

# **Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report for Community Park Sallins, Co. Kildare, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2021**

## **1. Introduction**

The EIA Directive 85/337/EEC, as amended aims to determine the likely significant effects of a project on the environment. EIA Screening determines whether an EIA is required for a specified project. Projects requiring mandatory EIA are listed in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. In the case of development which is under these thresholds, planning authorities are required under Article 103 of the 2001 Regulations, (as amended) to request an EIS where it considers that the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Screening involves appraisal of impacts from the proposed development according to three main criteria:

1. Characteristics of the project
2. Location of proposed project
3. Characteristics of potential impacts.

Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), outlines the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by a proposed development. These are: human beings, flora and fauna, soil and geology, water, air & climate, landscape, material assets, cultural heritage and the inter-relationships between the range of environmental criteria.

## **Consultation**

Consultation with Kildare Co. Council Parks Department, Kildare Co. Council Planners and the Cathal O' Meara Landscape Architects was conducted in preparation of this screening report.

Report was prepared by Mary O'Connor Ecologist.

## **2. Project Description and Location The proposed development comprises of the following works:**

### Introduction

Due to the recent Sallins By-pass construction the site's former farmland habitat has been greatly modified to accommodate the By-pass road and additional service infrastructure. A steep embankment housing the new road now divides the site creating a largely flat expanse of land to the South between the Bypass and the Canal and a sloping site to the North from the Bypass to the River Liffey. The acquisition of these lands has provided Sallins with a prime recreational site to meet the needs of the area's rapidly expanding population. Sallins GAA and Sallins Celtic Football Club were granted use of the site prior to construction works and continued use of the site during these works. The design of the park will see the GAA and Football Clubs formally accommodated within the site with provision of 2 full size GAA pitches, 2 full size soccer pitches and one multi use pitch. Changing rooms, club facilities and parking for the clubs will all be provided within the larger park facilities. An online community survey was carried out to ascertain the larger community requirements and public

aspirations for the site. The findings of this survey were analysed with the top rated elements drawn into the park design including a Kids Playground, a Teen area with Skatepark and basketball, Natural Play, Outdoor gym equipment, a loop path suitable for running and access to the River Liffey for water sports. Beyond play and sport other community facilities were desired such as a mixed use community building, allotments and outdoor space for occasional arts workshops, meetings and markets. In conjunction many comments relayed the desire for biodiversity and the creation of a park linked to nature with tree planting, wildflower and wetland creation.

### Location Map

A location map and layout is included as Appendix 1 of this screening report.

### Primary Design Decisions

With the criteria set the crux of the design layout was formed around fitting the required car parking and expansive pitches within the existing field layout in order to minimise hedge removal and habitat loss. This did mean the loss of one existing hedgerow and the rerouting of a central ditch. With these elements in place links to and from the park as well as internal routes were examined, roads and paths instated and suitable sites for desired facilities located. The position of the main entrance road was determined by site lines and levels from the by-pass allowing vehicular access to the car park, community building and allotments. Beyond this point the road narrows to allow controlled emergency access only through to the canal. This canal entrance is likely to be the main pedestrian/cyclist route allowing easy access from Sallins town along the canal towpath, indeed this route will soon be part of the Grand canal greenway and as such will bring increased visitor numbers to the area. 3 more entrances allow access to different sections of the path along the towpath. At the furthest end of the park a route links up to the by-pass footpath and another into meet the parks loop path. At a midway point along the canal a path leads into the new wetlands area and then a wider entrance forms a small plaza to the front of the existing historic farm courtyard, in turn this path links through to the new community building and changing rooms. The existing farmyard with its large agricultural building and historic stone walls offer an ideal space for a mixed use community yard suitable for food stalls, markets, workshops or group meetings. This area may also be suitable for use by the adjoining allotments which have been placed between the courtyard and the canal. The historic stone walls will be repaired and stabilized with sections removed for access while the existing farm shed will be restored for use as an open sheltered space. These areas will largely be left open so future use can be determined by Kildare County Council. To the east the courtyard will be flanked by the new community building with integrated changing rooms. Although the building itself is not part of this project an architect was commissioned to prepare a room schedule allowing for the foreseen uses to determine the size of the building footprint and design entrance routes and civic space around the building.

### Ecology/Biodiversity

The majority of existing hedgerows are to be retained with small gaps removed from the perimeter canal hedge in order to allow the above-mentioned entrances. To compensate for the loss of the central hedgerow the reformed central ditch will see water from the existing canal overflow exposed within a planted stream, flanked by marginal riverside plants and nodes of native trees. This stream will link the existing canal and perimeter hedge to the River Liffey via an engineered underpass through the new road embankment, thus forming a strong green corridor linking the two existing wet ecosystems. Further to this a large area of flat grassland close to the canal will be excavated forming

two ponds, planted with aquatic and marginal species; the area will be developed as a wetlands park with raised paths and a viewing platform allowing controlled access to this sensitive habitat. Similarly an existing area of wetland on the Liffey side of the park will be encouraged with additional stream works, planting and access paths. The dry canal basin forms another ecologically sensitive area within the site housing mature dry woodlands to the east which evolves into wet woodlands to the west. All trees within the woodlands are to be accessed with all healthy trees retained and pruned where beneficial, in areas the understorey of bramble will be removed and a low impact decked path will meander through the trees with stepped access in and out of the basin. Additional tree planting will see extensive areas of native planting on the road embankment and within the sloped western half of the Liffey site, here pockets of forest are set within a native meadow to surround and soften a crescent shaped parking area. To the bottom of this slope lies an existing hard attenuation basin, this will also be softened with the addition of wetlands and riverside planting. A mix of native and non-native trees have been chosen for use around the site in order to achieve maximum diversity. These will be used to line paths, create feature areas at entrances, form small orchards or shelter belts and break up hard areas such as the carpark. Ornamental grasses and perennial planting will be used in feature areas such as entrances and near buildings and again at the carpark to soften and divide the area, here planting beds will double as suds basins to hold water run-off from the hard surfacing. With the pitches occupying a large central portion of the site it was decided that they should have a mown over run for training which then grades into longer grass and uncut meadow. The longer meadow will in turn reach hedges, the planted embankment or marginal planting to the central stream. In addition several areas of native wildflower meadow will be accommodated around the site adding pops of colour and interest around the playground and exercise areas.

### Play and Sport

The GAA and football pitches are full size pitches measured for each sport and spaced to allow the required runover zones. Consultations with the local sports clubs showed that they are happy to share training areas and one all-weather pitch. All pitches will have the relevant markings, goal posts and netting with one pitch flood lite for evening use with the lighting engineered to reduce spill over and impact on wildlife. All drainage from the pitches will be designed to run to the central stream. Tennis and basketball courts have been provided for other sporting options. Play within the park is split into 3 recognisable sites. A fenced kids playground will cater for toddlers and younger children with safety surfacing below swings, slides, roundabouts and other selected equipment, a skatepark and basketball court will cater for older kids and teenagers allowing a mix of skating and scooters on robust ramps and runs with options for free running, climbing and cross over play. Both areas will be enlivened by the addition of semi-mature trees and feature planting to add colour and texture. A woodland trail within the existing dry canal trees will also allow light touch, sensory play and provide a natural explorative space with timber sculptures and play nodes. A 3m wide exterior looped path has been designed to allow runners to complete a 1.5KM (approximately) route. Along the northern extent of the route outdoor gym equipment has been located in groups allowing users to stop mid run or use equipment as a warm up or cool down session, being close to the teen play area it may also be used by older children and teenagers. The Liffey side of the park has largely been developed with watersports in mind, here a decked landing on the Liffey bank has been designed to link via steps to a lower platform just above high water level, allowing easier access to the river. A path from the carpark to the platform will allow users to wheel kayaks and equipment to this node. Features and Furniture A co-ordinated suite of high quality steel and timber furniture will be used throughout the site with the same materials and colours applied to bespoke features such as entrance gates, signage, bridges

and the feature wetlands observation tower. Park benches will be located at entrance points, within the play spaces and along paths with matching picnic tables in clusters forming relaxed places to gather. Steel gates with feature stone walls have been designed to frame the site entrances. The steel of these gates will be finished using the hallmark colour 'Mint Turquoise' (RAL 6003) with the park name in laser cut white steel letters. The stone walls will be formed using large cut stone blocks referencing the stone used in the historic canal locks. A laser cut plate with a designed willow logo connects Sallins to its Irish name, Na Solláin which means "the willows". This logo will be used throughout the site on other signage and feature elements. Bespoke bridges have been designed for the wetlands and central stream; these will be constructed in galvanised steel with hardwood side panels and timber decking to the path, an element of colour will be added to the handrail and on small signage elements. Similarly the wetlands observation tower and refurbished farm shed will use the same materials. The observation tower will be topped by a painted steel safety rail appearing as a strong band of colour and the structural steel of the shed and signage will be painted to match.

The project involves the proposed development of a community Town Park within the grounds Canal, Sallins. Site location map is included as Appendix 1.

The design of the proposed development takes into account best environmental engineering design to ensure least impact to the environment.

### **General Works**

The proposed works are to include construction of sports pitches, car parking, pedestrian paths, building works new building and refurbishment of existing structures along with landscaping and tree planting works.

Artificial Surfaces which may be used are permeable and will allow drainage to occur to ground on site.

All drainage from the pitches will be designed to run to the central stream. The central stream will have small dams along its length to slow down flow and encourage infiltration

Surface Water Drainage systems will be constructed on site. Soakaways and are proposed to drain any hard standing areas will be constructed within the proposed development. The majority of the site drainage will take the form of linear filter drains with attenuation capacity. These will be used under soft landscaped areas (lawn and suds planting) and under the car parking areas where permeable surfacing is used. Within the main site the roads will also have standard storm water drains but these will be fed into the filtration drains and then into an attenuation tank. The Liffey side of the site is set up in a similar manner but with no attenuation, here an overflow from the infiltration drains will take water to the stream tributary running into the Liffey.

The pitches will be drained by infiltration trenches into storm water drains running into the central stream. The stream will feature a series of small dams to slow down the flow and encourage infiltration.

The design may also contain landscape features such as mounding, tree planting and shrub planting.

It is likely the construction of the Park will take the park will be built in stages therefore we see construction taking approximately 3 years from starting on site to completion and opening. This timeframe is dependent on weather and ground conditions.

Any surface water drainage which may be necessary will be attenuated on site.

Foul water will be directed to the main foul-water sewer which traverses the site.

The construction will involve the import of construction materials, concrete, tarmacadam, and vehicle and machinery operation onsite.

Construction of foundations of pathways, and fencing structures will not exceed 500mm in depth.

Landscaping will only use clean bio-secure appropriate uncontaminated topsoils or topsoils excavated from within the site where possible, but site soil quality is an issue and BS certified topsoil from an exterior source maybe required.

Minor scrub and hedgerow clearance, will be required, this will not occur within the bird breeding season of 1st of March to 1st of September.

Planting schemes will not include any known invasive alien species as defined by Invasive Species Ireland.

### **General Site Construction Environmental Measures Consistent with Best Practice, Standards, Design and Controls**

### **ALL CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES WILL BE OUTLINED IN SPECIFICATION AND PRELIMS AT TENDER STAGE**

Raw or uncured waste concrete should be disposed of by removal from the site.

The amount of *in-situ* concreting required should be minimised by maximising the use of pre-cast or permanent formwork.

Ready-mix suppliers should be used in preference to on-site batching.

Washout of concrete trucks should occur off site at a designated, contained impermeable areas, however, if it is necessary to wash down the truck chutes it must be conducted in a dedicated bunded impermeable and signposted wash out area;

Prior to any work it should be ensured that all construction equipment is mechanically sound to avoid leaks of oil, fuel, hydraulic fluids and grease.

Foul drainage from site etc. will be discharged to the main foul-water sewer which traverses the site and hence to the local waste water treatment facility.

All vegetation clearance shall be carried out in one period outside the breeding bird's period which runs from 1st March to the 31st of August.

### **Runoff and sediment control**

Pollution control measures shall be implemented to ensure that pollutants and sediment are not deposited within any local drains, e.g. use of booms and bunds.

### **Fuel Management**

Fuel management measures will be implemented which will incorporate the following elements: fuels, lubricants and hydraulic fluids for equipment used on the construction site should be carefully handled to avoid spillage, properly secured against unauthorised access or vandalism, and provided with spill containment according to current best practice (Enterprise Ireland BPGCS005)2.

Fuelling and lubrication of equipment should be carried out off site in appropriately contained sites.

Emergency fuel spill kits with oil boom, absorbers etc. will be kept on site in the event of an accidental spill. should be available on site, any spillage of fuels, lubricants or hydraulic oils should be immediately contained and the contaminated soil removed from the site and properly disposed of.

Waste oils and hydraulic fluids should be collected in leak-proof containers and removed from the site for disposal or re-cycling.

Procedures and contingency plans will be set up to deal with an emergency

### **Waste Management**

Waste management measures shall be implemented to ensure that waste generated on site is managed appropriately:

During the construction phase of the project waste will be controlled and segregated appropriately on site by means of dedicated skips which will be disposed of off-site by a licensed waste operator.

### **Biosecurity Measures**

It is also important to note that as all trucks transporting materials to and from the site to the site have no potential to transport alien invasive species to the nearby NHA habitats as part of the works.

Wheels will be clean and only clean bio-secure appropriate uncontaminated topsoils or topsoils excavated from within the site where possible, or if site soil quality is an issue, BS certified topsoil from an exterior source maybe required.

Internal site works will be overseen to ensure no internal spread of any alien species located on site for example Himalayan Balsam from the Liffey Corridor.

### **Construction Environmental Management Plan**

All environmental measures must be outlined in a site Construction Environmental Management Plan and agreed prior to works.

### 3. Screening Assessment

**Table 1.** Characteristics of proposed development

Is the size and design of the proposed works significant?	No (sub threshold)
Potential for impacts from project in culmination with other existing and/or approved projects	No
Use of natural resources in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity?	<p>This is not an issue.</p> <p>All uncontaminated excavated site soil will be reused on site to even out the site and create a feature mound. Water entering the site from the canal overflow and via existing ditches will be used to supply the wetlands ponds. Existing small wetland areas will be enlarged with existing vegetation encouraged to infill these areas.</p> <p>The majority of existing hedgerows and woodlands will be retained with clearing and pruning of dangerous or diseased growth allowing healthy vegetation to thrive.</p> <p>Additional planting of native species mix will compensate for any loss of hedgerows in course of site development.</p>
Will the works produce waste?	<p>No</p> <p>Cut and Fill of soil from the site will be balanced within the site and not removed from the site.</p>
Will the works create a significant amount of pollution or nuisance?	No
Risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the project including those caused by Climate Change in accordance with scientific knowledge?	No

Risks to human health (water contamination, air pollution)	<p>Not an issue</p> <p>A foul water drainage layout has been carried out by the engineers for approval by Kildare County Council.</p> <p>Grey water management and adherence to SUDS will ensure only clean uncontaminated surface water leaves the site.</p>
Potential for cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects?	No

**Table 2. Location of Proposed Development**

Environmental Sensitivity of project in relation to existing and approved land use.	None
Relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground	<p>It is thought there will be adequate soil excavated from site for reuse but the quality of the topsoil is uncertain. This will be reused but may need to be supplemented by a local source Site excavated subsoil and topsoil will be stored separately on site in accordance with BS standards. Development will not impact on site regenerative capacity for natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground</p>
Absorption capacity of the natural environment including wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths, coastal zones and the marine environment, mountain and forest area	Not Applicable
Potential of works to impact directly or indirectly on sites designated for nature conservation (NHA/SAC/SPA)	<p>None</p> <p>The site is at a significant remove and is not ecologically connected to any site designated for Conservation, the nearest European site Ballynafagh Bog SAC is at a remove of over 6km from the nearest NHA the Grand Canal NHA is adjacent to the site.</p> <p>It is envisaged that the development will have a positive on the NHA by linking areas of additional</p>

	open water habitat available to species now utilising the canal, e.g. swans, ducks etc.
Potential for impacts directly or indirectly on Habitats or Species listed on Annex I, II and IV of the Habitats Directive	None (no annexed habitat or species occurs within the proposed development site)
Potential for impacts on breeding places of any species protected under the Wildlife Act?	None
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on any listed ACA in the County Development Plan?	None
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on any protected structure or recorded monuments and places of Archaeological Interest	NO The dry canal remains <i>in situ</i> and will not be impacted adversely by works on site.
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on listed or scenic views or protected landscape in the County Development Plan?	None NO
Potential to impact on areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure	None
Potential to impact on densely populated areas.	None

**Table 3.** Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Human Beings	Minor and localised impacts are identified due to a slight increase in traffic levels compared to current traffic levels.
Flora and Fauna	None Some small areas of hedgerow will be lost as part of the development but these will be compensated by planting of additional native woody species on site. Habitat creation of wetland and open water habitats will occur as part of the development these will provide a positive impact on the local flora and fauna.
Soils and Geology	It is thought there will be adequate soil excavated from site for reuse but the quality of the topsoil is uncertain. This will be reused but may need to be supplemented by a local source Site excavated subsoil and topsoil will be stored separately on

	<p>site in accordance with BS standards. Development will not impact on site regenerative capacity for natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground</p>
Water	<p>None</p> <p>The majority of the site drainage will take the form of linear filter drains with attenuation capacity. These will be used under soft landscaped areas (lawn and suds planting) and under the car parking areas where permeable surfacing is used. Within the main site the roads will also have standard storm water drains but these will be fed into the filtration drains and then into an attenuation tank. The Liffey side of the site is set up in a similar manner but with no attenuation, here an overflow from the infiltration drains will take water to the stream tributary running into the River Liffey.</p> <p>The pitches will be drained by infiltration trenches into storm water drains running into the central stream. The stream will feature a series of small dams to slow down the flow and encourage infiltration.</p> <p>Any surface water drainage which may be necessary will be attenuated on site.</p> <p>Foul water will be directed to the main foul-water sewer which traverses the site.</p> <p>Compliance with SUDs throughout the site.</p>
Air and Climate	<p>None</p> <p>No impact on air quality by the proposed development</p>
Noise and Vibration	<p>None</p> <p>Noise and Vibration levels will be restricted during the works, no potential impacts following construction</p>
Landscape	<p>None</p> <p>The landscape character will change significantly from the present unseeded construction site,</p>

	<p>mown GAA pitches and agricultural fields to a more diverse designed landscape.</p> <p>The creation of water features and additional tree planting and meadow creation will produce an attractive and characterful landscape.</p>
Material Assets	<p>None</p> <p>The proposed development will not have any significant impact on material assets including public utilities and natural resources</p>
Cultural Heritage	<p>None</p> <p>The proposal aims to conserve vernacular agricultural buildings on site and retain the dry canal feature.</p>
Interaction of Foregoing	<p>No significant effects likely to arise associated with the characteristics of the potential impacts.</p>

**Table 4.** Discussion of Potential Impacts

Will a large geographical area be impacted as a result of the proposed works?	No
Will a large population be impacted as a result of the proposed works?	No
Are any trans-frontier impacts likely to arise from proposed works?	No
Is the intensity and complexity of impacts associated with the proposed works considered significant?	No
Is there a high probability that the impacts will occur?	Conservation led design will provide safeguards in relation to potential impacts ensuring low probability that impacts will occur
What is the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact?	Conservation led design will provide safeguards in relation to potential impacts ensuring low probability that impacts will occur
Cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects?	It is considered that no significant cumulative effects will arise
Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effects?	The proposed plan aims to reduce effects of any potential impact

#### **4. Conclusion**

The DoEHLG Guidance Document “Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development” notes that “The greater the number of different aspects of the environment which are likely to be affected and the greater the links between the effects, the more likely it is that an EIS should be carried out. Where 5 complexity of impacts is deemed to apply in the case of a specific sub-threshold development proposal, there should be a predisposition towards the preparation of an EIS”.

In consideration of the above involving appraisal of characteristics and location of proposed development and characteristics of potential impacts and having regard to Annex III criteria of the EIA Directive it is concluded that an EIAR is not required for the proposed development.



