AtkinsRéalis

EIA Screening – Mullingar Courthouse to Saunders Bridge Active Travel Scheme

Westmeath County Council

April 2026

MULLINGAR ACTIVE TRAVEL BUNDLE

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1. Introduction

AtkinsRéalis has been commissioned by Westmeath County Council (WCC) to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report for the development Active Travel Facilities within the town of Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Scheme'. The EIA Screening Report will be submitted as part of the Part 8 planning documents for the Proposed Scheme.

This EIA Screening report assesses Project 3, which comprises a route of approximately 1.8 kilometres, encompassing the lower section of Mount Street extending to Jail Hill, Mount Street Gardens, the upper section of Lynn Road, Sundays Well Road, Auburn Road, Millmount Road from its junction with Millmount Avenue to its lower terminus, and Ballinderry Road up to the roundabout at Ardmore Road near Saunder's Bridge. The scheme also includes a section of Mullingar Park, extending from the entrance at Sunday's Well in the south to the entrance at Millmount in the northeast. The segment along Mount Street is intended to continue the existing pedestrian enhancement measures currently implemented on the upper part of the road, while the remainder of the scheme is designed to deliver high-quality infrastructure to support both pedestrian and cyclist movement along the designated route. The full extent of the Project 3, named Mullingar Courthouse to Saunders Bridge Active Travel Scheme, is illustrated in Figure 1-1.

Figure 1-1 – Extent of the Proposed Scheme (Mullingar Courthouse to Saunders Bridge - Project 3)

A Feasibility, Options Selection and Appraisal Report was previously conducted by AtkinsRéalis in October 2024 and identified the proposed design as the preferred option for Project 3.

1.1 Project Overview

The overall purpose of the Mullingar Active Travel Bundle is to provide upgraded pedestrian and cycling facilities in addition to facilitating any necessary infrastructure provisions to cater for future public transport upgrades.

The project aims to:

- Design new/upgrade existing cycleways/pedestrian footpaths in accordance with the Cycle Design Manual, in order to reduce public dependence on private vehicles as a primary mode of travel, using best practice standards and complementing the surrounding environment.
- To meet and accommodate WCC and stakeholder requirements.
- To meet planning, statutory and procurement requirements.

The Project Objectives are:

- Reduced public dependence on private vehicles as a primary mode of travel.
- Integration of safe and convenient alternatives.
- Enhance the area and contribute to a more attractive place.
- Provide safe pedestrian and cyclist facilities for school children and students to travel to and from school.
- Create opportunities to be physically active and reduce the negative consequences of car-based commuting.
- Provides sustainable travel options.
- Enhanced safety of Vulnerable Road Users.

This report reflects the requirements of the Planning and Development Regulations (2001-2025) and accordingly contains:

1. A plan sufficient to identify the land;
2. A description of the development, including in particular:
   a. a description of the physical characteristics of the development and, where relevant, of demolition works;
   b. a description of the location of the development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected;
3. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development;
4. To the extent the information is available, a description of any likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment resulting from:
   a. the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant; and
   b. the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity; and
5. Such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make, including any features of the proposed development or any measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

This report supports the Part 8 planning application for Project 3 of the Mullingar Active Travel Bundle. It assesses whether an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is required, based on a screening of the scheme's potential environmental impacts in line with statutory requirements.

A Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AtkinsRéalis, 2026) has been undertaken for the Proposed Scheme. This assessment considered the potential for likely significant effects on European sites within the scheme's zone of influence (ZoI). The AA Screening Report concluded that the Proposed Scheme, "*either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, will not result in likely significant effects on any SAC, SPA, or other European site*".

1.3 Guiding Principles

1.3.1 Transport Appraisal Framework

The objectives for the scheme are based on local, regional and national policies for the introduction of active travel measures as outlined in the following section as well as the criteria set out in the Department of Transport's *Transport Appraisal Framework (June 2025)'* (TAF). These-criteria headings are as follows:

- **Transport User Benefits and Other Economic Impacts:** To improve economic welfare of transport network users measuring the connectivity with existing and proposed public transport facilities as well as other economic impacts related to costs of construction and maintenance.
- **Accessibility Impacts:** To improve accessibility to key services, such as retails, healthcare and educational facilities, employment areas, etc for all road users and bring social inclusion benefits to those for whom non-motorised means are the predominate form of transit. This criterion will also assess four of the five main requirements for cycle-friendly infrastructure according to the Cycle Design Manual, which are: coherence, directness, comfort and attractiveness.
- **Social Impacts:** To improve accessibility for the socially, economically and physically disadvantaged groups; to provide increased health benefits by raising activity levels and to ensure gender impacts are addressed.
- **Land Use Impacts:** To integrate the scheme into strategic land use planning / strategies as set out in national and regional policies and guidelines.
- **Safety Impacts:** To reduce the potential for conflict between all road users along the routes through the provision of a facility which is in line with the current standards. The Scheme will seek to:
  - Improve safety and provide a better environment for vulnerable road users within the study area
  - Improve security by providing adequate lighting and visibility to deter anti-social behaviour.
- **Climate Change Impacts:** To reduce emissions in the transport sector by encouraging active travel through improved infrastructure and also to improve the robustness of infrastructure to be able to resist effects of climate change (extreme weather events).
- **Local Environmental Impacts:** To minimize impacts on the receiving environment, considering air quality, noise and vibration, biodiversity, water resources and soil quality, landscape and visual quality and cultural and heritage impacts.

1.3.2 Mullingar Settlement Area Plan, 2025 – 2031

The Mullingar Settlement Area Plan (MSAP) 2025 - 2031 sets out a strategy for proper planning and sustainable development of Mullingar. It builds upon the previous Mullingar Local Area Plan, 2014 – 2020. The Draft Mullingar Local Area Plan 2024-2030 is currently being prepared by WCC. The MASP outlines policies and objectives for the future development of the town and its environs.

Some objectives and policies from the MSAP that are relevant to the Mullingar Active Travel Bundle can be seen below:

- **TM5 -** Encourage and support the delivery of 'permeability schemes/links' including those identified under the Mullingar Local Transport Plan 2024, to improve cycle and walking facilities between estates and to the town centre.
- **TM6 -** Support the implementation of sustainable active travel interventions and actions as outlined in Table 8.3 of this Plan.
- **TM7 -** The design of new sustainable active travel infrastructure will be subject to environmental and/or ecological assessment, where applicable.
- **TM10 -** Support traffic calming measures to facilitate active travel i.e. footpath widening, dished crossing points, tactile paving urban landscaping and tree planting including measures to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility throughout the town.
- **TM11 -** Support and encourage the improvement of existing and the development of new signage and wayfinding to encourage the use of active travel modes.
- **TM12 -** Promote safe pedestrian and cycle access to schools, improving school visibility through signposting and placemaking, reducing vehicle congestion and speeds and preventing illegal parking in the area, in accordance with the 'Safe Routes to School' Programme.
- **TM13 -** Support the delivery of Park and Stride (P&S) sites to encourage a shift towards sustainable travel behaviours and help alleviate town centre congestion.

2. Description of the Proposed Scheme

2.1 Nature and Extent of the Proposed Scheme

The Proposed Scheme has been divided into 7 segments of common characteristic types as shown in Figure 2-1. Segments 01 and 02 will provide a continuation of the pedestrian interventions in place on the north end of Mount Street and a mixed traffic for cyclists and vehicles. Along segment 01, northbound cyclists and vehicles will share the road and southbound cyclists will be accommodated on a dedicated cycle track. Footpaths to be widened on both sides of the road in both segment and roads to be reduced to 3.5m wide.

Segments 03, 05, 06 and 07 will provide two-way cycle tracks on one side of the road and on Segment 04, from the junction with Mount Street to the zebra crossing, a two way cycle track will be provided and from that, cyclists will continue along the section though the park. Details of the proposals for each segment has been provided in Table 2-1.

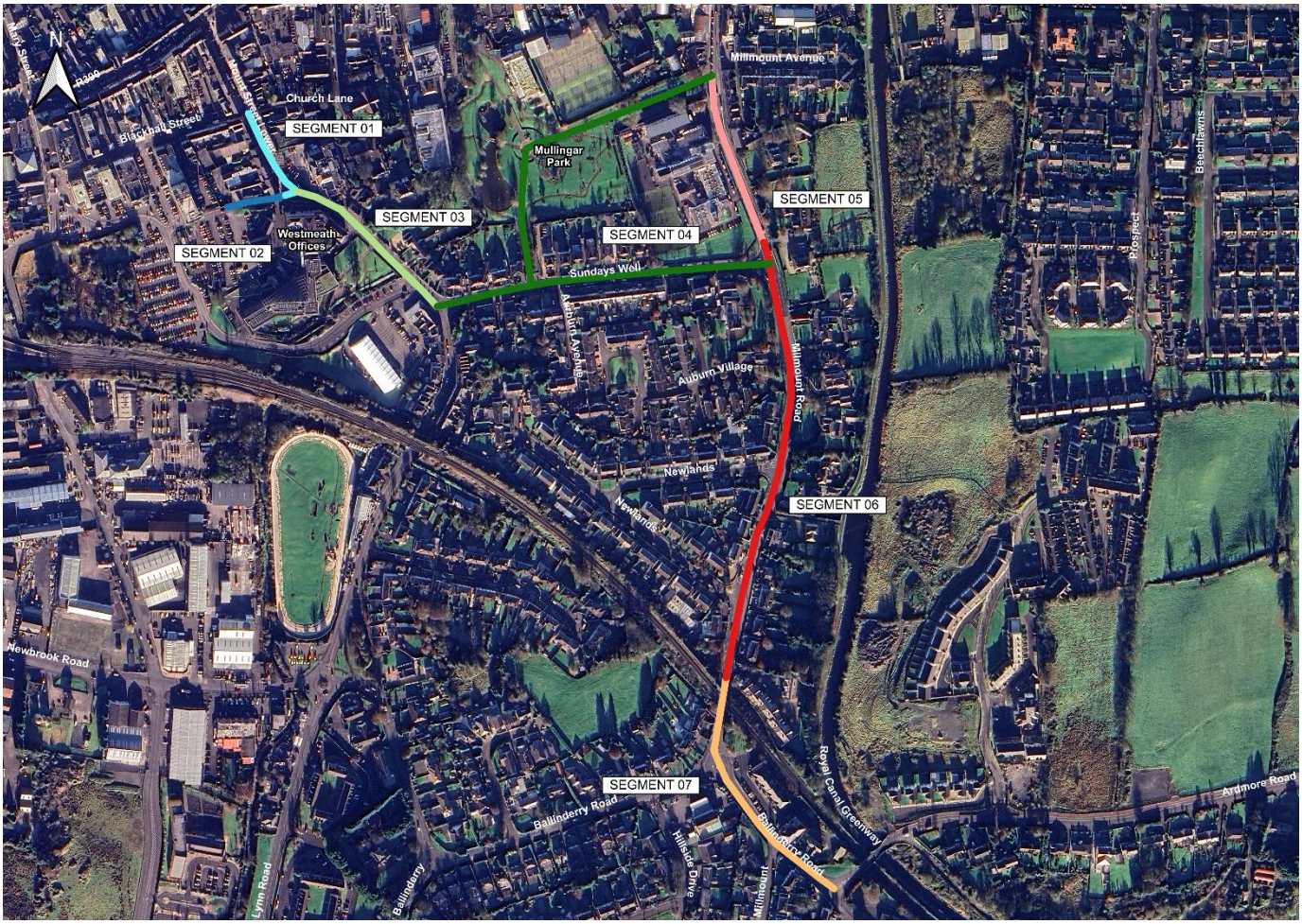

Figure 2-1 - The various Sections of the Proposed Scheme

Table 2-1 - Overview of Proposed Scheme Segments

Location	Proposal
Segment 01 and Segment 02	Retention of the existing facilities and mixed traffic for cyclists. Option to be further assessed at Phase 3 Preliminary Design by a landscape architect.
Segment 03	2.4m two-way cycle track on the eastern side 2m footpaths on the western side and 2.5m on the eastern side 5.5m carriageway Traffic calming raised toucan crossing.
Segment 04	2.5m Two-way cycle track on the north side from junction with Lynn Road until access to park Off-road facilities through the park Mixed street along Auburn Road. Retention of the existing parking bays on the southern side The existing zebra crossing upgraded in accordance with TL 605 of the CDM Traffic calming ramp.
Segment 05	2.5m two-way Cycle Track on the West Side 2.4m footpaths on the western side and 1.8m on the eastern side 6.0m carriageway Traffic calming with a raised table priority junction and ramp.
Segment 06	2.3m two-way cycle track on the East side 2.0m footpaths on both sides of the road 6.0m carriageway Retention of the parking bays and grass verges on the West Side Traffic calming raised tables at 3 No. priority junctions.
Segment 07	3.7m shared Active Travel Path on the East Side A 2m footpath on the West Side 6.0m carriageway.
Pinch Point under Railway Bridge	Existing give way traffic shuttle system system to be retained and modified with shared path on the east side and removal of footpath on the western side
Junction 1: Mount Street / Jail Hill Roundabout	Upgrade to a Standard Side Road Crossing according to the Cycle Design Manual.
Junction 2: Jail Hill /Lynn Road / Sunday's Well Priority Junction	Upgrade to TL407 Two-way Cycle Track Crossing Side Road with Priority - Full Set Back According to the Cycle Design Manual.
Junction 3: Auburn Road / Millmount Road Priority Junction	Upgrade to TL407 Two-way Cycle Track Crossing Side Road with Priority - Full Set Back According to the Cycle Design Manual.
Junction 4: Ballinderry Road Roundabout	Upgrade into a TL703 Segregated Roundabout with Shared Active Travel Facilities as per the Cycle Design Manual

2.2 Construction Methodology

The construction period for the Proposed Scheme is expected to last approximatively 15 months. The Key activities are outlined below.

2.2.1 Cycle path Construction

The exact construction depth for cycle track pavements is subject to the outcome of ground investigations to be carried out at detailed design stage. However, the typical cycle path construction will be in the order of 500 mm maximum excavation depth.

Works will commence with the clearance and off-site removal of redundant road signage, boundary treatment, road surface materials and topsoil. The works will be undertaken using a combination of operatives using hand tools, mechanical excavators and dumper trucks. To facilitate the main works, underground utilities which conflict with the main works will be uncovered using mechanical excavators and hand digging where appropriate. The need for significant utility diversions is not envisaged as part of the works; instead a 'lower and protect' approach will be favoured. This is likely to be restricted to locations where the walking and cycling facilities cross or interface with public roads.

Following the utility works, the initial pavement and cycle track construction phase will be undertaken. This will include the excavation and removal of the existing stone, soil, concrete ad bitumen materials along the route followed by the installation of new path and track base materials. Excavations will be largely undertaken by mechanical means, with any spoil arisings to be removed off site or reused locally where testing confirms its suitability. The Proposed Scheme involves an anticipated maximum excavation depth of 500mm below ground level to facilitate the base layers for the proposed footpaths / pavements and the ducting for the signalling associated with the scheme. The base layers of the pavement and track are to be made of compacted stone materials.

The works will also involve constructing the civil engineering elements required to facilitate the commissioning of the traffic signals and the public lighting elements at the latter stages of construction. Service chambers and underground duct sets will be laid within trenches and backfilled with granular material. Signal poles and public lighting columns will be erected, and ducting connections will be made to the base of each pole unit. Following completion of the lighting elements, the final pavement surface course will be laid using an asphalt paving machine followed by compaction using a vibrating roller

2.2.2 Road Resurfacing

The typical new road construction, which is minimised throughout the scheme, will be in the range of 600 mm to 1 m depending on capping requirements if the California Bearing Ratio (CBR) is poor.

The scheme also involves the resurfacing of the roadways and painting of new road markings within the scheme footprint. The existing road surface course layer will be planed-out throughout the entire scheme extents with planings being removed off site. The planed-out area will be replaced with Hot Rolled asphalt (HRA) or Stone Mastic Asphalt (SMA) surface course ca. 40mm - 60mm thick. Additional to this, and where required, additional bituminous layers may be replaced in localised areas where there is evidence of pavement failure. It is not envisaged that the foundations layers (i.e. sub-base or capping) will require replacement. Following road resurfacing new road markings will be painted on road surfaces.

2.2.3 Footpath Construction

The exact construction depth of the footpath is subject to the outcome of ground investigations to be carried out at detailed design stage. However, the typical footpath construction will be in the order of 300 mm.

2.2.4 Drainage Alterations

Typically, drainage will be provided using new gullies and existing or new storm drainage pipes where appropriate. The new facilities will generally slope towards the road in order to minimise the need for additional drainage collection measures. In some areas, where this may not be possible, additional channels or measures may be required. The details of this will be developed as part of the detailed design. The existing drainage infrastructure, and any new channels, within the Proposed Scheme site will outfall to the Brosna River.

2.2.5 Verge Reinstatement

For soft landscaping areas topsoil profiles will be graded to tie into the new pavement levels followed by grass seeding. The top soiling and seeding will be undertaken using a combination of mechanical excavator, tractor unit drawing a rotavator / rake / seed spreader and also operatives using hand tools for areas where machinery access is unavailable. There are areas along the scheme that will require embankments to be reduced in order to facilitate the active travel proposals, primarily along Segment 01 as can be seen in AtkinsRéalis Drawing Ref: 0086409-ATK-ST-P2-DR-C-900122) as well a small area in Segment 05 outside of Ardmore Hills (0086409-ATKST-P2-DR-C-900128).

2.2.6 Traffic Management

The construction of the cycle tracks and footpaths will be carried out in short segments (c. 100-200m in length) on one side of the roadway at a time to allow for continued traffic flow and will progress along the roadways, as such individual work zones will be relatively small.

2.2.7 Junctions

All junctions along the scheme will be segregated. This will feature cyclists passing through the junction on their own cycle tracks with dedicated traffic signal phases which are separate to the vehicular phasing and separate to the pedestrian phasing (where applicable). The proposed junctions are to include kerb upstands throughout (except at crossing points), providing vertical segregation and thereby increasing protection to the cycle tracks. The Roundabout on the scheme will be segregated whereby cyclists and pedestrians will join a shared path and use zebra crossings to facilitate crossing, the roundabouts will require kerb upstands throughout.

2.2.8 Site Compound

It will be the responsibility of the Contractor to determine a suitable location for the site compound within the proposed development area, but away from any identified environmental sensitive receptors (watercourses, designated sites etc) so as to avoid potential impacts to the environment and the general public. It is planned that existing Local Authority (Westmeath County Council) controlled material storage yards in the locality, currently used for the storage of inert materials, will be utilised during the construction phase to store similarly inert materials for incorporation in the Proposed Scheme. Materials will be brought to site on a periodic basis as required directly from suppliers. Parking for operatives will be at the main compound only. Operatives will be transported from the compound to the works area. No parking will be allowed within the temporary works area or on-street.

3. Receiving Environment

The Proposed Scheme will be constructed within the town of Mullingar. The Proposed Scheme is a 1.8km km long footpath/ cycleway along the lower section of Mount Street until Jail Hill, Mount Street Gardens, the upper section of Lynn Road, Sundays Well Road, Auburn Road, Millmount Road from the junction with Millmount Avenue to the lower end and Ballinderry Road until the roundabout with Ardmore Road at Saunder's Bridge. The scheme also comprises a section of the Mullingar Park, from the access on Sunday's Well on the south to the access on Millmount on the northeast. The Proposed Scheme is almost entirely located on existing hard standing surfaces of roadways and pathways with occasional areas of grass verges and roadside trees also within the footprint of the scheme all within an urban setting. The surface water drainage from the scheme site is via existing roadway drainage infrastructure which outfalls to the Brosna River (outside the scheme extents).

3.1 Site Zoning

The land use zonings for the Proposed Scheme, as identified within the Mullingar Settlement Area Plan include the following categories, as illustrated in Figure 3-1.

- Open Space
- Established Residential
- Community, Educational & Institutional
- Mixed Use; and
- Commercial.

The Proposed Scheme aligns with the Mullingar Local Area Plan, supporting policies and objectives of the development strategy area as well as the zoning requirements and improving local facilities, cycleways and pedestrian linkages.

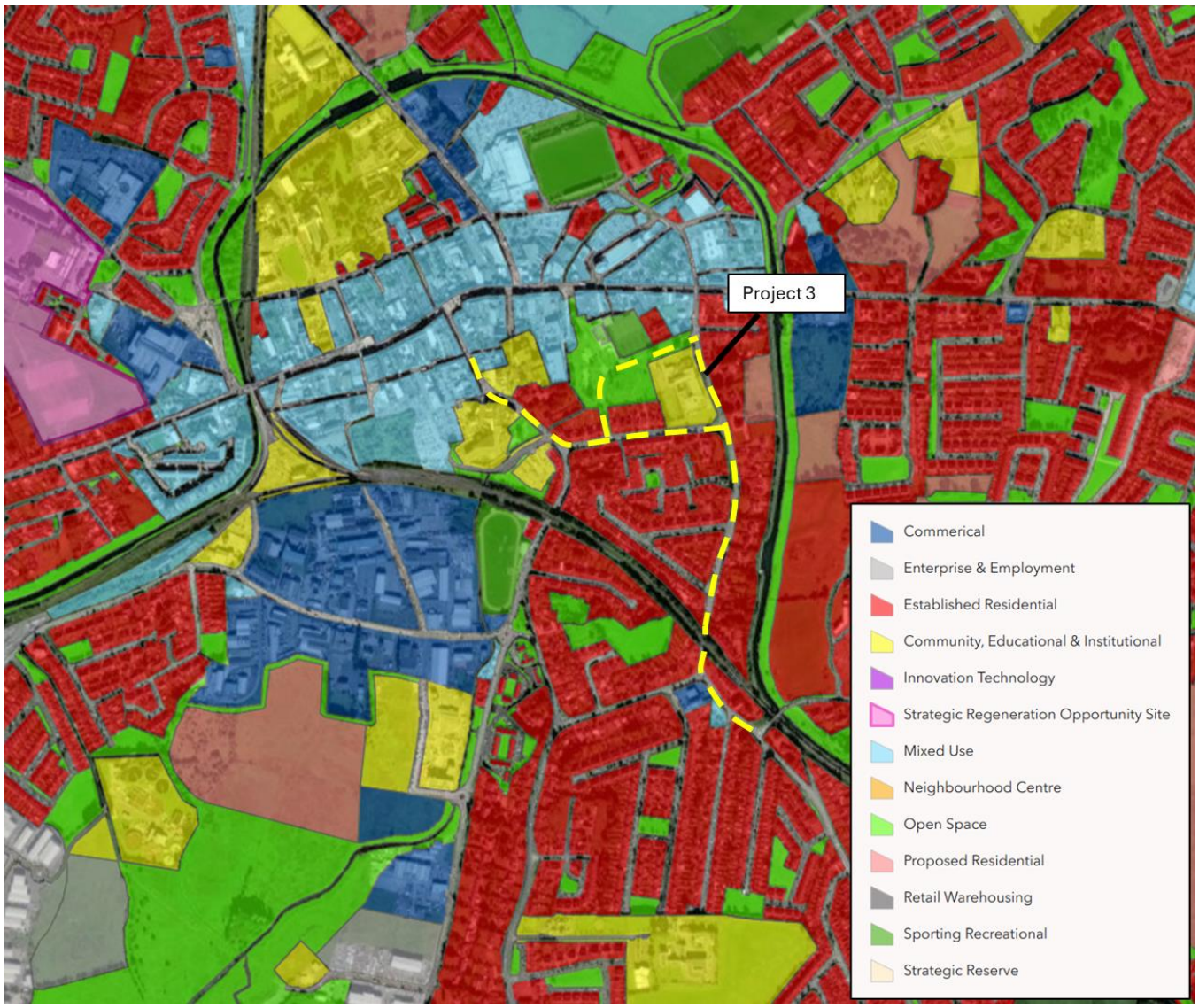

Figure 3-1 - Land Use within the Proposed Scheme (Mullingar Settlement Area Plan 2025-2031)

3.2 Hydrology

The Proposed Scheme is situated within the Lower Shannon Water Framework Directive (WFD) Catchment area, specifically in the Brosna sub-catchment. The nearest water bodies to the proposed route include the Royal Canal, located approximately 107.2 m east of Millmount Road; the River Brosna, which flows west of Sunday Wells Road and through Mullingar Town Park; and the Mullingar Town Park Pond. The River Brosna is of 'Poor' status for the 2019-2024 monitoring period, with it being 'At risk' of failing to achieve relevant WFD objectives by 2027. The EPA (2026) status of the Royal Canal is 'Good' for the 2019-2024 monitoring period with its risk of failing to meet relevant WFD objectives by 2027 under 'Review'.

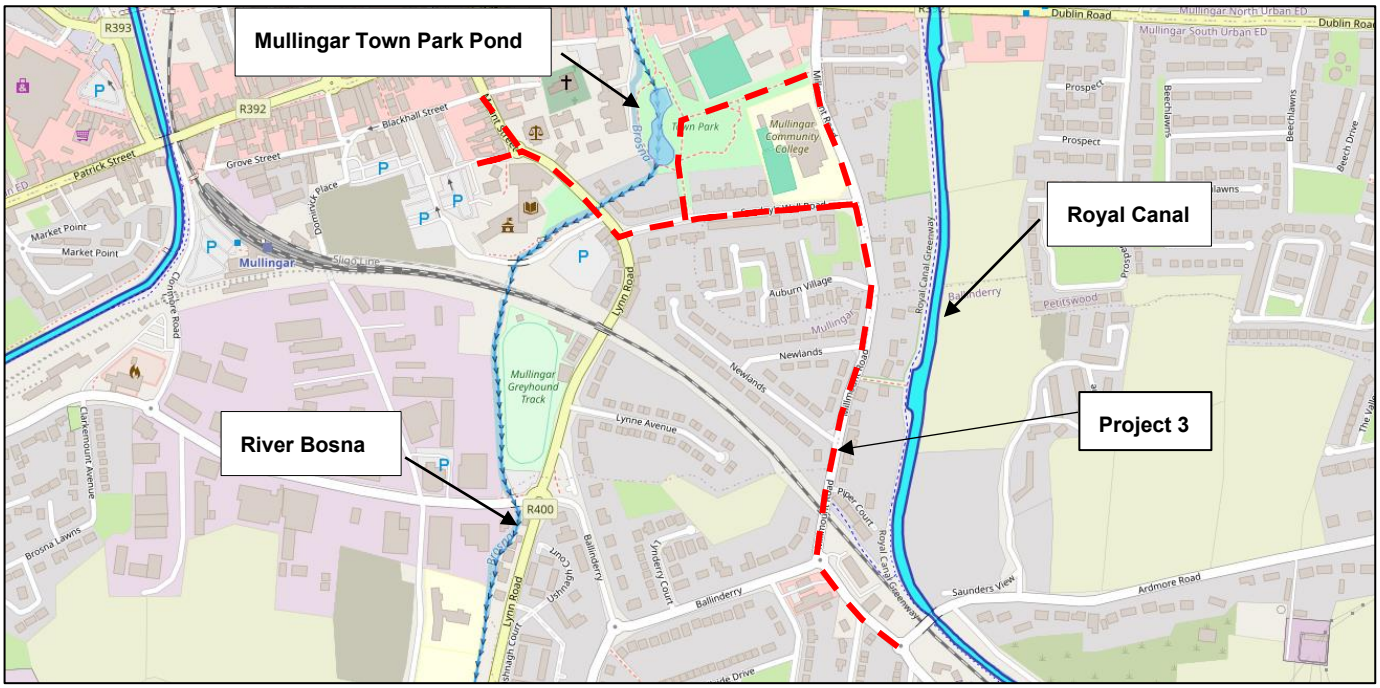

Figure 3-2 – Surrounding Surface Water Features of Project 3 (EPA, 2026)

3.3 Ecology

There are no internationally designated conservation sites within the study area. However, there are 9no. European sites (5 no. SACs and 4 no. SPAs) within the zone of influence (ZoI) of the study area. The surface water drainage network from the project site is via the roadway drainage infrastructure and for the purposes of this assessment it is assumed to ultimately outfall to the River Brosna, therefore resulting in an indirect hydrological connection to designated conservation sites located downstream on the River Brosna i.e. Lough Ennell SPA/SAC. As the Proposed Scheme is remote from any European site and is not within the same groundwater body as the nearest European site there is no potential connectivity to any European site via groundwater pathways. The European sites within the ZoI of the Proposed Scheme are presented in Table 3-1 below. Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-4 illustrate the European sites within the ZoI of the Proposed Scheme. There will be no land take from any of the designated sites within 15km of the scheme and, based on the findings of the Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening report (AtkinsRéalis, 2026) "*the Proposed Scheme, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, will not result in likely significant effects on any SAC or SPA or any other European site*".

Table 3-1 - Internationally Designed Conservation Sites within the ZoI of the Proposed Scheme

Site Name	Site ID	Distance and Connectivity to Study Area
Lough Ennell SPA	004044	3.4km South West of the project site. The Brosna River flows to Lough Ennell thereby providing a hydrological link between the scheme site and this SPA.
Lough Owel SPA	004047	3.9 km North West of the project site. There is no hydrological link between the scheme site and this SPA.
Lough Derravaragh SPA	004043	9.7km North of the project site. There is no hydrological link between the scheme site and this SPA.

Figure 3-3 - SPA's within the ZoI of Project 3

Table 3-2 - Special Areas of Conservation within potential ZoI of the Proposed Scheme

Site Name	Site ID	Distance and Connectivity to Study Area
Lough Ennell SAC	000685	2.8km South West of the project site. There is no direct overlap or direct connectivity between the Proposed Scheme and Lough Ennell SAC. The Brosna River, to which

Site Name	Site ID	Distance and Connectivity to Study Area
		surface waters from the Proposed Scheme site discharge, flows to Lough Ennell thereby providing a hydrological link between the scheme site and this SAC.
Lough Owel SAC	000688	3.8 km North West of the project site.. There is no direct overlap or direct connectivity between the Proposed Scheme and Lough Owel SAC. Lough Owel is upstream of the scheme site, as such there is no hydrological connectivity to the habitats within or bordering the SAC.
Wooddown Bog SAC	002205	4km East of the project site. There is no direct overlap between the proposed works and Wooddown Bog SAC. There is no direct or indirect/hydrological connectivity from the Proposed Scheme site to this SAC.
Scragh Bog SAC	000692	5.6km North West of the project site. There is no direct overlap between the proposed works and Scragh Bog SAC. There is no direct or indirect/hydrological connectivity from the Proposed Scheme site to this SAC.
River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC	002299	11.9km North East of the project site. There is no direct overlap between the proposed works and River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC. There is no direct or indirect/hydrological connectivity from the Proposed Scheme site to this SAC.

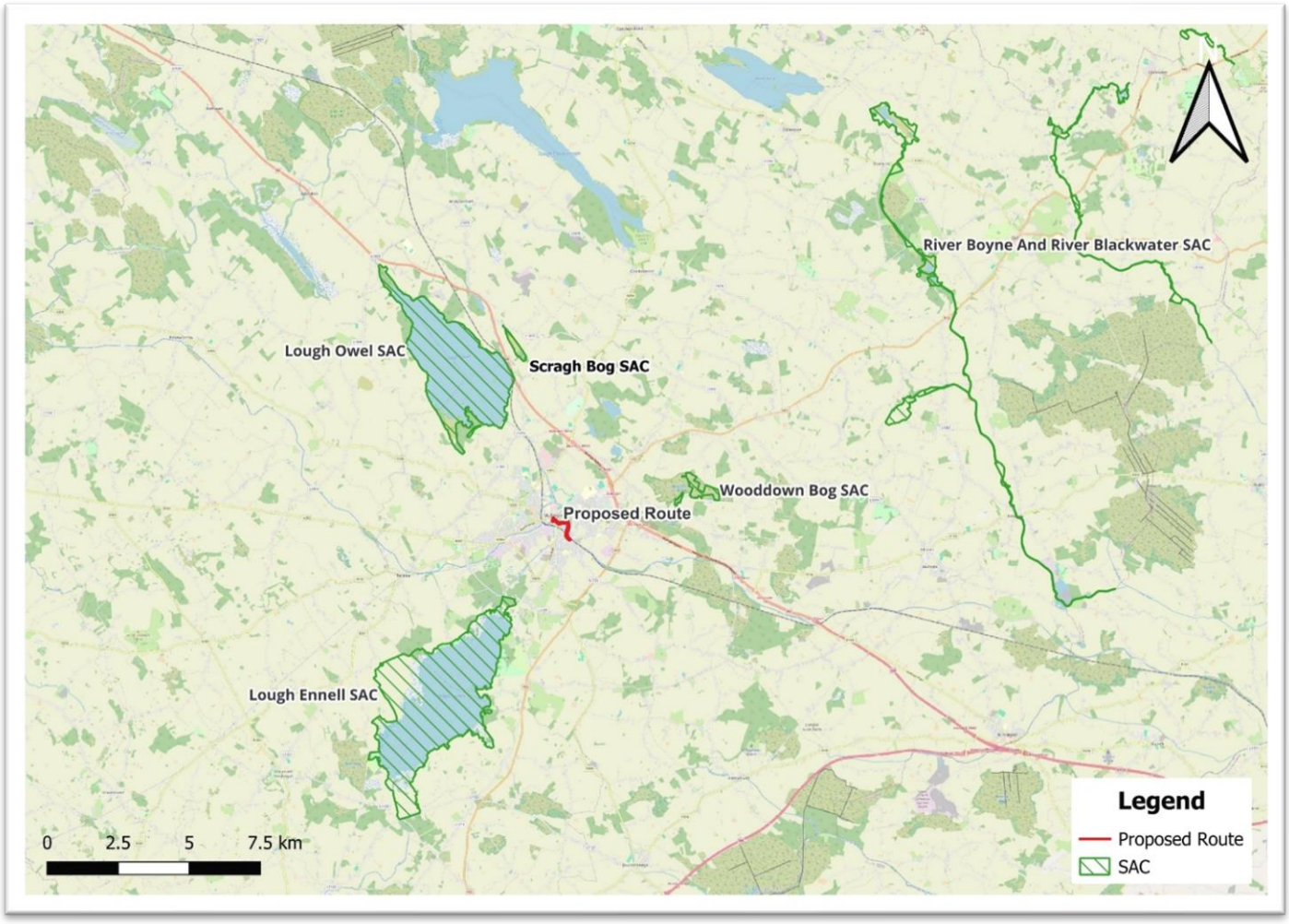

Figure 3-4 - SAC's within the ZoI of Project 3

Natural Heritage Area (NHA) is the basic designation for wildlife sites. These sites are considered to represent important habitats for species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection[1]. These sites are protected under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000)[2]

Additionally, proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) are those which have been published on a non-statutory basis, and have yet to be statutorily designated. These sites are of significance to flora, fauna, and their respective habitats. These sites will be designated on a phased basis over the coming years. Prior to designation pNHAs are subject to limited protection[3] .

There are no NHAs within or in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Scheme site, the nearest is Wooddown Bog NHA located ca. 3km east of the scheme extents. There is no connectivity to this NHA from the scheme site.

The Royal Canal pNHA (002103) is 80m south of the Proposed Scheme. A site synopsis for Royal Canal pNHA is presented below. Lough Sheever Fen/Slevin's Lough Complex pNHA, Walshestown Fen pNHA, Lough Owel pNHA and Lough Ennell pNHA are all within 5km of the Proposed Scheme, however, there is no connectivity to these pNHAs

[1] Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) | National Parks & Wildlife Service

[2] Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 | National Parks & Wildlife Service

[3] Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) | National Parks & Wildlife Service

from the scheme site. The locations of pNHAs in relation to the Proposed Scheme are illustrated in Figure 3-5 and 3-6 below.

Table 3-3 - pNHAs and NHAs within 15km of the Proposed Scheme

Site name (site code)	Distance from study area	Connectivity
Royal Canal pNHA (002103)	80m South	Yes direct connectivity established through Lough Owel
Lough Owel pNHA (000688)	3.9km North West	No direct or indirect (hydrological) connectivity
Wooddown Bog NHA (000694)	1.8km East	No direct or indirect (hydrological) connectivity
Lough Sheever Fen/Slevin's Lough Complex pNHA (000690)	3.5km North West	No direct or indirect (hydrological) connectivity
Walshestown Fen pNHA (001731)	3.0km North West	No direct or indirect (hydrological) connectivity
Lough Ennell pNHA (000685)	3.4 km South West	No direct or indirect (hydrological) connectivity

3.3.1 Summary of Royal Canal Site Synopsis

'The Royal Canal' is a man-made waterway linking the River Liffey at Dublin to the River Shannon near Tarmonbarry. There is a branch line from Kilashee to Longford Town. The canal NHA comprises the central channel and the banks on either side of it. The main water supply is from Lough Owel (also an NHA) via a feeder channel into the canal at Mullingar. A number of different habitats are found within the canal boundaries - hedgerow, tall herbs, calcareous grassland, reed fringe, open water, scrub and woodland. Otter spraints are found along the towpath, particularly where the canal passes over a river or stream. The ecological value of the canal lies more in the diversity of species it supports along its linear habitats than in the presence of rare species. It crosses through agricultural land and therefore provides a refuge for species threatened by modern farming methods.'

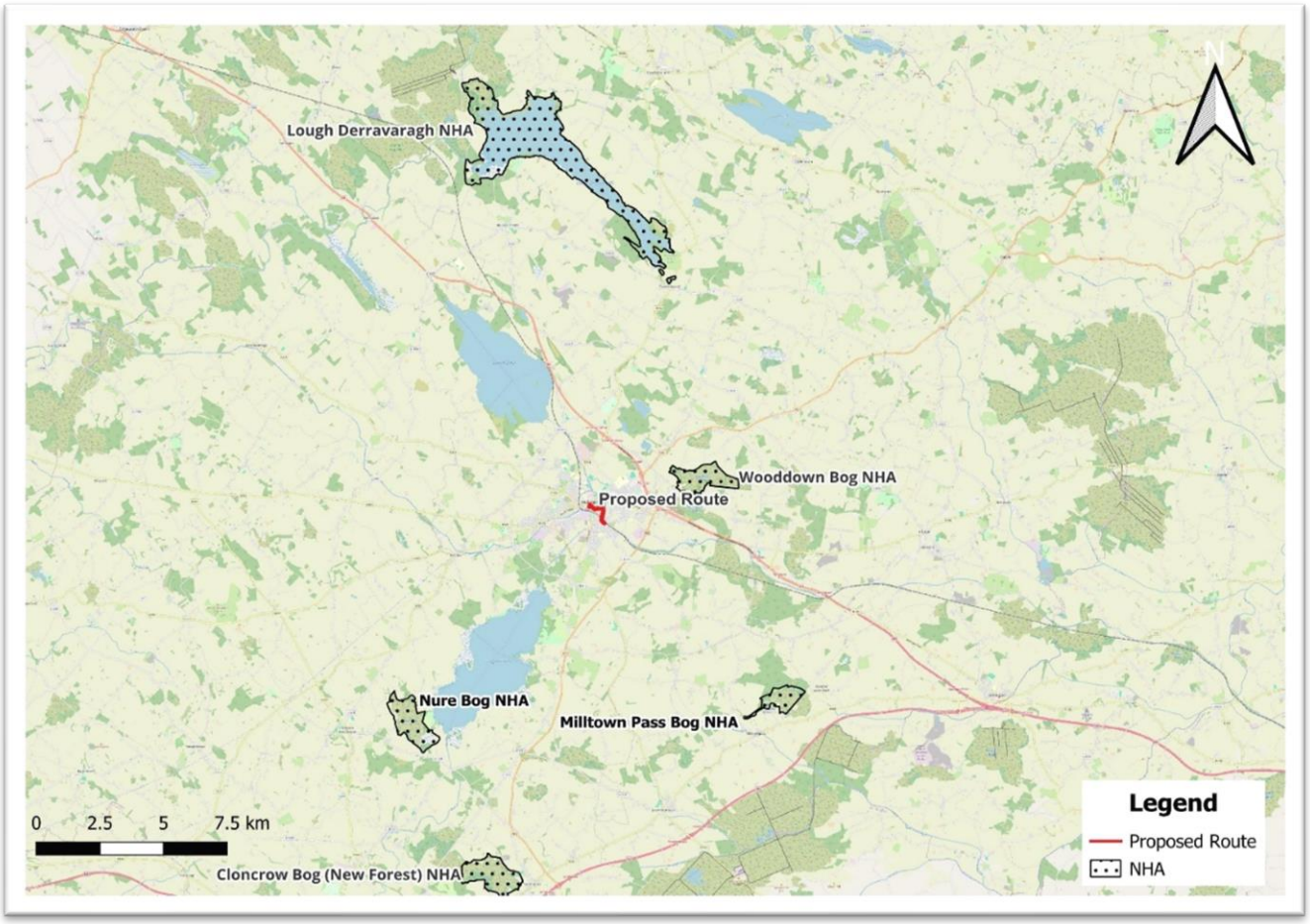

Figure 3-5 - NHAs within 15km of Project 3

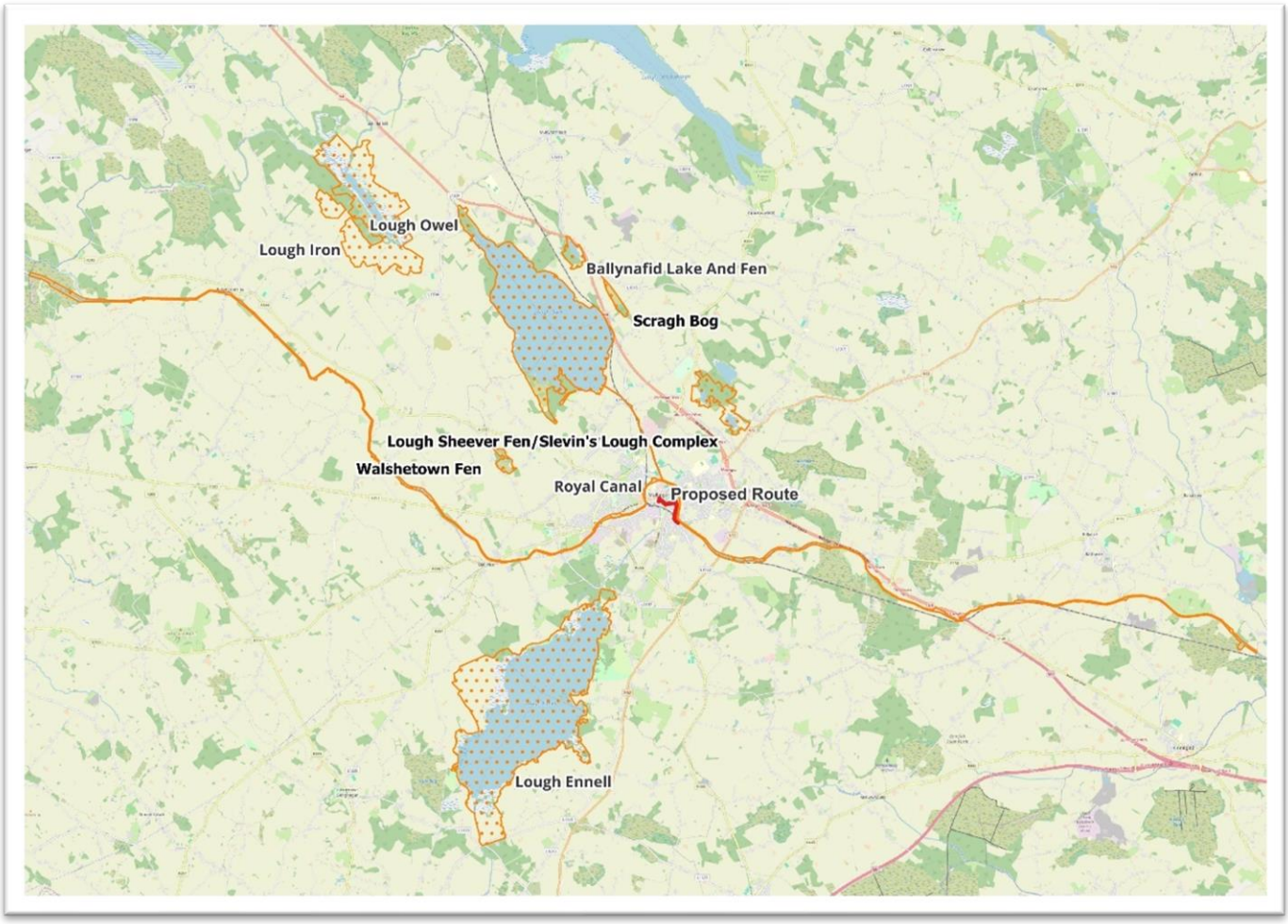

Figure 3-6 - pHNA's near the Proposed Scheme

A review of NPWS datasets identifies there are no Annex I habitats within the study areas. The White-clawed Crayfish can be found throughout the Bosna River and the Royal Canal feeder channel. There is no connectivity from the scheme site to the upstream stretches of the Royal Canal feeder channel and as such potential adverse water quality impacts on this watercourse are low. There is no expected impact on any Annex 1 habitats or qualifying interests from the Proposed Scheme.

3.4 Hydrogeology

A review of the Geological Survey Ireland (GSI, 2026) data confirms that there are no reported karst features, wells, or springs within the Proposed Scheme area. The nearest recorded well (GSI ID: 2325SEK006) is located approximately 2.41 km southeast of the Proposed Scheme. Additionally, there are no Groundwater Drinking Water Source Protection Areas within a 5 km radius, and no Group Water Schemes are identified within 10 km of the proposed development.

According to GSI (2026), the Mullingar area, including the Proposed Scheme, is underlain by a locally important aquifer—bedrock that is moderately productive only in local zones. The groundwater vulnerability beneath the proposed route is classified as 'High' to 'Moderate', indicating that groundwater may be shallow and susceptible to contamination (refer to Figure 3-7).

The Proposed Scheme is situated within the Inny Groundwater Body (Code: IE_SH_G_110), which currently holds a 'Good' status under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The overall WFD objective for this groundwater body is to 'Protect' and 'Restore' its current status.

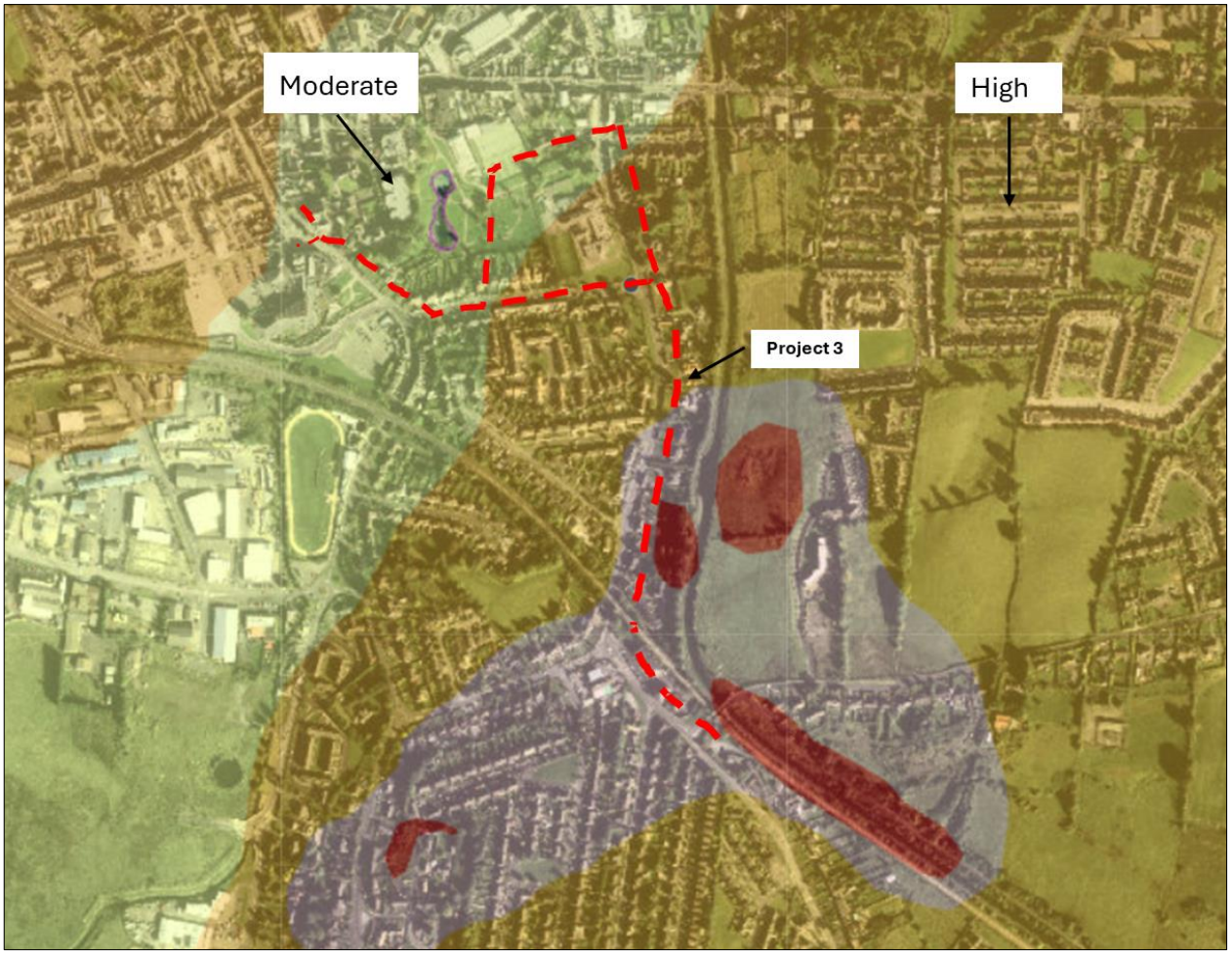

Figure 3-7 Groundwater Vulnerability within the vicinity of the Proposed Scheme (EPA, 2026)

3.5 Geology

According to GSI (2026) the area around the Proposed Scheme is underlain by the Lucan Formation, which consists of dark limestone and shale, which is a common geological unit in the region. The area is also classified as having 'Low',' Low inferred' and 'Made' land in terms of landslide susceptibility. There are no recorded landslide events in Mullingar Area. Based on the available geological and geohazard data, no significant landslide risk is identified for the Proposed Scheme.

A review of GSI (2026) indicates that there are no Geological Heritage Areas are located within the footprint of the Proposed Scheme. However, there are two Geological Heritage Areas (GHAs) located within a 7km km radius of the Proposed Scheme. Mullingar Bypass is located ca.2.6km south west, and is described by GSI (2026) as '*A roadcut section along the N4 road north of Mullingar, exposing limestone strata'*, and Portnashangan Quarry is located ca. 6.9km north of the Proposed Scheme, described by GSI (2026) as a '*Site comprising a disused, roadside quarry*'.

3.6 Flood Risk

A Flood Risk Assessment was conducted in June 2025 for the Proposed Scheme. The site has been assessed in accordance with the “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management” Guidelines. As part of the sequential test, the OPW flood hazard maps and, the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment Maps (CFRAM) produced by the OPW were reviewed.

From the assessment, there have been two historical recorded flood events where the River Brosna intersects the Proposed Scheme. The Bleach Yard Lynnsbury Tce Mullingar flooding which occurred in November 1965 and the Brosna Gaol Hill flooding which is a recurring flood as illustrated in Figure 3-8 below. The primary cause of flooding in Mullingar is heavy rainfall, resulting in the River Brosna overflowing, in response Westmeath County Council has installed, unblocked and replaced culverts to mitigate the flood risk.

According to the OPW Flood Maps, the northwestern section of the route located above the River Brosna falls within Flood Zones A and B, however this section is elevated on a bridge and lies within a flood-defended area. The Mullingar Local Area Plan and the Westmeath County Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment also confirm that the elevated section is protected. The remainder of the route lies within Flood Zone C, which is considered low risk. Therefore, a Stage 2 Initial Flood Risk Assessment is not required.

The following recommendations should be considered.

- Where possible, setting back of cycle facilities behind a buffer from the road can provide opportunities for planting and/or sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).
- The final surface water design including incorporation of SuDS should be agreed with the Authority Sustainable Drainage and Road maintenance teams.
- Suitable Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDs) are to be used within the Proposed Scheme to reduce surface water runoff from the proposed route where feasible and designed in accordance with CIRIA report C753 ‘The SuDS Manual V-6’

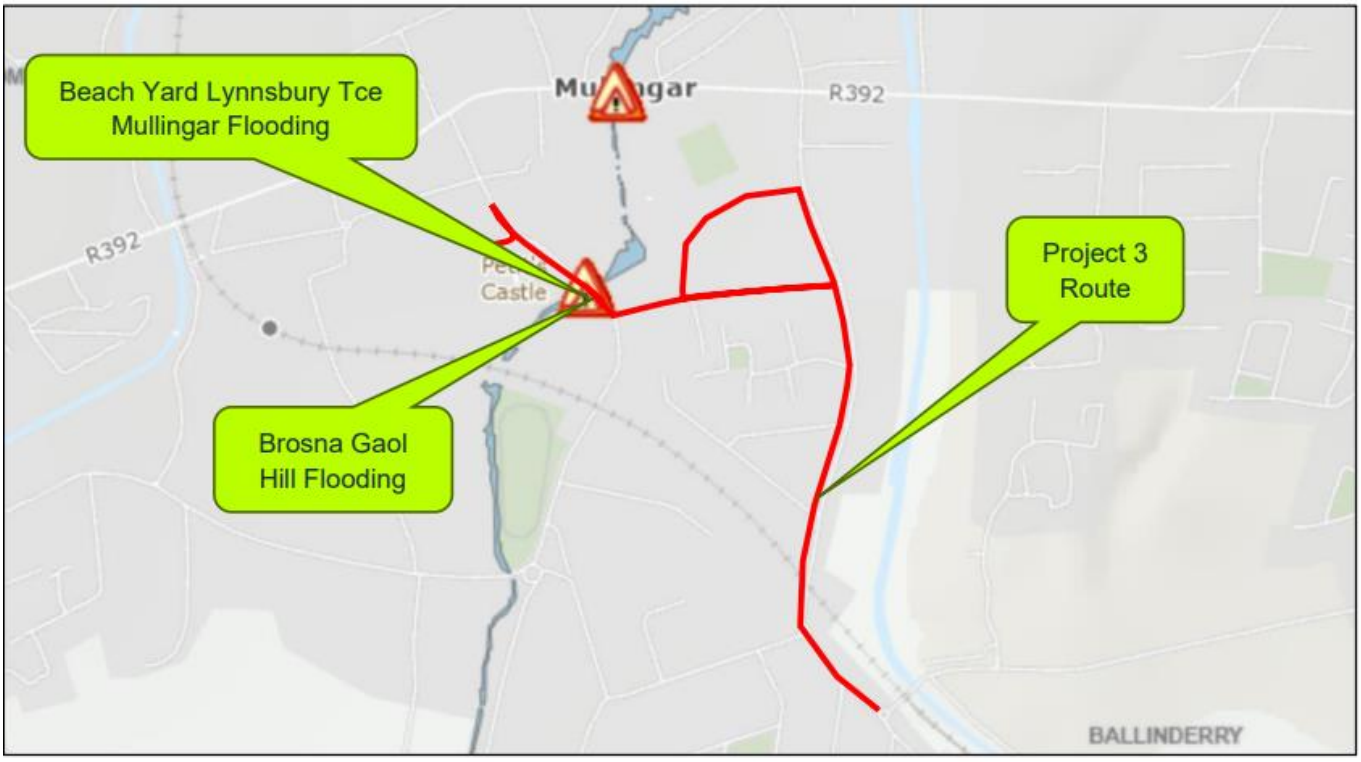

Figure 3-8 - Flooding Risk and Previous Events in the surrounding area of the Proposed Scheme (OPW, 2026)

3.7 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

A review of the National Monuments Service (NMS, 2026) has identified Mullingar as an area of archaeological and cultural heritage sensitivity. The proposed route runs adjacent to several features listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), and is in close proximity to Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) entries within the town, as illustrated in Figure 3-8.

Along the route, there are ten NIAH-listed structures, including Millmount Bridge (15310090), Sunday Well (15310096), a historic Post Box (15310098), as well as several houses of archaeological significance. Additionally, two SMR sites are located nearby: the Holy Well Ritual Site (WM019-089014) and the Ford at Mullingar (VM019-089014). Neither of these SMR sites is expected to be impacted by the Proposed Scheme.

It is recommended that an experienced archaeologist be appointed by the contractor prior to the commencement of the construction stage. The Project archaeologist will ensure that all proposed works are carried out appropriately and that any potential risk to archaeological / architectural features are minimised.

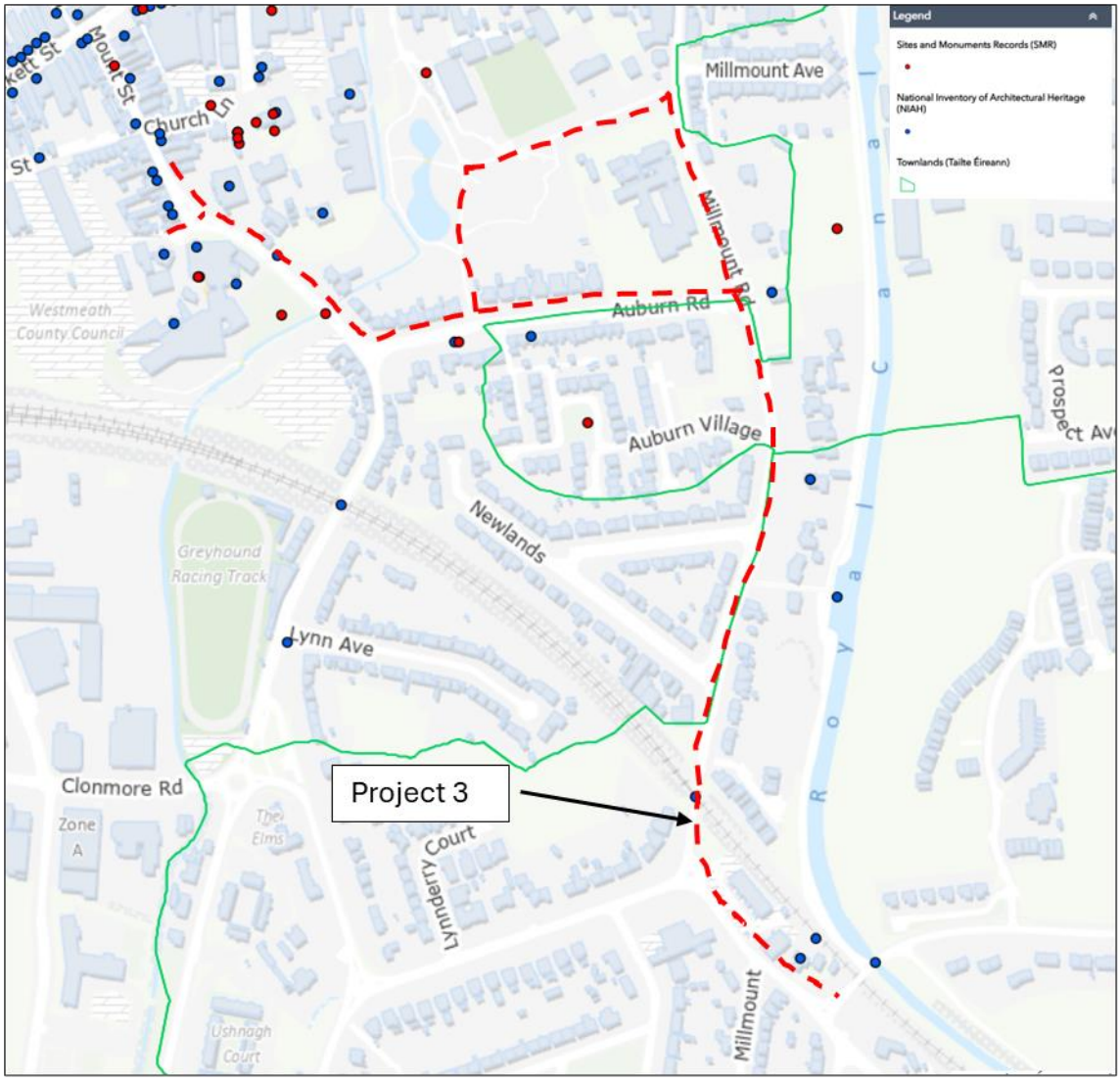

Figure 3-9 - SMR's and NIAH's within the vicinity of Project 3 (NMS, 2026

3.8 Population and Human Health

The Proposed Scheme is located along the existing road network within the town of Mullingar, which has a reported population of 22,667 (CSO, 2022). There are a number of residential and commercial properties located along the route which would be considered sensitive receptors. The main sensitive receptors along the route include; Mullingar regional Cultural Centre, Mullingar Park, Mullingar Community College and a number of local businesses.

4. EIA Screening Process

4.1 Desk-Based Studies

In undertaking this EIA Screening Assessment, AtkinsRéalis completed a detailed desk-based assessment using data from the following sources:

- Relevant guidance documents and legislation (listed in Section 4.3 below)
- Relevant published data from Government websites such as the EPA's Catchment website (www.catchments.ie), the Geological Survey of Ireland (www.gsi.ie), the Westmeath County Development Plan etc.
- Information provided by Westmeath County Council on the Proposed Scheme.

4.2 Site Visits and Assessments

An arboricultural survey was conducted by an independent arboriculturist, Dr Philip Blackstock (appointed by AtkinsRéalis) on the 24th and 25th June 2024.

The survey recorded information on trees (species, age, height, canopy size, condition etc.) growing on or immediately adjacent to the scheme site. The trees were categorized in accordance with BS5837: Trees In relation to Design, Demolition and Construction (2012) and recommendations for maintenance were provided in an associated tree survey report. Note: the arboricultural survey is not an ecological survey. This EIAR Screening Report should be read in conjunction with the AA Screening Report for the scheme.

4.3 EIA Screening Legislation and Guidance

The EIA Directive is transposed into Irish legislation through the Planning and Development Act 2000-2024 and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025. The EIA Directive requires that projects likely to have significant effects on the environment are subjected to an assessment with regard to their effects on the environment before development consent is given for such projects.

Projects listed in Annex I of the EIA Directive (as transposed in Part 1 of Schedule 5 to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), and projects listed in Annex II of the EIA Directive (as transposed in Part 2 of Schedule 5 to the 2001 Regulations) that equal or exceed the thresholds set out in Part 2 of Schedule 5 to the 2001 Regulations, require a mandatory EIA. Projects listed in Annex II, that do not equal or exceed the thresholds set out in Part 2 of Schedule 5 to the 2001 Regulations, are considered as "Sub-threshold development" and are subject to screening for sub-threshold EIA.

Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations (2001-2025) sets out the criteria that must be considered in determining whether a sub - threshold project should be subject to an EIA. Schedule 7A lists the information/criteria the applicant must submit to the competent authority for the purpose of an EIA screening determination(i.e. information that must be contained in an EIA screening report). The criteria is as follows;

1. A description of the Proposed Development, including in particular:
   a. A description of the physical characteristics of the whole Proposed Development and, where relevant, of demolition works; and,
   b. A description of the location of the Proposed Development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.

2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development.
3. A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the Proposed Development on the environment resulting from:
    a. the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant: and,

    b. the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.

The Proposed Scheme has been screened in accordance with:

- Section 3.2 of the 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA, 2022);
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects; Guidance on Screening. European Commission (2017),
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2003), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Developments;
- OPR Practice Note PN02 Environment Impact Assessment Screening. Office of three Planning Regulator (2021);
- Environmental Impact Directive (85/337/EEC) and all subsequent relevant amendments;
- Planning and Development Regulations (2001-2025), including S.I. No. 296 of 2018 - European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018, which came into operation on 1st September 2018; and,
- Roads Act, 1993-2024 and the European Union (Roads Act 1993) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulation 2019 (S.I. No. 279 of 2019).

Figure 4-1 overleaf provides a summary of the main steps involved in the EIA screening process.

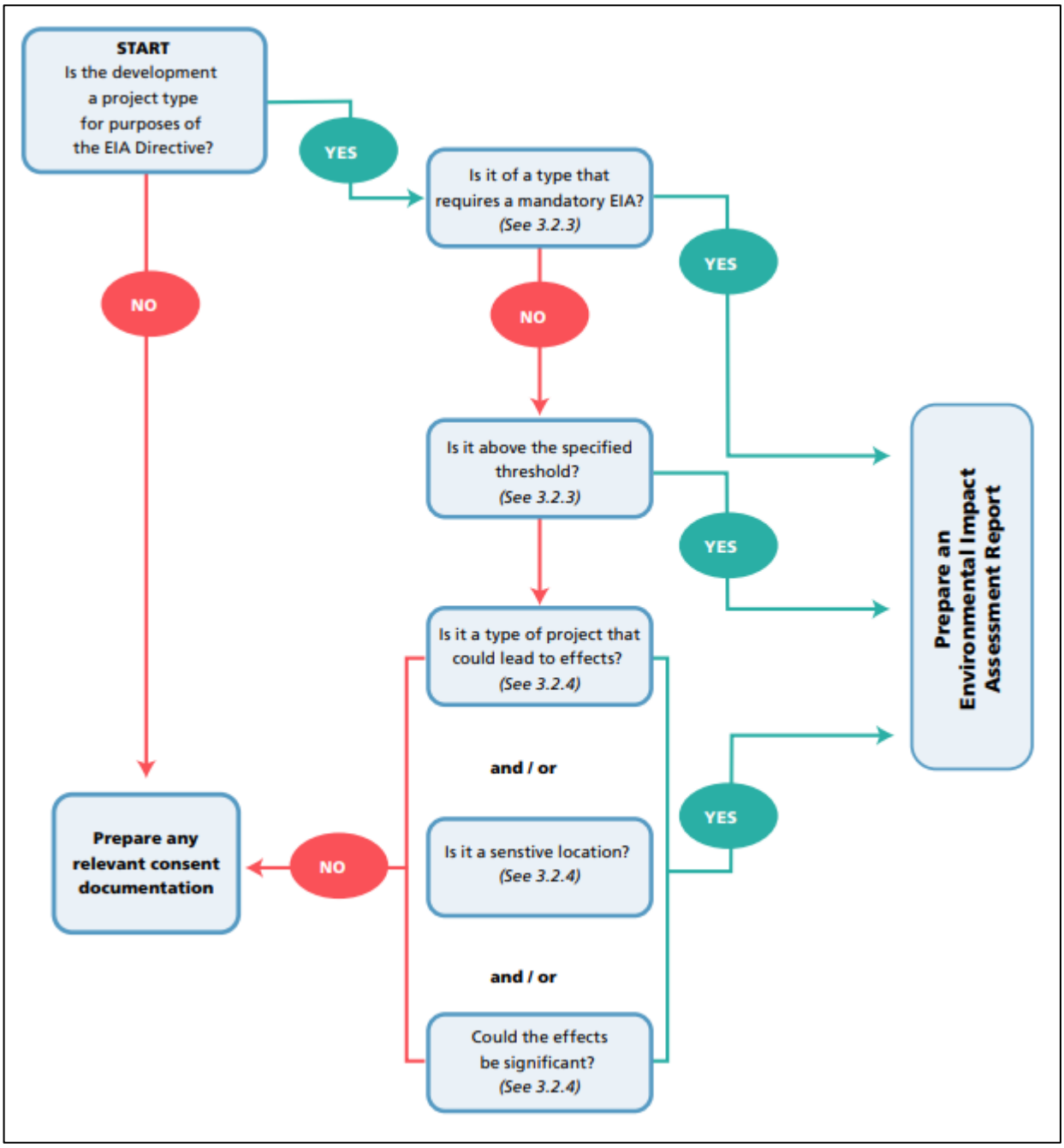

Figure 4-1 - EIA Screening Process (Source: 'Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' (EPA, 2022)).

4.4 The Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended - Screening

The 1985 EU EIA Directive differentiates between those projects that automatically requires an environmental impact assessment (listed as Annex 1 projects) and those which may require an assessment if they are likely to have significant environmental effects (Annex II projects). These project types have been transposed into Irish legislation under Parts 1 and 2 respectively of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

The Proposed Scheme was screened using the following criteria:

- If the project scheme is of a type listed in Schedule 5, Part 1;
- If not, whether:
  - it is listed in Schedule 5, Part 2;
  - it meets any of the relevant thresholds and criteria set out in Schedule 5, Part 2;
  - any part of it is located within sensitive area; or,
  - it would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

4.4.1 Part 1 Type Projects

The Proposed Scheme has been screened against the list of Project Types which have a high likelihood of impacting on the receiving environment and therefore require a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment, under Schedule 5 Part 1 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025. **This project does not fall within any category of development requiring a mandatory EIA; hence the preparation of an EIAR is not required under Schedule 5 Part 1.**

4.4.2 Part 2 Type Projects

The Proposed Scheme has been screened against the types of development, various processes and activities listed in Schedule 5 Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025. **The Proposed Scheme does not fall within any category or exceed any threshold that would require a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and is therefore screened out for an environmental impact assessment under Schedule 5, Part 2.**

Table 4-1 – Screening for Part 2 of Schedule 5

Class	Applicability	Screening
10(b) (iv) Infrastructure developments	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.	Although the project is located within an Urban area, it is not considered an urban development, which are defined as[4]: *1. Projects with similar characteristics to car parks and shopping centres should be considered to fall in Annex II(10)(b). This could be the case of bus garages for example, which are not explicitly mentioned in the EIA Directive, but have similar characteristics to car parks.* *2. Construction projects such as housing developments, hospitals, universities, sports stadia, cinemas and theatres should also be assumed to fall within this category.'*

[4] European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/678985

		Hence the preparation of an EIAR is not required under Schedule 5 Part 2 (10) (b) (iv).
15.	Any project listed in this Part which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant class of development, but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.	Based on the nature and scale of the scheme, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects on the environment, as detailed further in the following sections of this report. **Hence the preparation of an EIAR is not required under Schedule 5 Part 2 (15).**

4.5 Roads Act Screening

The scheme has been screened against the criteria outlined in Section 50(1)(b) and 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act 1993-2024, as follows;

> Section 50(1)(a) – 'A road authority shall prepare a statement of the likely effects on the environment (hereinafter referred to as an "environmental impact statement") of any proposed road development consisting of - (iii) any prescribed type of proposed road development consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road.
>
> Section 50(1)(b) – 'If An Bord Pleanála considers that any road development proposed (other than development to which paragraph (a) applies) 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 direct that the development be subject to an environmental impact assessment.'
>
> Section 50(1)(c) – 'Where a road authority or, as the case may be, the Authority considers that a road development that it proposes (other than development to which paragraph (a) applies) 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 inform An Bord Pleanála in writing prior to making any application to the Bord for an approval referred to in section 51(1) in respect of the development.'

Therefore, it is considered that the scheme should undergo an EIA screening to determine if an EIAR would be required in accordance with Sections 50(1)(a), 50(1)(b) and 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act 1993-2023.

Section 50 (1)(e) of the Roads Act (1993-2024) states 'where a decision is being made pursuant to this subsection on whether a road development that is proposed would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, An Bord Pleanála, or the road authority or the Authority concerned (as the case may be), shall take into account the relevant selection criteria specified in Annex III.' Annex III has been transposed into Irish Legislation via Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025.

There are no exacting rules as to what constitutes "significant" in terms of environmental impacts. The responsibility is on Planning Authorities to carefully examine every aspect of a development in the context of:

- characterisation of the project;
- location of the project; and.

- type and characteristics of potential impacts.

It is generally not necessary to conduct specialist studies or provide technical reports at this stage of the screening process. Instead, the focus is on determining whether such studies may be required and identifying any potential risks to the integrity of the receiving environment. For the purpose of screening sub-threshold developments for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), all relevant information, as outlined in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), has been provided on behalf of the applicant, Westmeath County Council.

Additionally, the potential for the proposed project to significantly impact the receiving environment has been assessed in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2025.

The findings of the EIA screening assessment prepared for the project have informed our professional judgement regarding the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), taking into account all relevant statutory requirements and applicable technical guidance. However, the final determination as to whether an EIAR is required for a particular project will be based on screening conducted by the planning authority.

5. Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

5.1 Determining if the project is likely to have significant effect on the receiving environment

All relevant information as required under Schedule 7 and 7A have been provided on behalf of Westmeath County Council and are presented within this screening report. The potential for this project to pose a significant impact to the receiving environment has also been evaluated in accordance with criteria listed in the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001-2025 (Schedule 7), as presented in the tables below.

5.1.1 Characteristics of the proposed development

Table 5-1 below details the development characteristics criteria, as required under Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended.

Table 5-1: Characteristics of the Proposed Scheme

Screening Criteria	Proposed Scheme
Size and design of the project	
Will the size and design of the whole project be considered significant?	No. The site area is ca. 2.5113ha and the scheme scale and nature is not considered significant within the urban setting. Refer to the detailed description in Section 3 above.
Cumulation with other projects	
Will other existing project and/ or approved project be able to affect the project.	A search of the Westmeath County Council Planning Applications, An Comissiún Pleanála planning portal, Uisce Éireann and Transport Infrastructure Ireland project portals has been undertaken for the applications submitted within the past 5 years in the vicinity of the scheme (last reviewed 26/03/2026). Some of the granted applications have already been completed and of those which are not completed, most are generally small scale in nature (i.e. residential extension works, or property improvement works). Completed or granted applications of such small scale (such as residential improvements) have not been considered further in terms of potential for cumulative impacts. For the purposes of this study, only significant new developments that are likely to generate a significant number of trips and developments that may encroach nearby to the existing corridor have been considered, as follows: ▪ 2360203 (granted, 2023) - Development which will consist of the construction of a new 54 bed extension and ancillary accommodation to the rear of existing hospital. The construction will be three storeys over part basement and all associated works. ▪ 2460422 (granted, 2026) - Development which will consist of: 1. Construction of 3 no. new all-weather playing pitches with associated flood lighting, ball stop nets and dug-outs, 2. Construction of a new walking track with flood lighting, 3. A new entrance from the Robinstown Road and, 4. Boundary treatments, car parking and all associated site works.

Screening Criteria	Proposed Scheme
	▪ 2560259 (granted, 2025) - Development of 104 no. residential units (a Large-scale Residential Development - LRD) and supporting infrastructure at Ardmore Road, Ballinderry Td., Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, a site of circa 3.3 hectares. ▪ 2460376 (granted, 2024) - Development of 245 no. residential units (a Large-scale Residential Development - LRD) and supporting infrastructure at Dublin Road, Petitswood Td., Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, a site of circa 9.72 hectares. ▪ 21357 (granted, 2021) - Construction of new single storey and 2 storey extensions to side and rear of existing premises, with new entrance lobby, external insulated render finish and all associated site works. ▪ 2560346 (granted, 2025) - Demolition of 2 no. structures: a disused shed, and prefabricated classroom building, and ground to be made good. The proposed demolition is located to the north-west of Mullingar Community College site. ▪ 2460035 (granted, 2025) - Development which will consist of demolition of existing premises at No.7 Pearse Street, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath and provision of new 4 storey extension to existing Annebrook House Hotel (a protected structure - RPS Reference No.019/118) to consist of new restaurant/bistro, new breakfast room, reception area extended bar area, ancillary rooms and 60 number bedrooms with new internal alterations to the adjoining premises at No.9 Pearse Street, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath (a protected structure - RPS Reference No.019/117) to include new connection to hotel, new single storey extension to rear, external alterations and all associated site works ▪ 2285 (granted, 2022) - Extension of planning application 16/6062.The variation of An Bord Pleanala planning permission Ref PL25M.239612 to replace granted house unit numbers 51 & 52 (house type E) with granted end-unit house (type L) also to vary house type/design of 50 No. units as follows: remove granted house unit No I to 32, 34 to 48, 128, 130, & 131 & replace with 12 No 5 bedroom 2-storey + dormer type houses, 4 No 4-bedroom 2-storey type houses, 10 No 5-bedroom semi-detached 2-storey + dormer type houses, 16 No 4 bedroom semi-detached 2-storey & dormer type houses, 2 No 2-bedroom apartments & 6 No 1 bedroom apartments in a 2 & 3 storey block, together with provision of parking spaces, bicycle shed, bin area, and all associated site works This scheme forms part of the overall Mullingar Active Travel Schemes bundle, which comprises 4no. separate Active Travel Routes. Project 3 is not directly linked with any of these routes. All of these Routes are being developed and constructed at different times, and therefore there are no significant environmental cumulative impacts expected during the construction phase. Due to the nature, scale and location of these separate routes, there is no potential for this scheme to have significant cumulative impacts during the operational phase.
Nature of any associated demolition works	
Will the construction of the project include any significant demolition works.	No. There are no demolition works proposed for the Proposed Scheme. Road planning will be removed offsite for disposal.
Use of natural resources	
Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources	The use of natural resources will be kept to a minimum; aggregates and soil will be re-used on site, where possible.

Screening Criteria	Proposed Scheme
above or below ground which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Should vegetation clearance be required along the proposed route, it will take place outside of the nesting season (February – August). If this is not possible, an ecologist will survey the vegetation for breeding birds no longer than 24 hours prior to clearance. If nesting birds are identified, then an alternative approach to the work will be used.
Production of waste	
Will the project produce wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Construction waste will be kept to a minimum with only contaminated waste being removed off site. The following waste streams will be produced during the construction: ▪ Waste produced by the construction of the cycle and pedestrian paths ▪ Generic construction waste. The Proposed Scheme involves an anticipated maximum excavation depth of 500mm bgl to facilitate the foundation for the footpaths / pavements and the ducting for the signalling associated with the scheme. The base layers of the pavement and track are to be made of compacted stone materials. All soil requiring disposal offsite will require waste classification in accordance with EPA requirements as set out in the documents 'Waste Classification List of Waste & Determining if Waste is Hazardous or Non-hazardous' (EPA, 2015), and 'Determining if waste is hazardous or non-hazardous' (EPA, 2018), and all relevant waste management legislation. In addition to screening against relevant WAC, the preparation of a waste classification tool (hazwaste online / EPA paper tool or similar etc.) will be required to be carried out in order to determine the relevant LoW / EWC code for the transport of any waste soils which require offsite removal and disposal. Prior to construction of the Proposed Scheme, the appointed contractor will prepare a Construction Resource and Waste Management Plan (RWMP). The RWMP will provide the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes including any litter arising during the construction phase of the Proposed Scheme.
Pollution and nuisances	
Will the project release any pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	Regional air quality in the vicinity of the Proposed Scheme is 'Good/2' (EPA, 2026). The closest Air Quality Monitoring Station to the Proposed Scheme is 21141, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath located ca. 100m to the west of the Proposed Scheme. Management of dust will be set out in the CEMP, created in line with relevant best practice measures such as those set out in 'Guidelines for the Treatment of Air Quality During the Planning and Construction of National Road Schemes' (NRA, 2011). Due to the nature and scale of the Proposed Scheme detailed in Section 3, it is anticipated that the construction works, and operation of the scheme will not have a significant effect on air quality.
Will the project cause:	
Noise and vibration.	Noise levels will not exceed the indicative levels of acceptability for construction noise in an urban environment as set out in the NRA guidance 'Good Practice Guidance for the Treatment of Noise during the Planning of National Road Schemes' (NRA, 2014). The construction phases will have noise barriers in place as required, to minimise / eliminate noise disturbances to sensitive receptors i.e. residential units located adjacent to the site while construction is taking place. Works will be scheduled during day-time hours. Construction contractors will be required to comply with the requirements of the European Communities (Construction Plant and Equipment) (Permissible Noise Levels) Regulations, 1988 as amended in 1990 and 1996 (S.I. No. 320 of 1988, S.I. No. 297 of 1990 and S.I. No. 359 of 1996), and the Safety, Health and

Screening Criteria	Proposed Scheme
	Welfare at Work (Control of Noise at Work) Regulations, 2006 (S.I. No. 371 of 2006). Due to the nature and scale of the Proposed Scheme, detailed in Section 3 it is anticipated that the construction works, and operation of the scheme will not have a significant effect with regards to noise.
Release of light.	The lighting will be designed to minimise the effects of light pollution on neighbouring properties. Low energy LED lighting will be used to illuminate areas.
Heat.	The development will not cause release of heat.
Energy.	The development will not cause release of energy.
Electromagnetic radiation.	The development will not cause release of electromagnetic radiation.
Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants, including leachate, onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or sea?	The potential for accidents or incidents causing oil and chemical spillages are limited. With the adoption of site-specific risk management and remediation measures, as appropriate, during construction, no adverse impacts would arise and the residual effects on sensitive receptors would not be significant. Excavation works will be monitored and in the event that contaminated materials are encountered these will be segregated from uncontaminated soils, temporarily stored (any stockpiles will be lined and covered by heavy duty 1000-gauge plastic), sampled and analysed for relevant parameters (Waste Acceptance Criteria suite e.g. Rilta Disposal Suite). Any contaminated soils will be characterised as per the requirements of the relevant Waste Acceptance Criteria (WAC) under the relevant European Communities Council Decision (EC) (92003/33/EC). The waste material will be classified in accordance with the requirements of the EPA as set out in the following documents 'Waste Classification List of Waste & Determining if Waste is Hazardous or Non-hazardous' (EPA, 2018). Any contaminated soils will be transported by appropriately permitted hauliers and disposed of to an appropriate EPA licensed Waste Facility in accordance with all relevant waste management legislation. Waste disposal records will be maintained by the Contractor.
Risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the project concerned	
Will there be any risk of major accidents (including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge) during construction, operation or decommissioning?	Ireland in general is at low risk of natural disasters: earthquakes are rare and of low magnitude, there are no active volcanos, and severe weather events are rarely experienced. Flooding is experienced throughout Ireland on a regular basis. The northwestern section of the route located above the River Brosna falls within Flood Zones A and B, however this section is elevated on a bridge and lies within a flood-defended area. The remainder of the route lies within Flood Zone C, which is considered low risk. Therefore, a Stage 2 Initial Flood Risk Assessment is not required. Possible accidents relevant to the development include vehicle collisions and fire, for both of which there will be plans in place to minimise the risk of harm caused by emissions or discharges. Major accidents affecting the development include generic risk of fire or explosion. All these events will be covered by risk assessments and contingency plans which apply to the Proposed Scheme. In the event of accidents or fire, measures will be in place to limit emissions to land, water and air, as far as practicable. With these arrangements in place the impact of emissions on human health and sensitive receptors in general would be mitigated such that adverse impacts would be unlikely to arise in the event of an accident.

Screening Criteria	Proposed Scheme
Is the location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme /adverse climatic conditions, e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	The location is not susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme/adverse climatic conditions. Flooding is the most common and relevant for the Proposed Scheme. According to the FRA (AtkinsRéalis, 2025) A northwestern section of the route located above the River Brosna falls within Flood Zones A and B whereas the remainder of the route lies within Flood Zone C, which is considered low risk. Therefore, a Stage 2 Initial Flood Risk Assessment is not required.
The risks to human health	
Will the project present a risk to the population (having regard to population density) and their human health during construction, operation or decommissioning? (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution)	Construction will be undertaken in accordance with the commitments to be set out in a site-specific CEMP prepared by the appointed Contractor, such that no significant construction effects on construction workers, residents and the environment would arise. Given the nature of the scheme impacts on population during operation, from water contamination, noise and vibration or air quality and climate are not anticipated to be significant.

5.1.2 Location of the development

Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended, requires a description of the location of the Proposed Scheme, with regards to the environmental sensitivity of the geographical area likely to be affected by the project. Table 5-2 below details the criteria considered and provides an assessment relating to same.

Table 5-2: Location of the Proposed Scheme

Screening Criteria	Proposed Scheme
Existing and approved land use	
Are there existing or approved land uses or community facilities on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	The Proposed Scheme is located within urban lands along the existing road network compromising lands zoned as; existing residential, enterprise & employment, proposed residential, educational, community & institutional, innovation technology, general urban district, mixed use and open space. Key areas along the route include Comhaltas (Mullingar Regional Cultural Centre) , Mullingar Arts Centre, Mullingar Park, and Mullingar Community College in addition to various local businesses and numerous residential properties. The construction of the Proposed Scheme could have an effect on these properties. A CEMP will be prepared to identify potential

Screening Criteria	Proposed Scheme
	environmental issues and control measures for their avoidance/mitigation. The contractor will inform and work with all stakeholders to address concerns. Control measures to avoid/mitigate impacts will be included in the CEMP. No existing, approved land uses for health, education, or community facilities in general, on, or around, the location will be affected by the Proposed Scheme. The construction, operation or decommissioning of the scheme will not involve actions which will cause significant physical changes in the topography of the area.
The relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground	
Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project?	Materials will be brought to site on a periodic basis as required directly from suppliers. It is planned that existing Local Authority (Westmeath County Council) controlled material storage yards in the locality, currently used for the storage of inert materials, will be utilised during the construction phase to store similarly inert materials for incorporation in the Proposed Scheme. As noted above, excavation works will be monitored and in the event that contaminated materials are encountered these will be segregated from uncontaminated soils, temporarily stored (any stockpiles will be lined and covered by heavy duty 1000-gauge plastic), sampled and analysed for relevant parameters (Waste Acceptance Criteria suite e.g. Rilta Disposal Suite). Any contaminated soils will be characterised as per the requirements of the relevant Waste Acceptance Criteria (WAC) under the relevant European Communities Council Decision (EC) (92003/33/EC). The waste material will be classified in accordance with the requirements of the EPA as set out in the following documents 'Waste Classification List of Waste & Determining if Waste is Hazardous or Non-hazardous' (EPA, 2018). Any contaminated soils will be transported by appropriately permitted hauliers and disposed of to an appropriate EPA licensed Waste Facility in accordance with all relevant waste management legislation. Waste disposal records will be maintained by the Contractor.
Absorption capacity of the natural environment	
Are there any other areas on or around the location which has the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths?	There are no wetland habitats located within the scheme site itself. However, nine wetlands are situated within a 15 km radius of the site. Additionally, surface water from the Proposed Scheme will discharge into the Brosna River, which flows into Lough Ennell. This establishes a hydrological connection between the scheme site and the SPA at Lough Ennell. An AA Screening (AtkinsRéalis, 2026) prepared for the Proposed Scheme concluded that "*the Proposed Scheme, either alone or in-*

Screening Criteria	Proposed Scheme
	combination with other plans or projects, will not result in likely significant effects on any SAC or SPA or any other European site.''
	Based on the location of the Proposed Scheme, there is no potential for impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to coastal zones and the marine environment?	The Proposed Scheme is located at an inland location. Therefore, it is not anticipated that it will have a significant impact on the coastal zone or marine environment.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to mountain and forest areas?	There are no mountain or forest areas within 2km of the Proposed Scheme and therefore no impacts on this habitat type. There are no woodlands identified within the inventory of Ancient and Long-Established Woodlands of Ireland within the Proposed Scheme. The nearest NSNW identified woodland habitat – Lough Slevin's Wood – is located ca. 2.5km from the Proposed Scheme and has no connectivity to the Proposed Scheme. A tree survey was carried out by Dr Philip Blackstock (July, 2024) for the Proposed Scheme. In total there were 29 trees surveyed. The scheme proposes to remove 1no. tree, with 11no. proposed to be placed within tree pits along Sunday wells road and Millimount Road.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to areas classified or protected under national legislation; Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC?	A screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been prepared for the scheme (AtkinsRéalis, 2026) which investigated the potential for the Proposed Scheme to have significant effects on a European Site(s) either alone or in combination with other plans or developments. The AA screening concluded that there is no absorption capacity of the natural environment under national legislation.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure?	The absorption capacity of the natural environment is characterised as follows: The area around the Proposed Scheme is urban in nature. There are 9no. European sites within the zone of influence (ZoI) of the study area. There is no direct connectivity to Natura 2000 sites located within the ZoI of the project, however indirect connectivity exists via The Brosna River, to which surface waters from the Proposed Scheme site discharge, flows to Lough Ennell thereby providing a hydrological link between the scheme site and this SAC and SPA. Based on the nature, scale and location of the Proposed Scheme as detailed in section 3, there is no potential for impact on absorption capacity of the natural environment. The route borders numerous National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) features and is nearby numerous Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) features none of which will be adversely impacted by the Proposed Scheme. The scheme is located within the Lower Shannon Water Framework Directive (WFD) Catchment area and the BROSNA_SC_010 sub

Screening Criteria	Proposed Scheme
	catchment area. The nearest water bodies to the proposed route include the Royal Canal, located approximately 107.2 mOD east of Millmount Road; the River Brosna, which flows west of Sunday Wells Road and through Mullingar Town Park; and the Mullingar Town Park Pond. The River Brosna is of 'Poor' status for the 2019-2024 monitoring period, with it being 'At risk' of failing to achieve relevant WFD objectives by 2027. The EPA (2026) status of the Royal Canal is 'Good' for the 2019-2024 monitoring period with its risk of failing to meet relevant WFD objectives by 2027 under 'Review'. Contamination of these watercourses via. siltation or hydrocarbon spillages, is a risk during the construction phase, however, best practice measures will be employed through adherence to the CEMP which will be prepared and accidental spills and silt generation will be dealt with through prescribed spill response and silt collection measures. Leaching of pollutants to groundwater is a risk during the construction phase, however, best practice measures will be employed through adherence to the CEMP which will be prepared and accidental spills will be dealt with through prescribed spill response measures. Should groundwater be encountered during excavations, the following measures will be implemented: ▪ Any groundwater temporarily dewatered during the excavation works, will be stored in a contained area and treated off-site; ▪ The Contractor will be required to provide a Site-specific dewatering plan, clearly setting out proposed excavation methodology, estimated dewatering rates, details of proposed treatment system, and discharge location; ▪ The time period that excavations are left uncovered will be reduced in so far as reasonably practical with impermeable coverings being used to cover excavations over night or in times of heavy rainfall during working hours. These coverings will be secured at night to prevent mammals becoming trapped; and, ▪ Excavations will not be carried out during or following times of prolonged rainfall.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to densely populated areas?	No. There is no significant effect on the absorption capacity of the natural environment in relation to densely populated areas as a result of the Proposed Scheme. The Proposed Scheme will result in a positive impact in terms of facilitating active travel for the population of the surrounding area.
Has the project the potential to impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or Archaeological significance?	As discussed above, the Proposed Scheme is bordered by numerous NIAH features with nearby SMR features. An archaeological assessment will be prepared and the National Monuments Service and Minister for Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht will be notified in advance of any works proposed at these locations and the required measures will be implemented.

Screening Criteria	Proposed Scheme
	There is no potential for impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment.

5.1.3 Characteristics of potential impact

Table 5-3 below details the types and characteristics of potential impacts of the scheme as required under Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended.

Table 5-3: Characteristics of the Proposed Scheme

Screening Criteria	Proposed Scheme
The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	
Outline the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The spatial extent of the Proposed Scheme measures ca. 2.5113 hectares. The expected duration of the construction works is approximately 15 months. Direct impacts associated with the Proposed Scheme are likely to be located within the environs of the site, chiefly associated with impacts on pedestrians and vehicular movement within the local area. Traffic management will be implemented during construction so as to minimise disruption to traffic flow. Due to the nature of the Proposed Scheme it is likely that the population of the local area would potentially be affected by the development.
Nature of the impact	
Outline the nature of the impact.	There could be potential adverse construction and operation impacts arising from temporary disruption or disturbance associated with the Proposed Scheme. This has potential to result in noise and air quality impacts but with the implementation of the control measures included in the CEMP it is unlikely that impacts would give rise to significant environmental effects. Potential adverse operational impacts of the development would be associated with footfall as well as the lighting. The design will be developed to reduce operational impacts by incorporating control measures. Westmeath County Council will engage with stakeholders including the adjacent residents and commercial, premises throughout the design and construction stages to address any concerns.
Transboundary nature of the impact	
Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects?	Given the location of the site no transboundary impacts would occur.
The intensity and complexity of the impact	
Outline the intensity and complexity of the impact.	The impacts identified are unlikely to cause significant changes in environmental conditions within the site and surrounding area.
The probability of the impact	
Outline the probability of the impact.	During construction, conventional construction and best environmental practice techniques can be readily deployed. In order to minimise disruption, a CEMP will be implemented.

Screening Criteria	Proposed Scheme
	There is no significant environmental impact during the operational phase anticipated, the Proposed Scheme will have an overall positive impact as it will provide active travel opportunities for the local population.
The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact	
Outline the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.	It is expected that the duration of construction works will be approximately 15 months. Normal working hours during the construction period are expected to be Monday to Friday 07:00 to 19:00, and Saturday 08:00 to 14:00. During the construction stage it may be necessary to carry out some work outside of normal working hours however, this will be kept to a minimum and only undertaken following approval from Westmeath County Council. The noise and air quality impact peaks during construction will be intermittent with a potential background level of nuisance as they will depend on the construction activities which are for their nature variable and not continuous. It is not expected that noise levels will be significant during the operational stage. The selection and implementation of established best practice procedures as set out by the appointed Contractor will ensure potential environmental impacts during the construction phase are offset.
Cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development	
Could this project together with existing and/ or approved project result in cumulation of impacts together during construction/ operation phase?	As outlined earlier, there are no permitted developments in the surrounding area that would result in cumulative environmental effects when considered alongside the Proposed Scheme.
Possibility of effectively reducing the impact	
What measures can be adopted to avoid, reduce, repair or compensate the impact?	The design of the Proposed Scheme is being developed to reduce both construction and operational impacts. During construction the impact of the Proposed Scheme would be further reduced through the implementation of the CEMP. During operation, potential impacts would be reduced by the inclusion of design measures, operational control plans including Westmeath County Council guidance and standards.

6. Potential for Significant Effects on the Receiving Environment

All relevant information as required under Schedule 7A has been provided on behalf of the client and is presented within Section 5 of this screening report. The potential for this Proposed Scheme to pose a significant impact to the receiving environment has also been evaluated in accordance with criteria listed Planning and Development Regulations (2001-2025) (Schedule 7), as presented within Section 5 of this screening report.

From an assessment of the types and characteristics of the potential impacts likely to arise from the Mullingar Active Travel Bundle Project 3, it is considered it will not constitute EIA development. With the implementation of the control measures included in a CEMP during construction few impacts would be likely to arise. Those that do, would be restricted to the site and a limited area in proximity to the site and would not be significant. Apart from pedestrians and road users near the site the local population and other sensitive receptors are unlikely to be affected by construction activities. At the operational stage, visual impacts and noise impacts are anticipated. However, it is not considered likely that there will be any significant effects.

It is considered that due to the size, nature, and characteristics of the Proposed Scheme, no significant effects on the receiving environment are expected; hence the preparation of a sub-threshold EIAR is not required.

7. Screening Conclusion

This EIA screening report has been carried out in accordance with the Planning and Development Regulations as amended 2001-2025 (which give effect to the provisions of EU Directive 2014/52/EU). The report assessed the impact of the Proposed Scheme in conjunction with committed developments in the surrounding area.

Based on all available information, and taking account of the scale, nature and location of the Proposed Scheme it is our opinion that the preparation of an EIAR is not a mandatory requirement (under Schedule 5, Part 1 and 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025). The Proposed Scheme is deemed a sub-threshold development; hence the potential for significant environmental effects arising as a result of the scheme has been evaluated, in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 7A and Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Acts 2001-2024.

Key findings are summarised as follows;

- Due to the limited nature of the works it is considered that there will be no significant cumulative impacts with other developments in the general area;
- Limited noise, vibration and dust emissions may be generated during construction; however, this is anticipated to be minimal in effect and will cause no significant impacts;
- There will be no significant impact on biodiversity, groundwater, surface water or traffic; and
- There will be no significant impacts on recorded monuments or historic features.

In summary, no significant adverse impacts to the receiving environment will arise as a result of the Proposed Scheme.

Accordingly, we consider that the preparation of an EIAR is not required for the proposed Mullingar Active Travel Bundle – Project 3. However, the competent authority will ultimately determine whether an EIA is required or not.

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