

Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

for the proposed

N22 MD O'Shea Roundabout to Ballycasheen Road Upgrade and L3907 Ballycasheen Road Active Travel Project



**Environmental Assessment Unit
Kerry County Council
December 2024**

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction and 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.

1.2 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 / EIS 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.

1.2.1 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)(iii) 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

“(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 and cycling 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.

1.2.2 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 subthreshold 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 either 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 significant and realistic doubt in regard to 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.

1.3 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 upgrade the N22 National Primary Road over a distance of 1.5km from a point 50m East of Woodford Bridge in the Townland Lissyvigeen to a point 100 west of MD O'Shea Roundabout in the Townland of Park and extending along the L3907 Ballycasheen Road over a distance of 300m from the junction with the N22 to the Railway Overbridge in the Townland of Ballycasheen. For the most part, the works will be accommodated within the existing road space. Works will include excavation, undergrounding of services, kerb line adjustment, surfacing, landscaping, lighting, road lining and ancillary site works. At certain locations, the proposals seek to accommodate the cycleway within residential amenity open space areas or through the setting back of existing roadside boundaries. Wastes generated will be disposed of at an appropriate authorised place of disposal.

Characteristics of the Plan or Project	
Size, scale, area, land take	This project proposes an upgrade of the N22 National Primary Road over a distance of 1.5km from a point 50m East of Woodford Bridge in the Townland Lissyvigeen to a point 100 west of MD O'Shea Roundabout in the Townland of Park and extending along the L3907 Ballycasheen Road over a distance of 300m from the junction with the N22 to the Railway Overbridge in the Townland of Ballycasheen. Works will include introduction of signal-controlled junctions at the L3907 (Ballycasheen Road) and R876 (Park Road) Junctions with the N22; road pavement upgrade and repair, using low noise road surfacing; significant improvement to active travel facilities through redistribution of road space and installation of new and upgrades to existing crossing facilities. Circa 0.1Ha of lands will be required adjacent to the Ballycasheen Road to facilitate widening for active travel, all other works will be undertaken within established road boundaries.

Characteristics of the Plan or Project

Details of physical changes that will take place during the various stages of implementing the proposal

General Site Clearance

Site clearance will involve:

- Removal of existing bituminous road pavement and foundation, total volume circa 2600m³. All bituminous material has been tested and confirmed to be non-hazardous and can be recycled as asphalt product or re-used as general fill.
- Removal of existing kerbs and footpaths, total volume circa 875m³. Material will be disposed of at an appropriate licensed facility.
- Removal of existing grassed areas and soil, total volume circa 600m³. Material will be disposed of at an appropriate licensed facility.
- Removal of up to 50 semi mature broad leaf trees, who's root structures are damaging existing footpaths. Where feasible trees will be retained or replanted with root protection installations. Material will be disposed of at an appropriate licensed facility.
- Removal of circa 70m of existing hedgerow including circa 10 mature trees, generating circa 150m³ of soil and stone waste. Material will be disposed of at an appropriate licensed facility.
- Removal of approximately 130m length of masonry walls, generating circa 70m³ of demolition waste, which will be disposed of at an appropriate licensed facility.
- Cleaning and jetting of existing drainage systems
- Removal of 200m of existing safety barrier. Material will be disposed of at an appropriate licensed facility.
- Removal of existing Road Signage installations. Material will be disposed of at an appropriate licensed facility.
- Removal of existing Pedestrian Crossing installation. Material will be disposed of at an appropriate licensed facility.

Construction

- Renewal of existing road pavement and replacement with Low Noise Stone Mastic Asphalt surfacing within the 50kph and 60kph speed zones, typical 70mm plane out and replacement (19,000m²). Localised excavation and replacement of the road foundation to a depth of 425mm (3,200m²).
- Provision of improved active travel facilities, this will include redistribution of existing traffic lanes in lieu of active travel space and will comprise of 5700m² of cycleway (typical construction 70mm bitumen on 100mm limestone), 4100m² of new footpath (typical construction 100mm concrete on 100mm limestone) bounded by 3400m of concrete kerbing including 200m of high containment kerb to replace safety barrier.
- Introduction of signalised traffic junctions including pedestrian and cycle crossing phases at the L3907 Ballycasheen Road Junction and at the R876 Park

Characteristics of the Plan or Project	
	<p>Road Junction, along with associated ducting, communications and electrical installations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation and upgrade of Pedestrian and Cycle Crossings at location west and east of MD O'Shea Roundabout, along with associated ducting, communications and electrical installations. • Installation of a Pedestrian and Cycle Crossing at Ballycasheen Road, along with associated ducting, communications and electrical installations • Renewal of drainage system by relocating road gullies to newly established kerb lines. • Introduction of revised road signage. • Minor Landscaping works • Relocation of 18 and installation of 22 new public lighting columns. • Construction of 165m of new masonry boundary wall and 75m of timber post and mesh fence.
Description of resource requirements for the construction/operation and decommissioning of the proposal (water resources, construction material, human presence etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials required to construct the project will include 3300m³ of bituminous material, 700m³ of concrete, 1650m³ of clean limestone, 3400m of precast concrete kerbing, 110m³ of masonry blockwork, 110 gully pots and 200m of PVC drainage pipes. Additionally, 54 signal columns, 900m of ducting along with associated electrical and telecommunications cabling and installations, will be required for traffic signals and crossings. Road signage and other ancillary items will also be required. All of these materials will need to be imported to site through road haulage. • Plant on site is anticipated to comprise of Road Planer (6 days), Road Paving Machine (18 days) 5T-10T Excavators (180 days) large Roller (12 days), small roller (55 days), teleporter (120 days), along with various other electrical handheld plant and tools. • The anticipated time Scale for the project is 150 days with an average of 10 construction workers on site per day, additionally traffic management crew of 3 people will be required for the 150 day duration. Total resource of 1950 person days is anticipated.
Description of timescale for the various activities that will take place as a result of implementation (including likely start and finish date)	Construction is expected to last approximately 28 weeks, the anticipated start date is October 2025 with a finish date of April 2026. Night works will be required for elements of the project, such as resurfacing at junctions, so as to minimise the impacts of the required road closures.
Description of wastes arising and other residues (including quantities) and their disposal	Approximately 10,000T of material will need to be removed from the site. All waste material will be removed by an approved Licensed Waste Contractor and disposed of as required to authorised waste facilities approved by Kerry County Council. Any recyclable material will be disposed of at a recycling centre. All bituminous material is confirmed as

Characteristics of the Plan or Project	
	being non-hazardous and can be recycled into new asphalt material, or along with excavated concrete, reused as general fill material, subject to EPA Article 27 approval for the contractor.
Description of any additional services required to implement the project or plan, their location and means of construction	The project comprises of online construction in an urban area and will require night works at various stages to minimise traffic delays. Elevated levels of traffic disruption and noise pollution are anticipated. A detailed traffic management plan and limitations on noise and nighttime works will be included in the contract documents.
Other	When in operation the project is expected to have positive benefits to noise receptors in the Whitebridge Manor Estate, through a combination of reduced traffic speeds, lower emitting noise surfacing and further setback of the traffic lane. The project when completed will provide high quality active travel facilities which in conjunction with other adjoining projects should generate a modal shift away from private car trips.

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 reallocate road space to cyclists and pedestrians, reduce traffic speeds, increase road safety and will result in an improved urban environment.</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. Construction stage noise impact would be imperceptible within the context of existing traffic noise on the N22 and Ballycasheen road. No adverse operational stage impacts are likely.</p> <p>It is noted that a relatively small number of trees would be lost along the roadside boundaries as a result of the proposal – but that these form part of a larger stand of trees which would be retained. It is considered that the minor impact of loss of trees on amenity and residential impact would be far outweighed by access to the</p>	No realistic potential for significant effects

	<p>proposed pedestrian and cycle facilities, reduced traffic noise and safer roads. Residential impact would be positive.</p>	
<p>Size of the development: Is the size of the proposed development exceptional in the context of the existing environment? <i>Are there cumulative considerations having regard to other existing and/or permitted projects?</i></p>	<p>The proposed scheme is of a small scale in the context of the existing environment. It is comprised within existing road boundaries. The length of the proposed works is c.1.8km in total.</p> <p>KCC / TII have separate plans to upgrade the Lewis Road and Kilcummin Road Junctions on the Killarney Bypass and to provide an underpass under the N22. Development consent is also in place for a Cycle lanes project in Killarney town which includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • along Rock Road in Killarney extending the existing cycleway to Cleeny roundabout • along Upper Lewis road along the Fitzgerald stadium • along Park road • from Deerpark to Killarney Sports & leisure centre • along Anne's road <p>In addition, there is a development currently going through the planning process, located in the vicinity of the proposed upgrade works. It is a mixed-use development consisting of a 90-bed nursing home and independent living units located at the junction of Ballycasheen Road and the N22 National Primary Road (Ref no. 23759). Additionally, a Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) which includes 249 off-dwellings (Ref no. 23967) has recently received planning permission in the area. Neither development will result in 'in-combination' effects. Both developments (if permitted) would benefit from the improved active travel facilities and crossings. They are considered to be complementary to each other as part of the sustainable growth of the town.</p> <p>Cumulatively, the proposed projects would improve the sustainable transport network in Killarney resulting in a positive impact on the environment by promoting a modal shift from private cars and increasing road safety.</p>	<p>No realistic potential for significant effects</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 proposed development include standard road project works within an urban environment and within existing road corridors. The project is located within the urban area of Killarney Town. Adjoining land uses are residential, commercial and recreation / forestry.</p> <p>As detailed in the Appropriate Assessment Screening report for the project, the N22 roadway passes over the Woodford River, which forms part of the Killarney National Park, Macgillycuddy's Reeks & Caragh River Catchment SAC. Lough Leane and the River Flesk which form part of the aforementioned SAC as well as the associated pNHA are located downstream. Excavations associated with the construction phase can generate unconsolidated material which could potentially make its way to watercourses downstream 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 adjoining Woodford River which forms part of the SAC. No invasive species are located along the works area.</p> <p>Pike wood to the north of the N22 in the vicinity of the Woodford River is zoned G3 (landscape protection) in the Killarney MDLAP 2019-2025. Within the Town boundaries, other areas of landscape protection can be found adjoining the N22 including an area identified as a native Oak-Birch- Holly woodland habitat to the north of the N22. Woodlands in Killarney can form part of potential foraging grounds for lesser horseshoe bats. No potential foraging habitat for the Lesser Horseshoe Bat would be impacted by way of this proposal. The proposal would be accommodated within the existing road boundaries. There is no potential for habitat loss or reduction of any qualifying interest habitat or functionally linked supporting habitat or landscape</p>	<p>No realistic potential for significant effects</p>
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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).

	<p>impact.</p> <p>The only protected structure in the general vicinity of the works area is Woodford House, a detached 19th-century Gothic Revival style house, set back from the N22 at Lissyvigeen. The Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI) has recorded two archaeological monuments within the study area, (1) is a souterrain (SMR KE067-168-) in Lissyviggeen townland, the Zone of Notification (ZAN) of which is located c.5m north of the existing N22. Works in the vicinity of same are limited to minor road surface repairs. (2) On the Ballycasheen Road the proposed route is located adjacent to the zone of notification around the ringfort (Ke067-016) but there is sufficient distance between the works and the monument. Works in the vicinity of same are limited to minor road surface repairs. 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 not adjacent to nature reserves or other sensitive features. The proposed development does not have potential to affect ecologically sensitive sites or locations or additional significant environmental sensitivities in the area.</p>	
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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 on environmental sensitivities in the area or elsewhere;
- The proposed works would be undertaken within the existing road boundaries;
- There is 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: 11/12/2024