



## **EIA Screening Report**

Footpath Scheme: Fore Co. Westmeath

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For: Meath County Council

Date of Issue: 30/05/2023

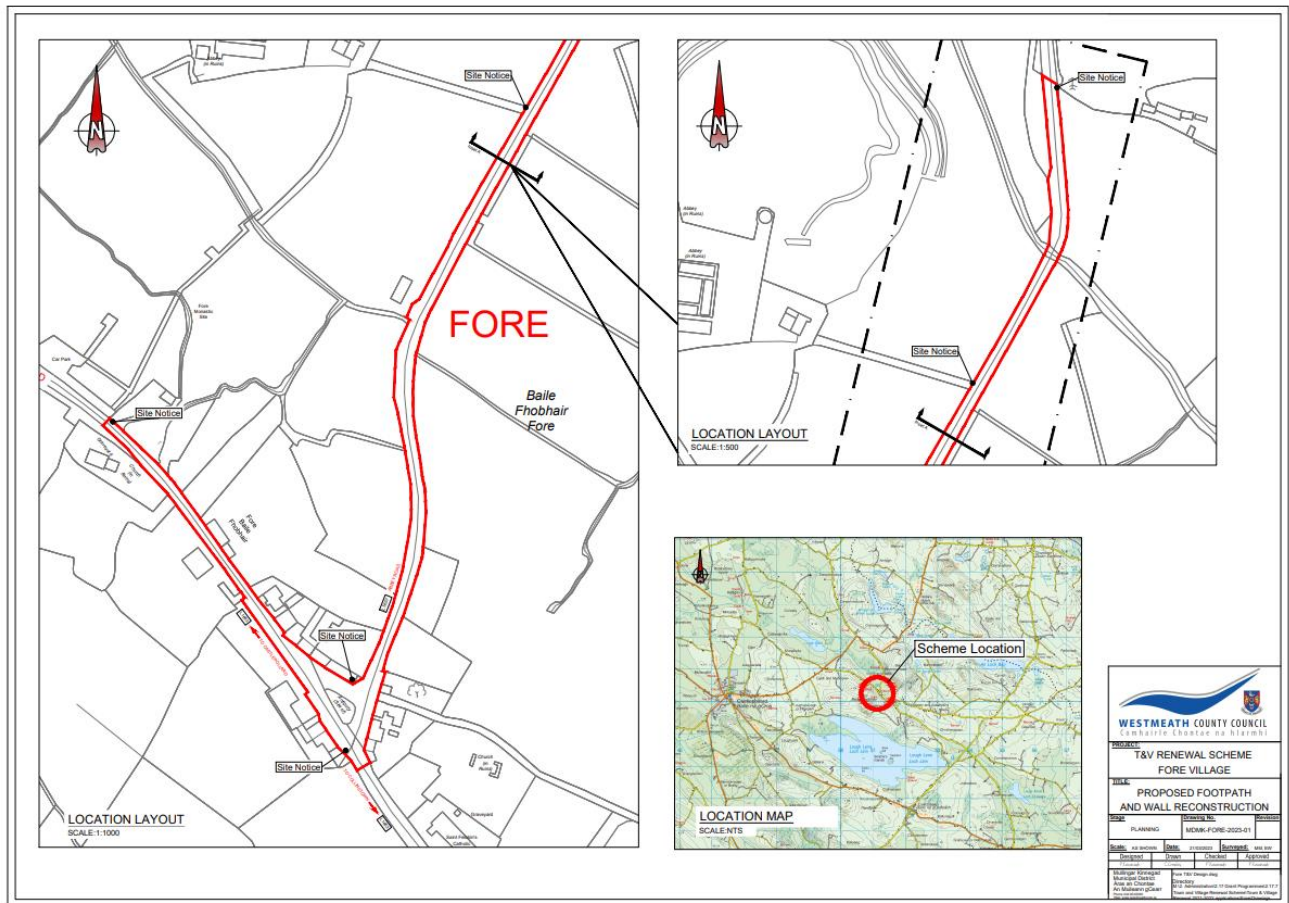
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# 1. Introduction

Westmeath County Council propose to create a high-quality paved community space in the heart of the village of Fore, completion of the missing section of the heritage stone wall and provision of public lighting on the footpath trail along the L5637. As currently proposed works will generally consist of the following:

- excavation of soils and subsoils not expected to exceed 450mm
- disposal of surplus soil off site to an authorised waste facility
- importation, placement, and compaction of hardcore (crushed stone)
- installation of high-quality paving.
- noise and general construction disturbance during daytime hours
- works duration is expected to be approximately 3 months.
- The erection of street lighting along the side road (Civil works already complete).
- The completion of the missing section of heritage stone wall

Figure 1: Site Location Map (Supplied by Westmeath County Council)



## 2.1. EIA Screening Methodology

Screening is the first stage in the EIA process, whereby a decision is made on whether or not EIA is required. 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 2001-2010 Regulations 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 by are below the given threshold must be screening to determine whether they require EIA or not. This is done by consideration of the criteria set out in Schedule 7.

EIA legislation sets down the types of projects that may require an EIAR. Annex I defines mandatory projects that require an EIAR and Annex II defines projects that are assessed on the basis of set mandatory thresholds for each of the project classes.

The EIA screening exercise initially assesses the development for Mandatory EIA using classifications defined in the appropriate legislation. Where no mandatory requirement is concluded, screening advances to sub-threshold development assessment, where the competent authority evaluates whether the project is likely to have a *significant* effect on the environment, with reference to its scale, nature, location and context.

The most recent guidance on Environmental Impact Assessment Screening has been provided by the Office of the Planning Regulator (ORP) 2021.

### 3. Screening and Assessment

#### 3.1 Form 1

Establishing if the proposal is a 'sub-threshold development':	
Planning Register Reference:	None
Development Summary:	<p>The program of works associated with this project will provide a walking path within the village of Fore Co. Westmeath.</p> <p>As currently proposed works will generally consist of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excavation of soils and subsoils not expected to exceed 450mm</li> <li>• disposal of surplus soil off site to an authorised waste facility</li> <li>• importation, placement, and compaction of hardcore (crushed stone)</li> <li>• installation of high-quality paving.</li> <li>• noise and general construction disturbance during daytime hours</li> <li>• works duration is expected to be approximately 3 months.</li> <li>• The erection of street lighting along the side road (Civil works already complete).</li> <li>• The completion of the missing section of heritage stone wall</li> <li>• Noise and general construction disturbance during daytime hours.</li> </ul>
Was a Screening Determination carried out under Section 176A-C?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, no further action required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>No, Proceed to Part A</b>
<b>A. Schedule 5 Part 1</b> - Does the development comprise a project listed in Schedule 5, <b>Part 1</b> , of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)? (Tick as appropriate)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, specify class <u> [insert here] </u>	<b>EIA is mandatory</b>  No Screening required
<b>X No</b>	<b>Proceed to Part B</b>

<p><b>B. Schedule 5 Part 2</b> - Does the development comprise a project listed in Schedule 5, <b>Part 2</b>, of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) <b>and</b> does it meet/exceed the thresholds? (Tick as appropriate)</p>	
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 2</p>	<p><b>No Screening required</b></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes the project is listed in Schedule 5, Part 2 <b>and</b> meets/exceeds the threshold, specify class (including threshold): _____ [specify class &amp; threshold here] _____</p>	<p><b>EIA is mandatory</b>  No Screening required</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes the project is of a type listed <b>but</b> is <i>sub-threshold</i>: _____ [insert here] _____</p>	<p><b>Proceed to Part C</b></p>
<p><b>C. If Yes, has Schedule 7A information/screening report been submitted?</b></p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Schedule 7A information/screening report has been submitted by the applicant</p>	<p><b>Screening Determination required</b></p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, Schedule 7A information/screening report has not been submitted by the applicant</p>	<p><b>Preliminary Examination required</b></p>

### 3.2 Form 2

<p><b>Preliminary Examination:</b> The planning authority shall carry out a preliminary examination of, at the <b>least, the nature, size or location of the development.</b></p>		
	<p><b>Comment:</b></p>	<p><b>Yes/No/ Uncertain:</b></p>
<p><b>Nature of the development:</b> <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 proposed works area is located in the village of Fore Co. Westmeath. Works will require the upgrade to the existing footpath infrastructure in the village covering an area of 1080m linear. Works are found along the L5637 and the L1163. In addition to an upgrade of the site footpaths the project also includes the installation of lighting and the removal and reinstatement of a historic stone wall.</p> <p>It is not expected the development will result in the production of any significant amounts</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>

	of waste materials including emissions or pollutants.	
<p><b>Size of the development:</b> Is the size of the proposed development exceptional <i>in the context of the existing environment</i>?</p> <p><i>Are there cumulative considerations having regard to other existing and/or permitted projects?</i></p>	The Westmeath County Council online planning database (via myplan) was reviewed to identify any nearby plans or projects within and around the proposed development site. No other developments were found within close proximity to the site that could lead to cumulative impacts with this development.	<b>No</b>
<p><b>Location:</b> <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><sup>1</sup></p> <p><i>Does the proposed development have the potential to affect other significant environmental sensitivities in the area?</i></p>	<p>No sensitive international, national or regionally significant ecological receptors were in the zone of influence of this project.</p> <p>The nearest Designated Site to the works area is Lough Lene SAC which is approximately 1km to the south and not hydrologically connected to the proposed development area. The Glore River is crossed by the proposed works. This is a tributary of the Inny River which forms part of the Shannon system. No designated sites are found with close proximity to this water course.</p>	<b>No</b>
<b>Preliminary Examination Conclusion:</b>		
Based on a preliminary examination of the <b>nature, size or location</b> of the development. (Tick as appropriate)		
<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.</b></p> <p><b>EIA is not required.</b></p>	<p>There is <b>real likelihood</b> of significant effects on the environment.</p> <p>An <b>EIAR is required.</b></p>	<p>There is <b>significant and realistic doubt</b> regarding the likelihood of significant effects on the environment.</p> <p>Request the applicant to submit the <b>Information specified in Schedule 7A</b> for the purposes of a screening determination.</p> <p>Proceed to Screening Determination.</p>

### 3. Conclusions

It is concluded that the characteristics of the proposed works would not be considered likely to have significant effects on the environment. This is based primarily on the very limited size and scale of the

<sup>1</sup> 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).

proposed works and the low potential to have significant impacts. No other projects emerged from the screening process with which the proposed works may have significant cumulative impacts.

It is concluded that there will be no significant direct or indirect impacts by virtue of the location of the proposed development on the receiving environment. This is based primarily upon the absence of any impacts predicted upon any protected sites such as Nature Reserves, parks or Natura 2000 Sites within the works area.

**The overall conclusion of this screening exercise is that there should be no specific requirement for a full Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed works.**

## References

DoEHLG. (2003) *'Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development'*. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

DOECLG (2015) *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2013* (Unofficial Consolidation). Unpublished Report by Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

NRA (2008) *Environmental Impact Assessment of National Roads Schemes – a practical guide*. National Roads Authority (Now Transport Infrastructure Ireland) , Dublin.

OPR (2021) Environmental Impact Assessment Screening OPR Practice Note PN02