FEHILY TIMONEY

CONSULTANTS IN ENGINEERING, ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE & PLANNING

TRIM MILLENNIUM PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE SCHEME

EIA Screening Report

Prepared for:

Meath County Council

comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

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EIA Screening Report

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Abstract: Fehily Timoney and Company is pleased to submit this EIA Screening Report having been prepared in support of a Section 177AE Application to consent for replacement of a pedestrian bridge over the Boyne River at Trim, Co. Meath, as part of the Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Fehily Timoney and Company have been commissioned by Meath County Council (MCC) to provide consultancy services, including the preparation of this Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report, for approval of the construction and installation of a new 30m span bridge over the River Boyne adjacent to Trim Castle in Trim, Co. Meath.

This EIA report presents an assessment of whether or not the proposed new Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme should be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This assessment is based upon the EPA (2022) Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR), as well as the other guidance documents as set out in Section 1.3, and considers the characteristics of the proposed scheme and the likelihood of significant effects on the environment.

1.2 EIA Legislative Background

The requirement for EIA derives from Directive 2014/52/EU in 2014. In determining the requirement for EIA, the Directive differentiates between the projects that always require EIA and those for which an EIA may be required. These projects are listed in Annex I and Annex II of the Directive, as transposed into Irish law by the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018.

1.2.1 Annex I Projects

These are projects which are considered as having significant effects on the environment and require a mandatory EIA. Project types requiring mandatory EIA are listed in the following legislation:

- First Schedule of European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (S.I. No. 349 of 1989) as amended;
- Schedule 5 of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001) as amended;
- Section 50 (1) of the Roads Act 1993 as amended;
- Article 8 of the Roads Regulations 1994; and
- European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 456 of 2011).

The regulations identify the following road-related developments as requiring mandatory EIA:

- Construction of motorways and express roads;
- Construction of a motorway, busway or service area;
- The construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500 metres or more in length in an urban area;
- Infrastructure projects including car parks with 400 or more spaces;
- Urban development projects which would involve greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 Hectares in the case of other built-up areas and 20 hectares elsewhere;

- The construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length;
- Over 4km length of field boundary to be removed;
- Re-contouring of farm holding above 5 ha; and
- Area of lands to be restructured by removal of field boundaries above 50ha.

Further details on the proposed project are provided in Section 2 of this report.

The proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme is not of a type requiring mandatory EIA under the EIA Directive as listed under Annex I Projects, and is not an infrastructure or road development as defined in The European Union (Roads Act 1993) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2019, Section 50, which states:

> *"50. (1) (a) A road development that is proposed that comprises any of the following shall be subject to an environmental impact assessment:*
>
> *(d) In particular, where a proposed development (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 located on -*
>
> *(i) a European Site within the meaning of Regulation 2 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011)."*

The proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge scheme require no in-stream works which directly or indirectly impacts the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site code: 002299) and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site code: 004232). The purpose of the works is to replace a previously in-situ pedestrian bridge which has become unsafe and requires replacing. These works are not of a type requiring mandatory EIA under the EIA Directive as listed under Annex I Projects as defined above. Furthermore, the proposed works do not fall within the scope of the road development criteria in relation to European Sites (as defined in the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) as the proposed works do not fall within Section 50 (i) *'a European Site within the meaning of Regulation 2 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*'.

1.2.2 Annex II Projects

These are projects where Member States decide whether an EIA is needed. This is done by the screening procedure, which determines the effects of projects on the basis of thresholds/criteria or a case by case examination. The projects listed in Annex II are in general those not included in Annex I which may be considered to have a lesser environmental impact.

Annex II lists the "*Construction of roads, harbours and port installations, including fishing harbours (projects not included in Annex I)*" as projects to undergo the screening procedure to determine the need for EIA.

The criteria to be considered when determining whether an Annex II (or sub-threshold) project should be subject to EIA are set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) and are addressed under three headings as follows:

1. Characteristics of the proposed works;
2. Location of the proposed works; and
3. Types and Characteristics of potential impacts.

Schedule 7A of the Regulations lists information which must be provided by the Applicant or Developer in order to allow the Competent Authority to assess the project against the criteria prescribed in Schedule 7.

> *"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."*

1.3 EIA Screening Guidelines

In order to assist the Competent Authority in their assessment, this report has been structured so as to present the information required under Schedule 7A against the criteria set out in Schedule 7.

This assessment was undertaken having regard to the following guidance:

- Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR) (EPA, 2022);
- Guidance on EIA Screening (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU), European Commission, 2017;
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development DEHLG (updated December 2020);
- Environmental Impact Assessment of National Road Schemes – A Practical Guide (NRA, 2008);
- Office of the Planning Regulator Practice Note (PN02) 'Environmental Impact Assessment Screening' (OPR, 2021); and
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009 (revised 2010).

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project Overview

2.1.1 Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme project is to construct a replacement pedestrian bridge across the Boyne River in Trim, Co. Meath, to replace the Millennium Pedestrian footbridge which had become unsafe and was demolished in August 2022.

2.1.2 Description of the Development

2.1.2.1 Scope, Size and Scale

The superstructure of the original demolished bridge was constructed from Ekki timber in 2001 but was observed as having undergone significant failure during a structural inspection undertaken in July 2022. Failure of one of the pinned connections at the bottom chord caused the bridge to rotate and the bridge was no longer safe for use. The reason for the failure was due to rotting of the timber forked connection. The abutments and foundation of the bridge are still in place, and it is proposed to reuse the existing foundation for the new bridge structure. The new bridge will therefore be at the same location and have the same span as that of the original Millennium Pedestrian Bridge, as shown in Figure 2-1, below.

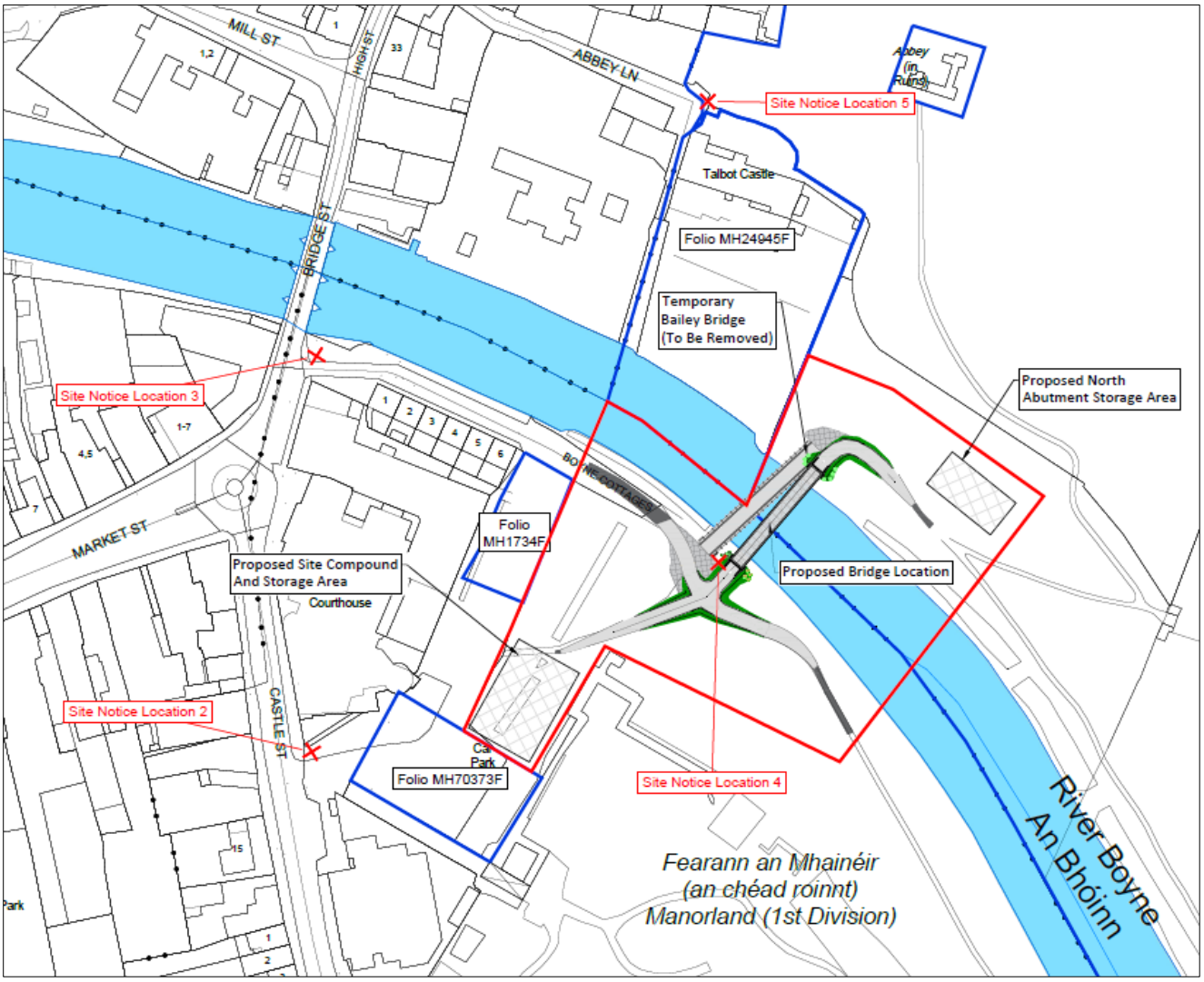

Figure 2-1: Proposed Pedestrian Bridge Location and Red-Line Site Boundary

2.1.2.2 Construction Phase

2.1.2.2.1 Temporary Site Compound and Storage Area

During the construction phase, it is proposed to install 2 no. temporary compounds to provide storage and staff welfare facilities, as shown in Figure 2-2, below. The proposed Main Site temporary compound will to be located in the grassed area adjacent to the existing car park, c. 50m southwest of the southern abutment which will include staff welfare facilities. A second temporary north abutment storage compound will be located c. 30m east of the bridge providing storage on agricultural land for machinery and materials. On completion of the construction phase, all temporary compounds and facilities will be removed and the lands fully reinstated.

Facilities to be provided in the temporary Main Site and Storage Area compounds will include the following:

- Welfare facility consisting of container with Portaloo;
- Employee parking;
- Contractor lock-up facility;
- Bottled water for potable supply;
- Water tanker to supply water used for other purposes;
- Fuel storage with bunded area to accommodate 110% of fuel storage;
- Diesel generator;
- Storage areas;
- Waste management areas.

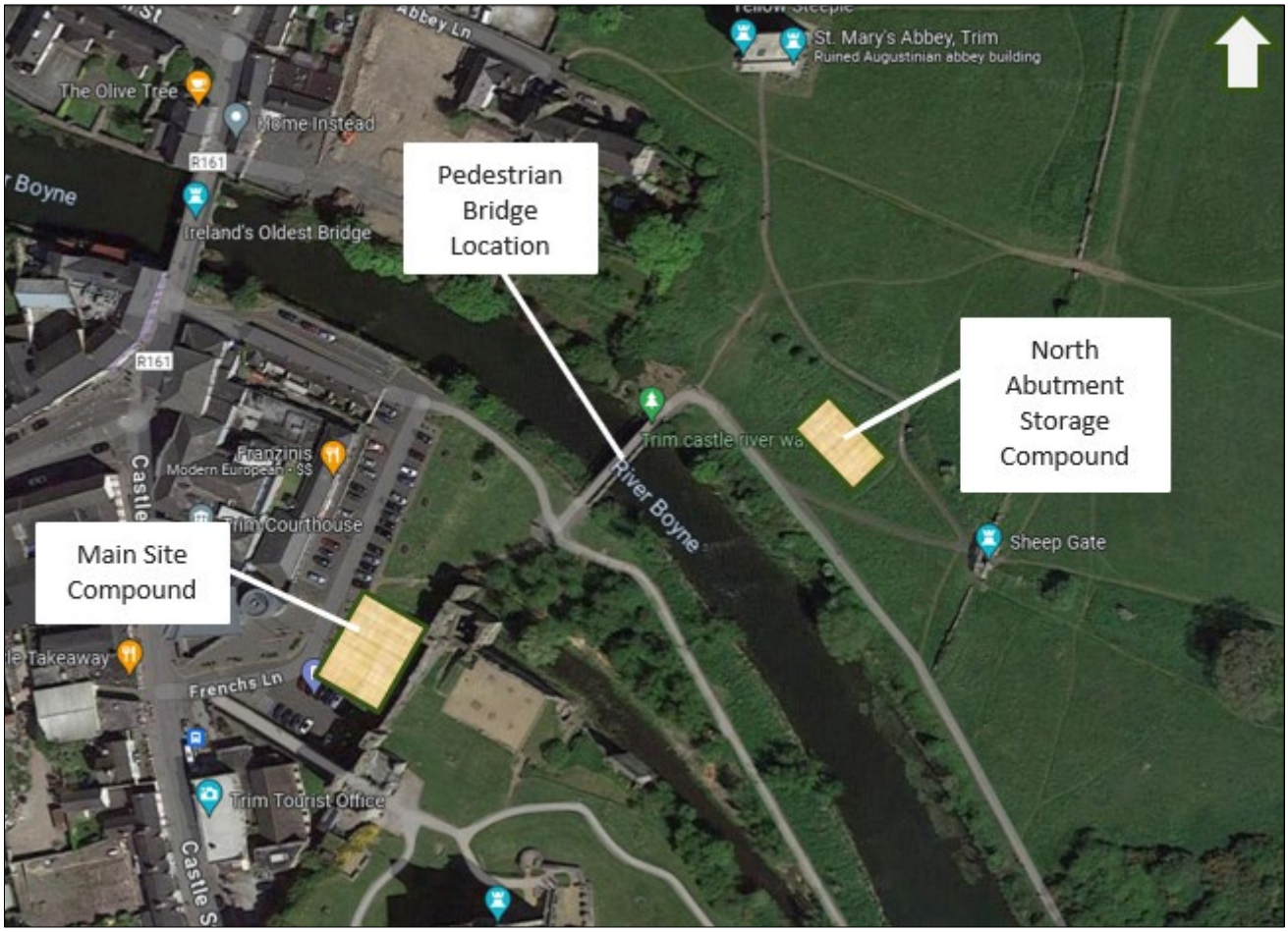

Figure 2-2: Proposed Bridge Site and Tempory Compound Locations

2.1.2.2.2 Preparatory Works

- Existing reinforced concrete bankseats (ca. 2m^3 of concrete), which are located ca. 1.5m from the river (depending on water-level), will be moved back via excavator or broken into pieces by a concrete breaker (if the bankseat is attached to the foundational structure). It will remain within the site boundary and shall be reused as fill for the approach ramps.
- New reinforced concrete abutments including wingwalls will be cast in-situ atop the mass concrete foundation. Timber shuttering will be utilised, and steel reinforcement will be placed inside the formwork as per the design. In Situ concrete, delivered to site by truck, will be poured into the formwork and vibrated into place using a poker. The concrete will be left to cure, and the formwork will be removed. The closest face of the abutment will be approximately 1.2m from the edge of the river (depending on water levels). Each abutment will contain ca. 16.5m^3 of in-situ poured concrete which will be delivered to site by ready mix delivery trucks.
- Two coats of epoxy paint will be applied to the areas of the reinforced concrete abutment which are to be buried.
- Bridge bearings will be bolted onto the newly constructed abutment bankseats. Anchors for the bearings will be cast into the concrete when constructing the abutment. The underside of be bearing plates are to be grouted (0.1m^3 grout).
- The temporary Bailey Bridge which is currently in place and is located directly west of the proposed bridge will be removed by the Army through reverse launching of the deck. Abutment blockwork etc will be removed after the removal of the bridge deck.

2.1.2.2.3 Bridge Deck Installation

- The bridge structure will be constructed using structural steel and shall be prefabricated offsite.
- The pre-fabricated steel bridge superstructure will be transported to site by lorry
- It is anticipated that a single crane will be used to install the bridge deck onto the bearings. The crane will be positioned on the southern bank of the River Boyne.
- After craning into position, bridge superstructure shall be fixed to the bridge bearings.

2.1.2.2.4 Approach Ramps and Finishes

- The topsoil and existing surfacing will be removed from the area below the approach ramps to a depth of approximately 0.3m. The approach ramp and footpath on the North Abutment has a plan area of approximately 140m^2 while the approach ramps on the southern side have a plan area of approximately 400m^2. The approach ramp commences approximately 4m from the watercourse. Any grass sods will be kept aside and re-used on the new approach ramps.
- 20m^3 of 6N/6P Fill shall be imported for the backfill at the abutments and 115m^3 of Engineered Fill used to raise the approach embankments to the required bridge level approximately 1.2m above the existing ground level. The fill be compacted by vibratory roller as it is placed.
- The approach paths to the bridge will receive a bound finish to tie in with the adjacent approach paths. A total area of approximately 400m^2 will be finished with a bound macadam surfacing ca. 100mm thick.
- The side slopes of the ramps will be top soiled re-using existing topsoil and seeded with grass to match the surrounding areas, grass-sods can also be re-used here.

- Timber post and rail fencing shall be provided at each abutment to prevent falls. Posts shall be driven into the ground to the required depth.
- A bridge deck joint will be installed at each abutment at the interface between the bridge deck and the approach ramps. This will be fixed to the structure through the use of an appropriate adhesive.
- Permanent pre-cast concrete bollards will be constructed at each end of the bridge to prevent vehicular access to the bridge. The bollards will have an in-situ poured concrete footing with an approximate volume of 0.2m^3. This will be installed ca. 4m from the river (depending on water level).

2.1.2.3 Operational Phase

During operation, the bridge will operate as a pedestrian bridge which will require ongoing periodic maintenance. This includes:

- Re-painting on a 20-25 year cycle or more frequent re-touching of paint work;
- Re-placing rubber joints when these parts weaken, expected to be required every 20 years;
- Re-placing of bearings and parapets which have a design life of 50 years, these are unbolted, and replacements are bolted in.

2.1.2.4 Decomissioning Phase

During decommissioning, the bridge structure can be removed by reversing the actions outlined in the construction phase. The bridge structure is self-supporting and can be craned out of position onto the river bank, where it can be transported for either recycling or refurbishment as required. The abutments are likely to remain in place for a replacement bridge structure.

2.2 Receiving Environment

Section 171 AE of the Planning and Development Act 2001 (as amended) outlines the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme, which must be considered in an EIA. The EIA includes details of the following:

- Population and Human Health;
- Biodiversity;
- Soil and Water;
- Air and Climate;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Material Assets; and
- Cultural Heritage and Landscape.

A summary of each of the above topics as they relate to the receiving environment is provided below.

2.2.1 Population and Human Health

The area containing Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme is located in parkland adjacent to Trim Castle, Trim, Co. Meath. The settlement pattern of the wider area is described as '*suburban*' in character. There are no residential dwellings or commercial premises directly adjacent to the bridge, with residential dwellings and commercial premises located c. 120m to the west, with, with larger residential housing estates on the north side of the Boyne River adjacent to the R497, which runs 440m east of the bridge site.

Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme is outlined in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which accompany this application, which describe the following:

- Environmental Management Plan (EMP): The EMP includes measures to protect from impacts due to dust, noise, and vibration generated by traffic and construction works;
- Safety and Health Management Plan: This outlines the management of safety and health during the design, construction, and operation, ensuring compliance with statutory obligations and the welfare of all involved;
- Emergency Response Plan: The includes protocols for immediate threats to the health and safety of the public or personnel, medical protocols, and emergency response procedures.

The Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme will have minimal interaction with populated areas or impacts on human health due to the nature and extant of the proposed works.

2.2.2 Biodiversity

The proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme is located in Trim, Co. Meath, and cross the River Boyne adjacent to Trim Castle which is within the *River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site code: 002299)* and the *River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site code: 004232).* The bridge will be erected at the same location as the demolished Millennium Bridge and will make use of the existing foundations and paths leading to the bridge location. The location for the proposed works and the *River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site code: 002299)* and the *River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site code: 004232)* are discussed in full in the Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening, Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and Ecological Appraisal Report provided with the planning application.

The NIS provides the necessary information to enable the competent authority to perform the required Appropriate Assessment for the Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme, thereby enabling the competent authority to perform its statutory function and comply with Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ('Habitats Directive'), in addition to the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2021.

The NIS has considered the potential for the proposed works to give rise to adverse effects on the integrity of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site code: 002299) and River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site code: 004232), either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, considering the site's structure, function and conservation objectives. Where potentially negative effects were identified, mitigation measures have been recommended to prevent these effects due to the proposed development of the bridge being hydrologically connected to a European Site SAC and SPA.

However, due to the nature of the proposed works to the bridge and following a comprehensive evaluation of the effects on the qualifying interests and conservation objectives for the SAC and SPA following the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, it has been concluded that proposed development work is not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects on designated European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

The River Boyne and riparian woodland present near the proposed project site offer potential foraging and commuting areas for bats. The proposed project is situated in a landscape that is highly suitable for common pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pipistrellus) and of moderate to hight suitability the following species of bat: Brown long-eared bat (Plecotus auritus), Daubenton's bat (Myotis daubentonii), Leisler's bat (Nyctalus leisleri) and soprano pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pygmaeus). It is of moderate suitability for Natterer's bat (Myotis nattereri). The area is of moderate to low suitability for Nathusius' pipistrelles (Pipistrellus nathusii) and for whiskered bat (Myotis mystacinus) as there are no cluttered woodland habitats present, which the latter species prefers. Lesser horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) does not occur in this part of the country.

Bat boxes will be installed under the bridge to enhance roosting potential and increase roosting options and capacity. It is noted that the bridge is located in an area which presents opportunities for foraging bats, but roosting opportunities in the bridge may be limited in terms of variety/conditions.

No tree removals are required as part of the Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme. If required and where feasible, trimming of trees will be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season (March 1st to August 31st inclusive). This will help protect nesting birds. Where vegetation removal is required outside this period, vegetation will be inspected for nesting birds by a suitably qualified Ecologist. In the event of birds nesting within affected areas, suitable mitigation will be put in place and trimming will only proceed upon agreement with NPWS and receipt of a wildlife licence.

The location for the Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme is within a landscape with the dominant habitats both on site and in the surrounding areas, as defined by Fossitt (2000) are improved agricultural grassland (GA1), as well as hedgerows and treelines (WL1/2).

As outlined within the *'Survey for Otter, Lutra lutra, occurring in the vicinity of Trim Millennium Bridge, Trim, Co. Meath*' (August 2022), the report concludes the following in relation to the presence of Otters:

> "*This stretch of the River Boyne is suitable for use as foraging habitat by the Annex I//IV species Otter (which is a Qualifying Interest of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC). Surveys of the river bank upstream and downstream would indicate a lack of suitable breeding habitat for holts or indeed haulout points, with a high degree of human and dog disturbance. Given the nature and location of the works, in combination with the very short duration (two days) of the work, the works will have no significant negative impact on the conservation objectives of Otter occurring in the vicinity of the works".*

The Ecological Appraisal Report outlines how the proposed works have been designed to avoid impacts on rare, threatened, or protected species and their habitats, and recommends mitigation measures to further reduce potential impacts, such as works that could disturb Otters or birds protected under the Wildlife Act should be carried out outside of the breeding season.

No in-stream works are required as part of the proposed works, however, all works should be carried out in accordance with best practice to avoid impacts on aquatic species, so the proposed works are unlikely to have an impact on any species.

The Ecological Impact Assessment of the site shows the only invasive species observed within the River Boyne near the bridge and adjacent to the river near the bridge were sycamore and an invasive pondweed species (Elodea sp.). Sycamore is not listed on the Third Schedule, thus there is no requirement for an invasive species management plan. All Elodea species are listed on the Third Schedule. However, as there are no in-stream works proposed, the presence of this species is not significant to the proposed bridge project.

2.2.3 Soil and Water

The Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme includes a Soil Management Plan which shall be finalised in accordance with this plan following the appointment of the contractor for the main construction works. This includes a '*Site Risk Assessment*' in relation to the following:

- Materials storage
- Demolition of existing reinforced concrete bankseat abutments
- Construction on new reinforced concrete abutments
- Laying of temporary hardstanding materials

The total construction programme is estimated to be 6 months, including for the fabrication of the steel bridge off site. The estimated length of time for works on site is approximately 10-12 weeks. During the construction period, the Resident Engineer appointed by the contractor should conduct regular meetings with the Construction Management Team to discuss the phasing of soil management as the work progresses.

Particular regard will be taken of daily weather conditions and long-range forecasts. The Resident Engineer should have the authority to suspend the works if weather conditions are deemed too extreme for the effective protection of the Boyne River.

Any contaminated soils will be handled, removed and disposed of in accordance with statutory requirements for the handling, transportation and disposal of waste. In particular, the following measures will be implemented:

- Contaminated material will be left in-situ and covered, where possible until such time as WAC (Waste Acceptance Criteria) testing is undertaken in accordance with recommended standards and in-line with the acceptance criteria at a suitably licenced landfill or treatment facility. This will determine firstly the nature of the contamination and secondly the materials classification i.e. inert, non-hazardous or hazardous,
- If the material is deemed to be contaminated, consultation will take place with the respective local authority and/or EPA on the most appropriate measures. Such materials will be excavated, transported by a contractor with a valid waste collection permit and recovered/disposed of at an appropriate facility.

Details of oil spill protection measures adjacent to sensitive receptors and emergency spill response procedures are outlined as follows:

- Storage tanks, used to store fuel for the various items of machinery, will be self-contained and double-walled. Refuelling of construction vehicles will be carried out from these tanks or from delivery vehicles at designated refuelling areas. Specific mitigation measures relating to the management of hydrocarbons are as follows:

- Fuels, lubricants and hydraulic fluids for equipment used on the construction site will be carefully handled to avoid spillage.
- Any spillage of fuels, lubricants or hydraulic oils will be immediately contained, and the contaminated soil removed from the site and properly disposed of;
- Waste oils and hydraulic fluids will be collected in leak-proof containers and removed from the site for disposal or re-cycling; and
- Appropriate spill control equipment, such as oil soakage pads, will be kept within the construction area and in each item of plant to deal with any accidental spillage.

An emergency preparedness and response procedure are required to prevent environmental pollution incidents, with Emergency Silt Control and Spillage Response Procedures contained within the CEMP. Suitable spill kits and absorbent material for dealing with oil spills will be maintained on site. In the event of pollution or potential risk of pollution the Local Authority should be informed immediately.

2.2.4 Air and Climate

The Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme identifies measures which are implemented to control dust and emissions which may impact air quality. This involves the implementation of an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) to monitor environmental measures for the duration of the works, with the principal source of potential air emissions during the works being dust arising from earthworks, the temporary storage of excavated materials, the movement of construction vehicles, loading and unloading of aggregates/materials, demolition of existing reinforced concrete bankseats and the movement of material around the site.

Construction vehicles and plant emissions have the potential to increase concentrations of compounds such as NO2, Benzene and PM10 in the receiving environment. Plant and machinery such as generators, excavators etc. will be required at various stages of the construction works. These will be relatively small units which will be operated on an intermittent basis.

Although there will be an emission from these units, given their scale and the length of operation time, the impacts of emissions from these units will be negligible.

The EMP measures to mitigate any dust and emissions during the construction phase include:

- A water bowser will be available to spray work areas and haul roads, especially during periods of excavations works coinciding with dry periods of weather, in order to suppress dust migration from the site;
- All loads which could cause a dust nuisance will be covered to minimise the potential for fugitive emissions during transport;
- Gravel will be used at the site exit point to remove any dirt from tyres and tracks before travelling along public roads;
- The access and egress of construction vehicles will be controlled to designated locations, along defined routes, with all vehicles required to comply with onsite speed limits;
- Construction vehicles and machinery will be serviced and in good working order;
- The developer in association with the contractor will be required to implement a dust control plan as part of the CEMP.

- Receptors which receive dusting and soiling from local routes entering the site; and dwellings directly adjacent to the site that experience dust soiling, where appropriate, and with the agreement of the landowner, will have the facades of their dwelling cleaned if required should soiling have taken place;
- Ensure all vehicles switch off engines when stationary – no idling vehicles; and
- Exhaust emissions from vehicles operating within the site, including trucks, excavators, diesel generators or other plant equipment, will be controlled by the contractor by ensuring that emissions from vehicles are minimised through regular servicing of machinery.

Furthermore, regular monitoring of air quality is to be conducted to identify any potential impacts from construction activities, with traffic management on and around the site implemented to reduce dust and emissions from vehicles in proximity to the river where possible.

2.2.5 Noise and Vibration

The construction noise model assessed several tasks with the potential to generate noise. These tasks included:

- deliveries and/or removal of material to and from site,
- preparation of access roads,
- preparation of hardstands,
- preparation of new approach ramps and finishes,
- demolition of existing reinforced concrete bankseats and
- removal of temporary bailey bridge.

In relation to site traffic, the noise impact from construction personnel movements to and from the site is expected to be low.

The preparation of access roads, hardstands and drainage are expected to have a slight impact and be temporary in duration. The construction works associated with the construction of the in-situ reinforced concrete abutments is expected to have a slight impact and be temporary in duration.

2.2.6 Material Assets

Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme will require no connections for electricity, communications, natural gas or water supply as power and water will be provided via generator and tanked water.

A temporary compound will be required to provide storage and staff welfare facilities for the duration of the works. This temporary compound will be removed after completion of works and the compound site reinstated to its former land use.

2.2.7 Architectural and Cultural Heritage

Design and best practice measures are incorporated into the proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme. No intrusive investigation works which may cause impact on architectural or cultural heritage assets in the vicinity of the works will occur due to the following:

- The bridge and footprint of ancillary structures such as footpaths and ramps will utilise the existing footprint;
- The bridge will utilise existing foundation for the abutments;
- No in-stream works will take place for the installation of the bridge and ancillary infrastructure;
- The bridge is pre-fabricated and will be lifted into place in one piece by a crane, which will be located on the southern bank of the River Boyne;
- No new roads will be established to build the proposed bridge development;
- For decommissioning the self-supporting bridge structure can be lifted off the abutments via crane in one piece.

The Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme will have no impact on architectural or cultural heritage assets in the vicinity of the works.

3. ASSESSMENT AGAINST SCHEDULE 7 CRITERIA

Having considered the above environmental factors the aim of the next section is to address likely impacts on the environment by the Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme. A brief overview of the sensitivities and impacts will be highlighted. Whether an EIA would be deemed relevant to the scale of the proposed work and the environment will then be determined. The following sections presents the EIA Screening based on the criteria contained in Schedule 7A of the Regulations and are grouped under the following headings:

- Characteristics of the proposed works - Table 3-1
- Location of the proposed works - Table 3-2
- Types and Characteristics of potential impact - Table 3-3

Table 3-1: Characteristics of the proposed works

Criterion	Commentary
The size and design of the whole of the proposed works:	The proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme is a new pedestrian footbridge to replace the original Millennium Pedestrian footbridge which was demolished in August 2022. The superstructure of the demolished bridge was constructed from Ekki timber in 2001 but was observed as having undergone significant failure during a structural inspection undertaken in July 2022. Failure of one of the pinned connections at the bottom chord caused the bridge to rotate and the bridge was no longer safe for use. The reason for the failure was due to rotting of the timber forked connection. The abutments and foundation of the bridge are still in place, and it is proposed to reuse the existing foundation to support the new bridge structure. The new bridge will therefore be at the same location and have the same span as that of the original Millennium Pedestrian Bridge. During the proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme, the proposed Main Site temporary compound will to be located in the grassed area adjacent to the existing car park, c. 50m southwest of the southern abutment which will include staff welfare facilities. A second temporary compound will be located c. 30m east of the bridge providing storage on agricultural land for machinery and materials. On completion of the works, all temporary compounds and facilities will be removed and the lands fully reinstated. Facilities to be provided in the temporary site compounds will include the following: • Welfare facility consisting of container with Portaloo; • Employee parking; • Contractor lock-up facility; • Bottled water for potable supply; • Water tanker to supply water used for other purposes;

Criterion	Commentary
	• Fuel storage with bunded area to accommodate 110% of fuel storage; • Diesel generator; • Storage areas; • Waste management areas. The temporary site compound is proposed to be located in the grassed area adjacent to the car park southwest of the bridge.
Cumulation with other existing development and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme:	According to the National Planning Application Database for Trim, Co. Meath (meathcoco.maps.arcgis.com), there are a number of medium and small-scale developments within the receiving area. Residential developments include the erection of a three storey apartment building with up to 12 residential units (planning reference: 221176), as well as the demolition of an existing dwelling, garage and associated outbuildings to erect seven residential units in their place (planning reference: 211914), and some applications for single residential units. Commercial developments include a 3 and 4 storey extension (total 43 new bedrooms) to an existing hotel (planning reference: TA190860) within the architectural conservation area and the demolition of part of a supermarket building and several new extensions to that building (planning reference: TA191322). Other applications refer to extensions to buildings, installing solar panels on roofs, change of use applications as well as applications for retention of building features or use changes. Due to the scale, location and nature of these developments, it has been ruled out that there is a risk of significant in-combination effects between the proposed development and any of these applications. Should any activities associated with proposed and existing developments identified in the future coincide with the works at Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme, the Contractor should advise the local authority of these developments as part of the finalisation of the construction stage TMP so that they can be considered.
The nature of any associated demolition works:	Existing reinforced concrete bankseats (ca. 2m3 of concrete), which are located c. 1.5m from the river (depending on water-level), will be moved back via excavator or broken into pieces by a concrete breaker (if the bankseat is attached to the foundational structure). It will remain within the site boundary and shall be reused as fill for the approach ramps.

Criterion	Commentary
The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity:	During the construction phase, the proposed Main Site temporary compound will to be located in grassed area adjacent to the existing car park, c. 50m southwest of the southern abutment which will include staff welfare facilities. A second temporary compound will be located c. 30m east of the bridge providing storage on agricultural land for machinery and materials. On completion of the works, all temporary compounds and facilities will be removed and the lands fully reinstated. Natural resources will be used where the temporary compound on grassed or agricultural land shall be constructed with crushed rock aggregate hard standings with low dust content. A geotextile will be placed under the hard standing to minimise soil disturbance when aggregate is removed after completion of the proposed works. All temporary facilities will be removed, and the lands reinstated upon completion of the construction phase (bare areas will be allowed to recolonise naturally). Water Quality Measures during the Construction Phase will require • Works to minimise land take for the temporary site compound areas situated on grassland. • No instream works. • Aggregate with low content of fines will be used for construction of the temporary compound hard standing in order to minimise sediment washout. • A geotextile layer shall be installed under the site compound hard standing to minimise soil disturbance when the hard standing material is removed. With the implementation of the mitigation measures detailed in the Ecological Appraisal, the CEMP and the NIS accompanying this application, there will be no significant residual impacts from the Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme on biodiversity.
the production of waste:	As described within the accompanying CEMP, the 'Waste Management Plan' addresses the production of waste during the construction phase of the works. Here, it states it will be the objective of the Developer in conjunction with appointed contractor to prevent, reduce, reuse and recover as much of the waste generated on site as practicable and to ensure the appropriate transport and disposal of residual waste off site. This is in line with the relevant National Waste Management Guidelines and the European Waste Management Hierarchy, as enshrined in the Waste Management Act 1996, as amended. Any waste generated during the development construction phase will be collected, source separated and stored in dedicated receptacles at the temporary compound during construction.

Criterion	Commentary
	The Construction Waste Management Plan prepared for the proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge works is in line with the "Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects" (2006), as published by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and supported by the Eastern-Midlands Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021. The Waste Management Plan shall be finalised in accordance with this plan following the appointment of the contractor for the main construction works. It will be the objective of the Developer, in conjunction with the appointed contractor, to prevent, reduce, reuse and recover as much of the waste generated on site as practicable, and to ensure the appropriate transport and disposal of residual waste off site. This is in line with the relevant National Waste Management Guidelines and the European Waste Management Hierarchy, as enshrined in the Waste Management Act 1996, as amended.
Pollution and nuisances:	Temporary localised nuisance is likely during the construction phase of the proposed works, which can be reduced and managed through standard environmental and construction best practice methods and controls such as dust dampening/ road sweeping, use of silt fences, use of noise mufflers/ barriers, control over times of operation etc. Given the location of the Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme, it is critically important to prevent any silt or pollution escapement during the works through strict adherence to the water quality mitigation measures defined in the accompanying Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Water levels will be monitored at all times by site management to anticipate flood events. Works will cease during spate events and the works area will be prepared to ensure that flood risk will not result in material escapement or spills which may indirectly impact qualifying interest habitats or species downstream. Site management to consider all potentially polluting activities from the construction stage and includes mitigation measures for critical elements such as storage and handling of potentially polluting materials. All efforts to minimise pollution and siltation escapement to the river will be made in light of proposed bridge construction works. An Emergency Response Plan is contained within Section 6 of the accompanying CEMP and outlines how any major accident or disaster in relation to watercourses will be addressed through the implementation of Emergency Silt Control and Spillage Response Procedures. Suitable spill kits and absorbent material for dealing with oil spills will be maintained on site. In the event of pollution or potential risk of pollution the Local Authority should be informed immediately.

Criterion	Commentary
The risk of major accidents, and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge:	An Emergency Response Plan is contained within Section 6 of the accompanying CEMP and outlines how any major accident or disaster in relation to the Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme and watercourses will be addressed. The proposed development is very small in size and has low potential impacts which may cause temporary effects to the receiving environment. The operational phase is consistent with existing land use. Consequently it is not expected that proposed development will have any significant in-combination effects with the above plans. The greatest risk of accidents or disasters is the release of sediment and pollutants into watercourses, which could negatively impact upon aquatic habitats and species. Machinery will only be refuelled in the site compound, located a safe distance from the Boyne River or potential surface water pathways (i.e., ≥25m). Any diesel or fuel oils stored on site will be bunded to 110% of the capacity of the storage tank. Design and installation of fuel tanks will be in accordance with best practice guidelines BPGCS005 (Oil Storage Guidelines). Mobile bowsers, tanks and drums will be stored in a secure, impermeable storage area, away from drains and open water. Ancillary equipment such as generators, fuel storage tanks will be contained within a bunded area. Only designated trained operators will be authorised to refuel plant on site and emergency spill kits will be present at equipment for all refuelling events. An emergency spill kit with absorbers etc. is to be kept on site in the event of an accidental spill. The Management of Health and Safety during the Design Process include risk management procedures involving the identification and evaluation of risks and the development of mitigation measures to eliminate (where possible) or reduce those risks during the life cycle of the proposed works. In relation to water quality, the main impacts from the proposed works on the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site code: 002299) and River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site code: 004232) are expected to occur during the construction phase. Primarily, these risks relate to water pollution and/or contamination via siltation. The attached NIS prescribes mitigation for the protection of water quality. No risk of pollution given the implementation of NIS mitigation. Wheel wash facilities will be located at the site entrance to reduce construction traffic fouling public roads. Each wheel wash will come with a water tank which will be filled regularly. These units will be self-contained and will filter the waste for ease of disposal. Waste will be removed from each unit and from the site to an appropriate waste management facility by the proposed contractor.

Criterion	Commentary
	The other potential major disaster/accident that could occur and has the potential to negatively impact biodiversity (e.g. through the loss of habitats and destruction of species) is fire. As part of the Safety and Health Management Plan (Section 5. in CEMP), all hazards (including fire) must be minimised throughout the design, construction, operation and decommissioning process. For example, as described in the attached CEMP, part of the Noise and Vibration programme describes how exhaust emissions will be minimised via the regular maintenance of machinery. This will also reduce the risk of faults developing and thus, the start of fires.
The risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution):	Water contamination associated with the works are considered unlikely, with no water drinking sources within proximity of Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme site. As demonstrated within the documentation supplied as part of this application, all efforts will be made to minimise pollution and siltation escapement to the Boyne River. No significant risk to human health due to pollution is likely on the adoption of best practice construction methods. An emergency preparedness and response procedure is required to prevent environmental pollution incidents. Emergency Silt Control and Spillage Response Procedures are included in CEMP Section 4.3.3. Suitable spill kits and absorbent material for dealing with oil spills will be maintained on site. In the event of pollution or potential risk of pollution the Local Authority should be informed immediately. No significant risk to human health due to pollution is likely considering adoption of best practice construction methods and adoption of mitigation in the NIS. The principal source of potential air emissions during the works will be dust arising from the temporary storage of excavated materials, the movement of construction vehicles, loading and unloading of aggregates/materials and the movement of material around the site. These emissions during the works phase can be minimized through best practice. A Dust Management Plan (DMP) for the construction works at Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme outlines the sources of dust during the works and identifies measures to minimise dust during the works and the complaints procedure for dust.

Table 3-2: Location of the proposed works

Criterion	Commentary
The existing and approved land use:	The existing and approved land use of the Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme is of a pedestrian bridge at the same location and have the same span as that of the original timber Millennium Pedestrian Bridge removed in 2022 due to rotting of the timber structure. Surrounding land uses are agricultural and recreational within an urban location with residential and commercial receptors in proximity, but not adjacent to, the site.
The relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground:	The proposed work require a Main Site temporary compound located in the grassed area adjacent to the existing car park, c. 50m southwest of the southern abutment which will include staff welfare facilities. A second temporary compound will be located c. 30m east of the bridge providing storage on agricultural land for machinery and materials. On completion of the works, all temporary compounds and facilities will be removed and the lands fully reinstated. The temporary compounds shall be constructed with crushed rock aggregate hard standings with low dust content. On completion of woks, all temporary facilities will be removed, and the lands reinstated upon completion of the construction phase.
The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas: **(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;** **(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment; (iii) mountain and forest areas;** **(iv) nature reserves and parks;** **(v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive and;** **(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;**	The proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme, site compound and facilities are located adjacent to the Boyne River which are within the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site code: 002299) and River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site code: 004232). Therefore, particular attention needs to be given to ensure the area is contained and no runoff occurs to the Boyne River. Appropriate controls will be set out so that the proposed works will not significantly affect the absorption capacity of the natural environment, with appropriate measures taken such as machinery will only be refuelled in the site compound, located a safe distance from the Boyne River or potential surface water pathways (i.e., ≥25m). Any diesel or fuel oils stored on site will be bunded to 110% of the capacity of the storage tank. Mobile bowsers, tanks and drums will be stored in a secure, impermeable storage area, away from drains and open water. Ancillary equipment such as generators, fuel storage tanks will be contained within a bunded area.

Criterion	Commentary
(vii) densely populated areas; **(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.**	Only designated trained operators will be authorised to refuel plant on site and emergency spill kits will be present at equipment for all refuelling events. An emergency spill kit with absorbers etc. is to be kept on site in the event of an accidental spill.

For criteria 3 ' Types and Characteristics of Potential Impact' the Regulations require that the likely significant effects on the environment of the proposed works (in relation to criteria set out under 'Characteristics of the Proposed Development' and 'Location of the Proposed Development') are assessed for the environmental topics set out in section 171A of the Planning and Development Act (i.e. population and human health, biodiversity, land, soil, water, air and climate, material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape) taking into account—

(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),

(b) the nature of the impact,

(c) the transboundary nature of the impact,

(d) the intensity and complexity of the impact,

(e) the probability of the impact,

(f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact,

(g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment, and

(h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

Table 3-3: Types and Characteristics of Potential Impact

Criterion	Commentary
Human Health:	Potential for localised nuisance during the construction works through increase in noise and dust. Plant and machinery such as generators, excavators etc. will be required at various stages of the construction works. These will be relatively small units which will be operated on an intermittent basis. Although there will be an emission from these units, given their scale and the length of operation time, the impacts of emissions from these units will be negligible. In relation to site traffic, the noise impact from construction personnel movements to and from the site is expected to be low.

Criterion	Commentary
	Significance of effect: Likely Effects, Slight Effects, Temporary Effects. On completion of the proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme, there will be increased pedestrian activity with enhanced safety for those using the bridge due to improved structural integrity on replacement of the previous timber structure. **Significance of effect**: Positive Effects, Long-Term Effects.
Biodiversity	Best-practice mitigation measures will incorporate the recommendations arising from consultation with statutory bodies such as Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) (Dublin Office) and National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). These recommended mitigation measures will be implemented in order to reduce or completely avoid any and all potential impacts to aquatic qualifying interest species and habitats within the Boyne River which are River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site code: 002299) and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site code: 004232). Due to the relatively non-intrusive nature of the proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme and site compound located on grassed areas and agricultural lands, it is unlikely that the proposed development would impact on the qualifying interests associated with the Boyne River SAC and SPA. **Significance of effect during construction stage:** Unlikely Effects, Slight Effects, Temporary Effects. **Significance of effect during operation stage:** Unlikely Effects, imperceptible. The River Boyne and riparian woodland present near the proposed project site offer potential foraging and commuting areas for bats. The proposed project is situated in a landscape that is highly suitable for common pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pipistrellus) and of moderate to hight suitability the following species of bat: Brown long-eared bat (Plecotus auritus), Daubenton's bat (Myotis daubentonii), Leisler's bat (Nyctalus leisleri) and soprano pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pygmaeus). It is of moderate suitability for Natterer's bat (Myotis nattereri). The area is of moderate to low suitability for Nathusius' pipistrelles (Pipistrellus nathusii) and for whiskered bat (Myotis mystacinus) as there are no cluttered woodland habitats present, which the latter species prefers. Lesser horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) does not occur in this part of the country.

Criterion	Commentary
	Bat boxes will be installed under the bridge to enhance roosting potential and increase roosting options and capacity. It is noted that the bridge is located in an area which presents opportunities for foraging bats, but roosting opportunities in the bridge may be limited in terms of variety/conditions. **Significance of effect during construction stage:** Unlikely Effects, imperceptible. **Significance of effect during operation stage:** Unlikely Effects, imperceptible. The Ecological Impact Assessment of the site shows the only invasive species observed within the River Boyne near the bridge and adjacent to the river near the bridge were sycamore and an invasive pondweed species (Elodea sp.). Sycamore is not listed on the Third Schedule, thus there is no requirement for an invasive species management plan. All Elodea species are listed on the Third Schedule. However, as there are no in-stream works proposed, the presence of this species is not significant to the proposed bridge project. Standard clean-check-dry biosecurity measures will be necessary to ensure compliance with Article 49 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 in relation to the control of the spread of invasive species. **Significance of effect:** Unlikely Effects.
Land, soil, water	During the construction phase of the bridge replacement works, it will be necessary to provide temporary compounds located near the southern abutment which will include staff welfare facilities and a temporary compound on the northern abutment on agricultural land for storage of construction machinery and materials. The proposed Main Site temporary compound will to be located in the grassed area adjacent to the existing car park, c. 50m southwest of the southern abutment which will include staff welfare facilities. A second temporary compound will be located c. 30m east of the bridge providing storage on agricultural land for machinery and materials. On completion of the works, all temporary compounds and facilities will be removed and the lands fully reinstated. The temporary Site Storage area and compound shall be constructed with crushed rock aggregate hard standings with low dust content. On completion of woks, all temporary facilities will be removed, and the lands reinstated upon completion of the construction phase.

Criterion	Commentary
	Significance of effect: Likely Effects, Indeterminable Effects, Temporary Effects. Wheel wash facilities will be located at the site entrance to reduce construction traffic fouling public roads. Each wheel wash will come with a water tank which will be filled regularly. These units will be self-contained and will filter the waste for ease of disposal. Waste will be removed from each unit and from the site to an appropriate waste management facility by the proposed contractor. **Significance of effect:** Likely Effects, Temporary Effects. Given the protective measures in place and nature of the proposed works, there is no potential to alter groundwater hydrology. **Significance of effect:** Unlikely Effects, Imperceptible.
Air and climate	Localised impacts arising from machinery operation during the construction phase of the proposed Bridge Scheme will result in a temporary increase in dust and exhaust emissions. These emissions during the works phase can be minimized through best practice. All vehicles and mechanical plant will be fitted with effective exhaust silencers and maintained in good working order for the duration of the Bridge Scheme. Machinery that is used intermittently will be shut down or throttled back to a minimum during periods when not in use. **Significance of effect**: Likely Effects, Brief Effects.
Material assets	There may be impacts on traffic during the construction stage of the development. However, these will be temporary and managed as outlined in a Traffic Management Plan. A dedicated competent Traffic Management Coordinator will be appointed for the duration of proposed works and this person will be the main point of contact for all matters relating to traffic management on the works. There will not be any requirement to cut a supply of gas, water, electricity or telecommunications. **Significance of effect:** Likely Effects, Brief Effects.
Cultural heritage and the landscape	The proposed Bridge Scheme do not directly or indirectly interact with any National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) feature. No significant alteration of landscape character or effects on sensitive/scenic views or routes. **Significance of effect:** Neutral Effects.

4. CONCLUSION

No significant effects likely to arise associated with the characteristics of the proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme and location of the temporary site compound located adjacent to an existing car park, c. 50m southwest of the southern abutment which will include staff welfare facilities. A second temporary compound/storage area will be located c. 30m east of the bridge providing storage on agricultural land for machinery and materials. On completion of the works, all temporary compounds and facilities will be removed and the lands fully reinstated.

No significant effects likely to arise associated with the location of the proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme. While the ecological resources within the area are considered sensitive receptors as described in the NIS included in this application, the nature of the works is such that it is considered that the receptor will not be significantly impacted. The cultural and landscape resources within the area are not sensitive to the proposed bridge replacement works.

The Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts associated with proposed scheme will not result in significant environmental effects. Potential impacts relate primarily to temporary impacts at construction stage and the implementation of the Best Practice Construction measures will provide safeguards to avoid significant impacts at this stage; particularly in relation to the protection of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA protection of water bodies and reduction of noise and dust nuisance.

Overall Conclusion: No Negative/Adverse Effects or Significant Effects are likely to arise from the proposed Trim Millennium Pedestrian Bridge Scheme.

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