA.

Section 50(1)(c) states that where a road authority considers that a proposed road development that it proposes (other than development as listed in Section 50(1)(a)) consisting of the “construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road” would be likely to have significant effects on the environment (i.e. it must carry out EIA Screening), it shall inform An Bord Pleanála in writing prior to making an application for approval of the proposed scheme.

Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended

In accordance with A120. (1) (a) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, where a local authority proposes to carry out a sub-threshold development, the authority shall carry out a preliminary examination of, at the least, the nature, size or location of the development.

The purpose of the preliminary screening exercise is to conclude that:

- (i) there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall conclude that an EIA is not required;
- (ii) there is a significant and realistic doubt regarding the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, the information specified in Schedule 7A for the purposes of a screening determination; or

- (iii) there is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall (i) conclude that the development would be likely to have such effects, and (ii) prepare, or cause to be prepared, an EIAR in respect of the development.

1.2 Methodology

In order to determine if the proposed road development is likely to have significant effects on the environment, and in accordance with the legislative requirements outlined and supported by OPR guidance, a preliminary examination of the project is therefore required. This is an examination of, at least, the nature, size or location of the development.

Preliminary examinations must consider at least the following:

- The nature of the development including the production of wastes and pollutants;
- The size of the development; or
- The location of the development including the potential to impact on certain ecologically sensitive sites (including European sites, NHAs, pNHAs, Nature Reserves) and the potential to affect other environmentally sensitive sites in the area.

As part of this, the project location and description will be outlined in Section 2 of this report followed by the preliminary screening exercise in Section 3 and the conclusion in Section 4 of this report.

2. Project Description and Location

This proposal, under assessment, seeks to provide 220m of 2m wide concrete footpath with 0.5-1m wide green verge on the eastern side and 320m of slip form kerbing on the western side of the R878 Regional Road commencing north of Tralee Town in the townland of Laharn.

All works will be undertaken within established road boundaries, and no additional land take will be required. Wastes generated will be disposed of at an appropriate authorised place of disposal. Full project details are provided below:

Characteristics of the Plan or Project	
Size, scale, area, land take	220m of 2m wide concrete footpath with 0.5-1m wide green verge on the eastern side of Laharn R 878 and 320m of slip form kerbing on the western side of the road. No land take is required. All works are to be carried out within the curtilage of the existing road Depending on available funding a 40mm overlay may also be included in the works total area 2,240m ²
Details of physical changes that will take place during the various stages of implementing the proposal	Dig out of 3m wide strip on the eastern side for 220m to facilitate the construction of the footpath. Dig out 0.3m strip on the western side for 320m to facilitate the construction of a slip form kerb. Compaction of loose material to form foundation of path and slip form kerb. Construction of footpaths in bays with reinforcement. Additional Ducting and lighting will be provided on the western side of the road. Lights to be cowled to be rear to prevent light interference to the natural habitat to west of the site.
Description of resource requirements for the construction/operation and decommissioning of the proposal (water resources, construction material, human presence etc)	Excavators, road saw, dumpers, concrete delivery truck and pump, slip form kerbing machine, Plainer, Paver, pick up trucks. Total project will take approx. 8 weeks and 30 man hours.
Description of timescale for the various activities that will take place as a result of implementation (including likely start and finish date)	Proposed start date May 2026 to July 2026
Description of wastes arising and other residues (including quantities) and their disposal	Excavated pavement material approximately 230m ³ . This will constitute 106m ³ of bitumen bound material and the remainder 124m ³ of loose granular material including Clause 804

Characteristics of the Plan or Project	
Description of any additional services required to implement the project or plan, their location and means of construction	Temporary Welfare Facilities, Temporary site compound and Temporary Traffic management
Other	

3. Preliminary Screening Examination

Preliminary Examination:		
	Comment:	Yes/No/ Uncertain:
<p>Nature of the development: <i>Is the nature of the proposed development exceptional in the context of the existing environment?</i></p> <p><i>Will the development result in the production of any significant waste, or result in significant emissions or pollutants?</i></p>	<p>The proposal seeks to improve safety for pedestrians on the R878 Regional Road by providing 220m of 2m wide concrete footpath with 0.5-1m wide green verge on the eastern side of the road and 320m of slip form kerbing on the western side. No land take is required. All works are to be carried out within the curtilage of the existing road</p> <p>Depending on available funding, a 40mm overlay may also be included in the works total area of 2,240m².</p> <p>The proposed works are small in scale and do not involve the creation of significant pollution or waste, risk of major accidents or risk to human health. The proposed works are also short in duration and involve limited excavation works and do not involve complex construction. Proposed works are not out of character within an urban setting. The construction stage noise impact would be imperceptible within the context of existing traffic noise on the R878 Regional Road. No adverse operational stage impacts are likely. It is further noted that there is no requirement to remove any trees along roadside boundaries.</p>	No realistic potential for significant effects
<p>Size of the development: <i>Is the size of the proposed development exceptional in the context of the existing environment?</i></p>	<p>The nature of the proposed development is small in scale, in keeping with, and not exceptional in the context of the existing environment.</p> <p>There are no other significant permitted projects in the area likely to have any significant cumulative effect on the environment. The proposed development is considered cumulatively and well beneath any threshold for EIA consideration.</p>	No realistic potential for significant effects

<p>Are there cumulative considerations having regard to other existing and/or permitted projects?</p>		
<p>Location: <i>Is the proposed development located on, in, adjoining or does it have the potential to impact on an ecologically sensitive site or location?</i>¹</p> <p><i>Does the proposed development have the potential to affect other significant environmental sensitivities in the area?</i></p>	<p>The characteristics of the proposed development include standard road project works within an urban environment and existing road corridors. The project is located within the urban area of Tralee Town. Adjoining land uses are residential, commercial, educational and recreational.</p> <p>As detailed in the Appropriate Assessment Screening report for the project, the proposal is located upstream of the Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC (002070) and Tralee Bay Complex SPA (004188). Excavations associated with the construction phase can generate unconsolidated material which could potentially make its way to watercourses and reduce water quality (sedimentation) – though the risks of same are considered to be low. In addition, the hydrological connection between the works area and watercourses is considered to be weak and interrupted and includes discharge to the municipal drainage system. There is no possibility of discharge to the Big River, which provides a hydrologic connection to the SAC and SPA. No invasive species are located along the works area.</p> <p>The County Archaeologist has confirmed that, having regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed works on previously disturbed lands within existing roadside boundaries, it is considered that the likelihood of Archaeological and Cultural Heritage impact is low.</p> <p>The proposed works are located upstream of nature reserves or other sensitive features. However, the proposed development does not have the potential to affect ecologically sensitive sites or locations or additional significant environmental sensitivities in the area.</p>	<p>No realistic potential for significant effects</p>

¹ Sensitive locations or features includes European sites, NHA/pNHA, Designated Nature Reserves, land designated as a refuge for flora and fauna, and any other ecological site which is the objective of a CDP/LAP (including draft plans).

4. Conclusion

In consideration of the nature, scale and location of the development, it is concluded that there is no significant and or realistic doubt in regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. EIA Screening nor EIA are required in this instance.

4.1 Reasons for conclusion

- The development is not of a scale that would introduce significant or complex environmental effects and is substantially below mandatory thresholds for EIA;
- The proposal is not a complex one, either in nature, scale or design and is not likely to significantly impact environmental sensitivities in the area or elsewhere;
- The proposed works would be undertaken within the existing road boundaries;
- There are no potential cumulative or in combination effects likely to arise;
- There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development.

Influential measures incorporated into the project envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment

None required

Signed:



Brendan O'Connor (Ecologist)

Environmental Assessment Unit (EAU)

Date:

03/03/2026