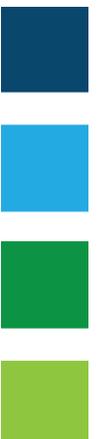




**Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project  
Preliminary Examination and Environmental Impact Assessment  
("EIA") Screening Report**



**PROJECT NAME: Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project**

**REPORT NAME: Preliminary Examination and Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”) Screening Report**

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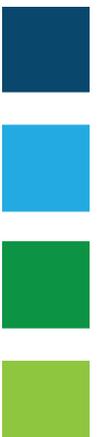
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**Table of Contents**

1.0 INTRODUCTION ..... 2

2.0 REGULATORY CONTEXT ..... 3

3.0 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION CONCLUSION..... 4

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND EXISTING SITE..... 5

5.0 SCHEDULE 5 PROJECT TYPE APPLICABILITY ..... 10

6.0 INFORMATION PROVIDED FOR EIA (SCHEDULE 7A OF THE REGULATIONS) ..... 11

7.0 EIA SCREENING ..... 13

8.0 EIA SCREENING DETERMINATION ..... 23

**Table of Figures**

Figure 4-1: Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project - Regional Site Location Map..... 7

Figure 4-2: Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project – Proposed Red Line Boundary..... 8

Figure 4-3: Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project - Site Layout Plan ..... 9

**Table of Tables**

Table 7-1: Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria ..... 14



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents a Preliminary Examination and Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”) Screening for a proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch and associated works at Mill Brae, Stranorlar within the I County of Donegal. The screening is done by reference to the criteria set out in Annex III of the EU Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (“the EIA Directive”) and as transposed into Irish law by Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended. EIA Screening is the stage which ascertains whether there is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development in which event EIA is required under the EIA Directive. It should be noted that the screening procedure should ensure that an EIA is only required for projects likely to have significant effects on the environment.

This preliminary examination and EIA Screening report has been done by TOBIN Consulting Engineers and it takes due notice of the following regulations and guidance documents:

- Planning and Development Acts and Regulations 2000 – 2021;
- EU Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (the EIA Directive);
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (August 2018) Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on Carrying out EIA (the 2018 Guidelines);
- Environmental Protection Agency (Draft - August 2017) Revised Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (the Draft EPA Guidelines);
- European Commission (2017) Environmental Impact assessment of Projects, Guidance on Screening (the EC 2017 Guidance);
- Guidelines issued by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (August 2018); and
- Office of the Planning Regulator (“OPR”) Practice Note PN02 on Environmental Impact Assessment Screening (June 2021).

## 2.0 REGULATORY CONTEXT

The EIA Directive is European Policy on the environment and is based on the precautionary principle, requiring that effects on the environment are considered as early as possible during planning and decision-making processes.

The EIA Directive is set out under in EU Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by 2014/52/EU (“the EIA Directive”). Annex I lists developments for which EIA is mandatory and Annex II lists projects which require a determination of their likely significant effects. Criteria to determine whether a sub-threshold development should be subject to an EIA is set out in Annex III.

These annexes are broadly transposed into Irish legislation under a variety of Acts and Regulations. For the purpose of the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development, the relevant legislation includes Part 10 of and Schedules 5 – 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

The criteria to determine whether a sub-threshold development should be subject to an EIA are set out under Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. Schedule 7A lists information to be provided for the purpose of an EIA Screening. Under Article 120 of the 2001 Planning and Development Regulations, where a Local Authority proposes to carry out a sub threshold development, the Local Authority must carry out a preliminary examination of, at least, the nature, size or location of the development.

Where the Local Authority concludes based on that preliminary examination that –

- (i) there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it must conclude that any EIA is not required; or
- (ii) if it concludes instead that there is significant and realistic doubt in regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development it must carry out a screening for EIA; or, finally
- (iii) where it concludes that there is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development it must at that point conclude that development would be likely to have such effects and prepare or cause to be prepared an EIAR in respect of the development.

In the present case the conclusion at preliminary examination stage was as per (ii) above.

The EIA Directive states that in order to ensure a high level of protection of the environment and human health, screening procedures should take account of the impact of the whole project in question, including where relevant, its subsurface and underground, during the construction, operational and where relevant demolition phase. When determining whether significant effects on the environment are likely to be caused by a project, the competent authority should identify the most relevant criteria to be considered and should take into account information that could be available following other assessments required by EU legislation in order to apply the screening procedure effectively and transparently.

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### 3.0 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION CONCLUSION

As already referred to in Section 2.0 above the conclusion following preliminary examination in accordance with Article 120(1)(a) of the 2001 Regulations as amended was that there was significant and realistic doubt in regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and so it was necessary to proceed with screening for EIA and in that regard to prepare the information specified in Schedule 7A of the Regulations for the purposes of a screening determination.

## 4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND EXISTING SITE

The location of the proposed development is at Millbrae, Stranorlar in the County of Donegal - partly on lands that are within the existing Finn Valley complex and partly on adjoining lands. The location and layout of the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch can be viewed in Figures 4-1 to 4-3 below.

Specifically, the proposed development involves the:

- Upgrade of existing grass sports pitch through the construction of multi-purpose all-weather sports pitch approx. 150m x 106m in size
- Construction of perimeter embankment/flood berm
- Provision of grassed walking/running track on raised embankment/flood berm, ranging in width between 7 and 3 metres
- Provision of 5m clear unobstructed run off area around GAA and rugby pitches, 3m wide surrounding soccer pitches
- Construction of 6 no. dugouts
- Erection of 1.2m high mesh panel perimeter fencing
- Construction of 6 no. 1.2m wide pedestrian gates and 1 no. 4m wide vehicular gate to allow pitch access/egress with demountable flood barrier
- Cleaning area for cleaning of boots placed at pedestrian entrances to prevent rubber crumb leaving play areas
- Installation of 6 no. flood light columns approx. 20m high at 500 Lux
- Attachment of ball stop netting with heights varying between 10 and 16 metres high
- Recesses in pitch fencing for storage of goal posts
- Removal and relocation of existing discus and hammer throw cage approx. 30m northwest of the proposed pitch location
- Decommissioning, removal, and relocation of existing drainage
- Connection to existing on site substation
- Relocation of existing underground 10kV lines
- All associated site works including replacement landscaping

The proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch will be located within an existing sports ground at Finn Valley Centre, Millbrae, Stranorlar, County Donegal. The site currently comprises of a conventional grass sports pitch and is located immediately south of an existing All-Weather running track. The southern perimeter of the existing grass sports pitch is marked by a bank that falls to a lower level, approximately 15m OD (Malin), where an adjoining grade pitch is located.

The surrounding environment comprises wet grasslands to the south and east with residential and commercial developments to the north and west of the development site. Millbrae runs along the eastern boundary of the site and provides existing access to the Finn Valley Centre. The River Finn is located south of the proposed development site boundary. The proposed development will overlap with the boundary of the River Finn SAC.

Users of the synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development will make use of the existing Finn Valley Centre car park and as such the proposed development will not include any changes to existing access or carparking. It is also proposed that the car park located within the adjacent Stranorlar Gaelscoil will be available for use during busier periods of activity.

Existing drainage infrastructure will be decommissioned, removed or relocated away from the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch as part of the proposed works. A slotted pipe drain beneath the existing pitches will be removed and replaced with proposed subsurface

drainage and an existing drainage ditch will be relocated around the proposed pitch via a new culvert.

Pitch construction allows for stormwater to permeate vertically through the pitch where it will be collected by a series of French drains, which will be designed to convey surface water to a soakaway/attenuation unit beneath the pitch. The French drains will be wrapped in geotextile to prevent the ingress of debris such as soil and rubber crumb entering the surface water drainage system. A connection to existing storm water infrastructure is proposed to manage extreme flood events.

It is planned to raise the pitch area to match the level of the existing running track. This will involve raising the existing levels by between 0.1m to 2.5m across the site. It is also proposed to form a raised flood protection berm around the pitch area in order to maintain dry conditions for the synthetic surface year-round in light of flood risk from the River Finn. The level of the berm is to be a minimum of 18.3m OD (Malin) in all areas surrounding the pitch.

The proposed development will involve the removal and relocation of an existing discus and hammer throw cage will be removed and a new cage installed approximately 30m north-west of the proposed development location. The cage will include a concrete slab base and mesh metal fencing.

In agreement with ESB Networks, the proposed development will involve the relocation of existing underground 10kV lines around the northern and western development site boundaries.

All disturbed lands will be fully reinstated following completion of the construction works. Approximately 220m of new hedgerow will be planted along the southern boundary of the proposed development site. Lands located immediately west of the proposed all-weather pitch will be graded and reseeded to create an amenity grassland and an area for discus/hammer throw sports. Lands located to the south of the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development will remain as existing and used as a conventional grassed sport pitch.

On completion, the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development will function as a Multi-Purpose All-Weather sports pitch. The new pitch will be utilised in line with the Finn Valleys Centre existing opening hours (9am-9pm). The life span of an All-Weather pitch is typically 20-25 years. After this stage there may be a requirement to replace the synthetic carpet and rubber crumb infill.

It is anticipated that the proposed construction works will commence Q1 2023 and last for an approximate duration of 8 months.

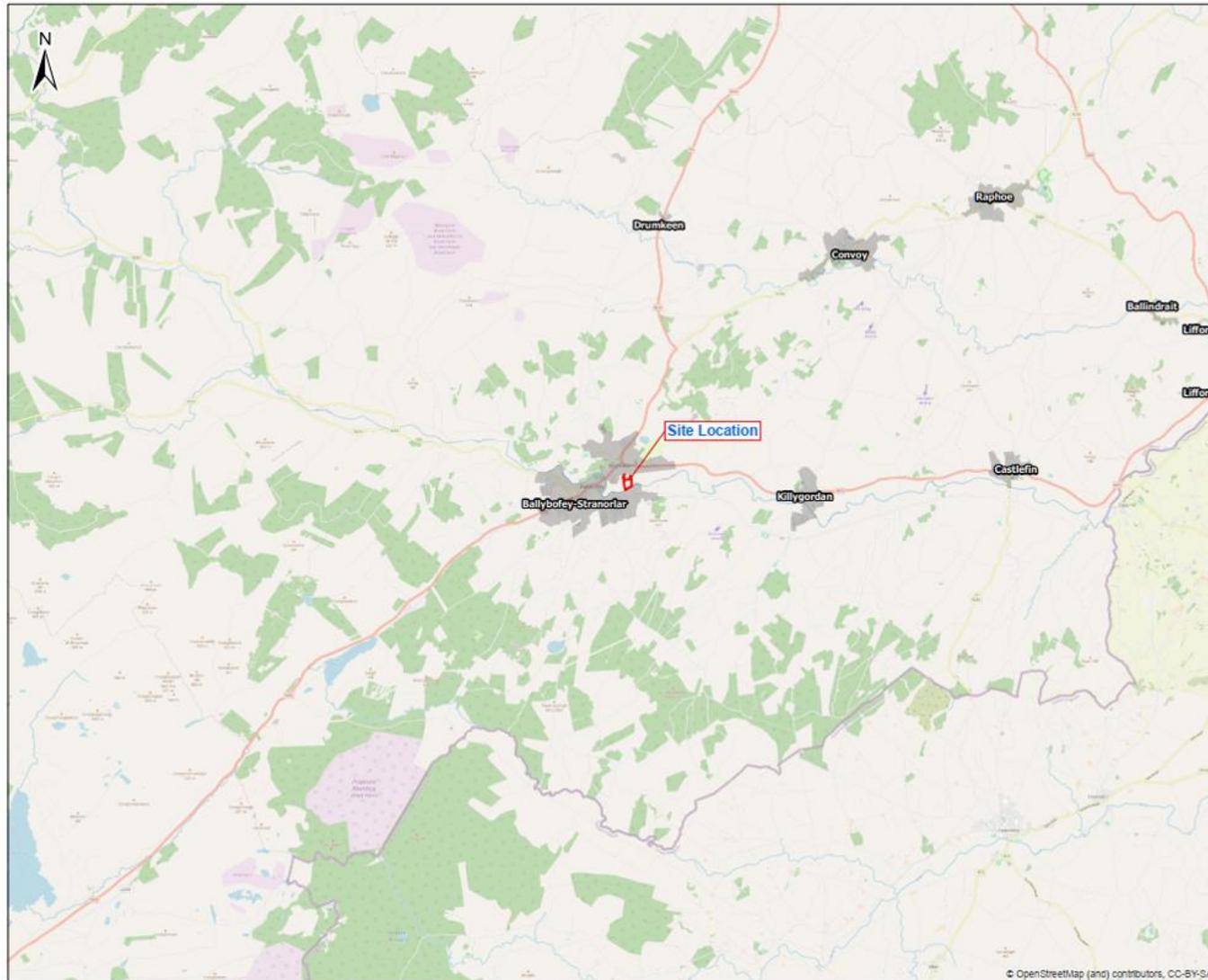


Figure 4-1: Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project - Regional Site Location Map



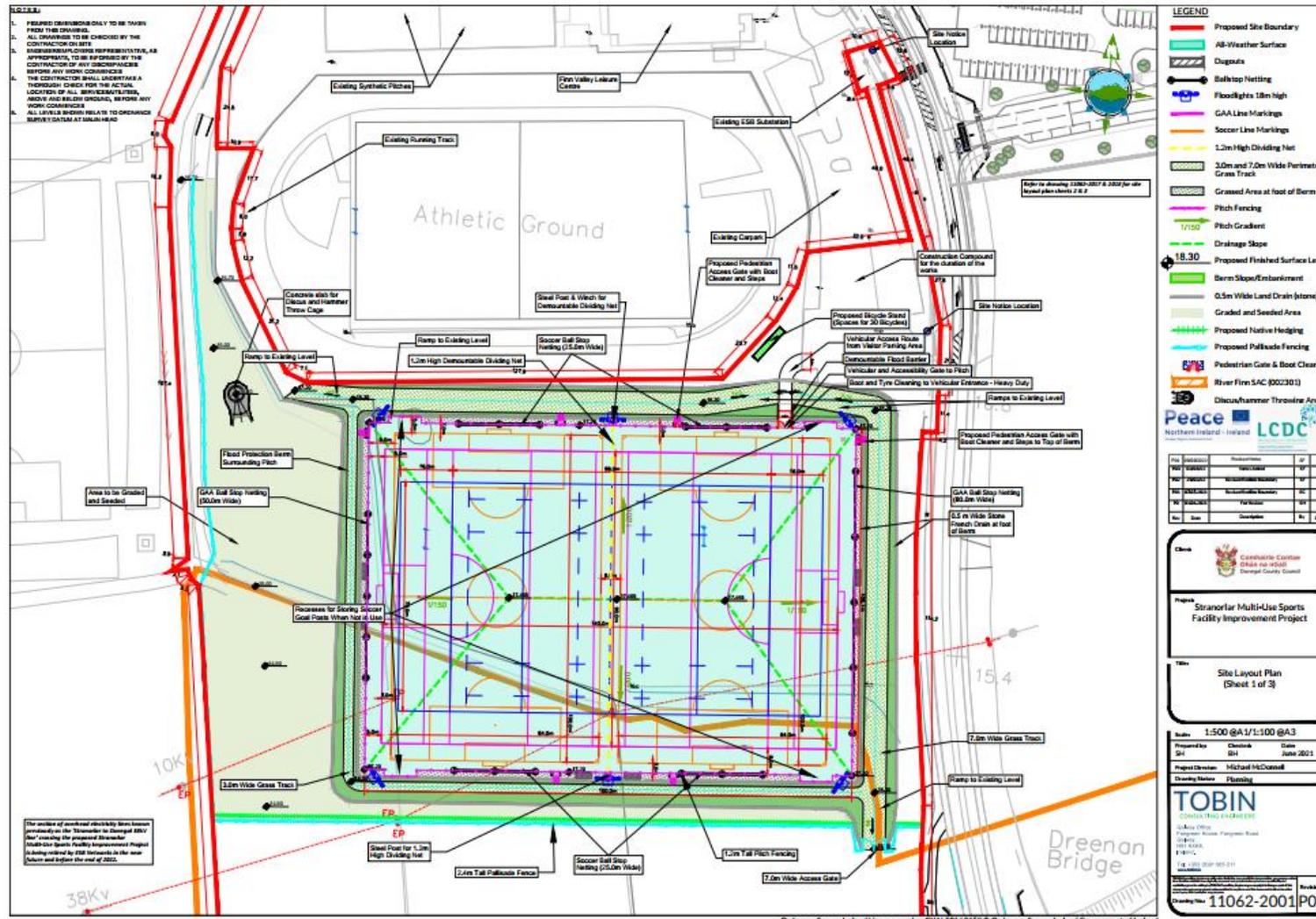


Figure 4-3: Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project - Site Layout Plan

## 5.0 SCHEDULE 5 PROJECT TYPE APPLICABILITY

This section considers the full proposed construction of a synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch with respect to Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

The proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development is located in an urban environment and involves the upgrade of an existing pitch through the construction of a new all-weather pitch community facility. The proposed development does not meet or exceed Schedule 5 Part 1 or Part 2 thresholds or criteria, and as such, EIA is not mandatory.

A consideration of sub-threshold has been carried out and as per the ruling of the European Court<sup>1</sup>, it is recognised that the EIA Directive has a *'wide scope and a broad purpose'* when determining if EIA is required. A review of Part 1 confirms that there are no applicable Classes, hence the proposed development is not considered a Part 1 sub-threshold development. Part 2 Class 10 (b) Infrastructure Projects and in particular, (iv) Urban development is of relevance. This Class is applicable to urban development *"which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere."*

The proposed development is not located within a business district, *"a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use"*, but it could be classed under *"other parts of a built-up area"*. The size of the proposed site however is approximately 3.55 hectares and therefore is substantially less than the applicable threshold of 10 hectares.

Class 15 should also be noted as this is applicable to "any project listed in this Part which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant class of development, but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.

On review, the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development is for an upgrade of an existing playing pitch through the construction of a new multi-purpose sports community facility within the urban environment. Recognising the requirement to apply a 'wide scope' it is considered the proposed development should be subject to a sub-threshold development as it is considered to fall within the project meaning of Part 2 Class 10 (b) (iv). An EIA Screening determination is required for sub-threshold developments as per the 2001 Regulations, as amended and a screening assessment is provided in Section 5 of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment August 2018, August 2018

## 6.0 INFORMATION PROVIDED FOR EIA (SCHEDULE 7A & 7 OF THE REGULATIONS)

Under Schedule 7A of the Regulations, as amended, the following information is to be provided by the applicant or development for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for Environmental Impact Assessment:

1. A description of the proposed development, including in particular—
  - A description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works, and
  - 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—
  - the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant, and
  - the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.
4. The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7, which is set out below.

Under schedule 7 of the regulations, as amended, the following criteria should be used for determining whether development listed in part 2 of schedule 5 should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment:

1. Characteristics of proposed development - The characteristics of proposed development, in particular—
  - the size and design of the whole of the proposed development,
  - cumulation with other existing development 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,
  - the nature of any associated demolition works,
  - the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity,
  - the production of waste,
  - pollution and nuisances,
  - 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, and
  - the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).
2. Location of proposed development - The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, with particular regard to—
  - the existing and approved land use,

- the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,
  - 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;
    - (vii) densely populated areas;
    - (viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.
3. Types and characteristics of potential impacts - The likely significant effects on the environment of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in paragraph (b)(i)(I) to (V) of the definition of 'environmental impact assessment report' in section 171A of the Act, taking into account—
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
  - the nature of the impact,
  - the transboundary nature of the impact,
  - the intensity and complexity of the impact,
  - the probability of the impact,
  - the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact
  - 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
  - the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

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## 7.0 EIA SCREENING

This section provides an EIA Screening against the appropriate criteria as established by the EIA Directive Annex III and as transposed into Irish law by Schedule 7 of the 2001 Regulations, as amended.

It should be noted that under the EIA Directive, the EIA Screening process balances two objectives, in determining if a project listed in Annex II is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, therefore be made subject to an assessment of its effects on the environment; and it should ensure that EIA is only carried out for those projects for which it is thought that a significant impact on the environment is possible .

Table 7.1 below screens the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development against the Schedule 7 criteria ).

Table 7-1: Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria

Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria	
1. Characteristics of project	Consideration of the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development
<p>The characteristics of projects be considered, with particular, regard to: -</p> <p>a) the size and design of the whole project;</p> <p>b) cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects</p> <p>c) the nature of any associated demolition works</p> <p>d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;</p> <p>e) the production of waste;</p> <p>f) pollution and nuisances;</p> <p>g) the risk of major accidents having regard in particular to substances or technologies used and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge;</p> <p>h) the risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution).</p>	<p>There is no likelihood of significant environmental effects arising from the proposed development having regard to the characteristics of the project, as set out below:</p> <p>The project is not significant in terms of design or size. The proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development will be wholly contained within the existing site boundary of Finn Valley Centre and will consist of an upgrade of an existing playing pitch through the construction of a new synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch. In addition, the proposed development will involve the construction of a raised embankment/flood berm and provision of a grassed running/walking track on top, installation of dug outs, goal storage, perimeter fencing, ball stop netting, flood lighting, pedestrian and vehicle access with demountable flood barrier and boot cleaning area. The proposed development will involve the removal and relocation of an existing discus and hammer throw cage. Lands located to the south of the proposed all-weather pitch will be left undisturbed and will continued to be used as grassed sports pitches. Associated works will include a connection to an existing substation and relocation of existing 10kV line, construction of new drainage arrangements and decommissioning of existing redundant drainage, replanting and reseeding to reinstate landscaping on site.</p> <p>A review of planning applications within 500 metres of the site for the years 2017 – 2021 indicates that there are no significant development proposals within the vicinity of the site that could act in cumulation with the project. In addition, the small-scale nature and operation of the proposed development is unlikely give rise to any significant cumulative environmental effects.</p> <p>The project will not involve the demolition of any existing structures other than excavation and associated removal of soil. The existing topsoil will be removed by excavation prior to the laying of the new substrates and drainage. Approximately 4000m<sup>3</sup> of soil will be removed and temporarily stored on site and subsequently reused onsite in the construction of the embankments.</p> <p>The removal of existing hedge rows will result in no net loss as the proposed development involves replacement planting. All disturbed lands will be fully reinstated following completion of the construction</p>

Table 7-1: Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria

Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria
<p>works. Approximately 220m of new hedgerow will be planted along the southern boundary of the proposed development. Lands located immediately west of the proposed all-weather pitch will be graded and reseeded to create amenity grassland and an area for the planned relocation of the discuss/hammer throw sports area.</p> <p>Existing drainage infrastructure will be decommissioned, removed, or relocated away from the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch as part of the proposed works. A slotted pipe drain beneath the existing pitches will be removed and replaced with proposed subsurface drainage and an existing drainage ditch will be relocated around the proposed pitch via a new culvert.</p> <p>Electricity connection works will be carried out to connect the proposed floodlights to an existing substation located approximately 95m northwards within the same site. The proposed development does not involve additional laying of electricity cables and excavation works other for the purpose of connection. In addition, an existing underground 10kV line will be relocated around the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch as part of the proposed works.</p> <p>During construction, there will be no elements of the proposed development that make use of natural resources other than the proposed construction of embankments/flood berm. Approximately 4,000m<sup>3</sup> of soil will be removed and temporarily stored on site and subsequently reused onsite in the construction of the embankments. Approximately 20,500m<sup>3</sup> of filling material will be required to for the proposed finished surface levels. There will be no use of natural resources during the operation of the facility. All waste produced including soil removal will be managed in accordance with approved removal practices. Having regard to the use of soil for the construction of embankments, these works are of scale that are not likely to have a significant environmental impact.</p> <p>The proposed development during construction and operation will not result in significant pollution or nuisance. The proposed works will generate noise during construction from general building works. The permissible hours of operation of a building site within Donegal County Council are Monday to Friday 07.00 – 18.00, and Saturday 08.00 – 14.00, with no noisy work permissible on Sundays or bank holidays. The construction works will be subject to applicable standards including BS 5228:2009 and A1:2014 “Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites” and Donegal County Council Air Quality Monitoring and Noise Control Unit. Other potential construction or operational phased pollution or</p>

Table 7-1: Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria

Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria	
	<p>nuisance include noise, visual intrusion, lighting, and traffic. The new pitch will be utilised in line with the Finn Valleys Centres existing opening hours (9am-9pm) and floodlighting will be operation only when pitches are actively in use. It is not anticipated that the scale of operations involved either at construction or operation will generate significant visual intrusion, lighting, or increased traffic.</p> <p>The proposed development will not result in a risk of major accidents and/or disasters including those caused by climate change or flooding. The proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development will be wholly contained within the existing site boundary of Finn Valley Centre and will involve works small scale in nature that are not likely to have a significant impact on the surrounding environment.</p> <p>Regarding climate change, the proposed development has been designed to be resilient against flooding through the construction of a flood berm/raised embankment and demountable flood barrier which will provide flood protection for a 1 in 1000-year flood event. The berm will surround the proposed pitch on all sides and has been incorporated into the site layout to protect the proposed facility from flooding and to prevent rubber crumb from the synthetic pitch leaving the site in the event of a flood event. As such, the design and operation of the proposed development is not likely to result in water contamination. There are no operations on site during construction or operation that could result the generation of air pollution.</p> <p>The proposed development is not a COMAH site (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) nor is the site location near a nuclear installation.</p>
2. The Location of Project	Consideration of the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development
<p>The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be considered, with particular regard to: -</p> <p>a) the existing and approved land use;</p>	<p>In consideration of the location of the project, there are no anticipated significant environmental effects arising with regards to:</p> <p>The proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development will be wholly contained within the existing site boundary of Finn Valley Centre and will consist of an upgrade to an existing playing pitch through the</p>

Table 7-1: Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria

Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria	
<p>b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground</p> <p>c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas: -</p> <p>i. wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;</p> <p>ii. coastal zones and the marine environment;</p> <p>iii. mountain and forest areas;</p> <p>iv. nature reserves and parks;</p> <p>(v) areas classified or protected under Member States' national legislation; special protection Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC;</p> <p>(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation have already been exceeded and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;</p> <p>(vii) densely populated areas</p>	<p>construction of a new multi-purpose all-weather pitch. The new pitch will be utilised in line with the Finn Valleys Centres existing opening hours (9am-9pm).</p> <p>The project is not likely to have a significant impact on the relative abundance, availability, quality, or regenerative capacity of natural resources. The proposed development will be provided on an area already in use as a grassed playing pitch. The project therefor will include the removal of existing grass and soil. All disturbed lands will be fully reinstated following completion of the construction works. Approximately 220m of new hedgerow will be planted along the southern boundary of the proposed development. Lands located immediately west of the proposed all-weather pitch will be graded and reseeded to create amenity grassland and an area for the planned relocation of the discuss/hammer throw sports area. Lands located to the south of the proposed all-weather pitch will be left undisturbed and will continued to be used as grassed sports pitches. There is no requirement for additional land-take and in consideration of the size and scale of the proposed pitch at 150m x 106m in size, approximately 16,000 m<sup>2</sup>, there will be no impact on the abundance, availability, and quality of land within the environs of the proposed facility.</p> <p>The River Finn (EPA_Code: 01F01), which flows in an easterly direction, is located south of the proposed development site boundary. The watercourse forms part of the River Finn SAC (002301) at this location. Approximately 10460m<sup>2</sup> of the proposed development will overlap with the boundary of the River Finn SAC. There will be no impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment. The proposed development currently sits within the floodplain of the River Finn and for this reason, the design of the proposed development has incorporated flood prevention and protection measures to prevent any incidence of rubber crumb entering the surrounding water course. The proposed development is not situated within a coastal zone, mountain, forest or nature reserve and there are no likely direct or indirect effects arising from the proposed development on the natural environment.</p> <p>A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken for the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch. However, following the application of the detailed mitigation measures, potential adverse effects will be avoided or reduced. Consequently, it is determined that there will be no risk of adverse effects on the qualifying interests or on overall site integrity, nor in the attainment of their specific conservation objectives for the River Finn SAC and River Foyle and Tributaries SAC. In addition, the potential link between the proposed development and the Finn SAC and River Foyle and Tributaries SAC, no adverse effect on the</p>

Table 7-1: Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria

Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria	
(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.	<p>integrity of any European sites during development and operation of the proposed development is anticipated alone or in-combination with any other plans or projects.</p> <p>The River Finn runs south of the site. The proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development site is located within the Foyle Water Framework Catchment (ID_01) and within the Finn Donegal Sub Catchment SC_030 (ID_01-2) and River Sub Basin (O60). Stranorlar and nearby Ballybofey are listed as the largest urban centres in Foyle catchment. In 2018 the ecological status or potential of the Finn Donegal River Sub Basin is reported as poor which shows a decline in previous reporting, which showed status as moderate in 2015.</p> <p>Existing drainage infrastructure on site will be decommissioned and relocated away from the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch as part of the proposed works. A slotted pipe drain beneath the existing pitches will be removed and replaced with the proposed subsurface drainage. The existing watercourse is to be picked-up at a new location to the west of the proposed pitch surface and re-routed around the proposed pitch via a new culvert. The size of the diverted watercourse culvert will be determined following catchment analysis and it is intended that the diverted watercourse will discharge back to its original course via a new manhole before exiting the site. As a result, the existing culvert will be made redundant and will be removed as part of the contract works.</p> <p>The proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch construction will allow for stormwater to permeate vertically through the pitch where it will be collected by a series of French drains, which will be designed to convey surface water to a soakaway/attenuation unit beneath the pitch. The French drains will be wrapped in geotextile to prevent the ingress of debris such as soil and rubber crumb entering the surface water drainage system. Prior to outfall to the soakaway, it is proposed that surface water will be directed through a catchpit manhole and bypass interceptor. These measures are intended to prevent any pollutants such as light oils associated with maintenance vehicles entering the stone soakaway and infiltrating to groundwater. The measures will also prevent the loss of capacity of the soakaway attributed to floatable debris or sediments entering the stone soakaway. A connection to existing storm water infrastructure is proposed to manage extreme flood events.</p> <p>A review of Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study maps (CFRAMS) confirms that the site is located within the river flood extent of the Finn River. At this location a recurring flood event has been</p>



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3. Types and characteristics of the potential impact	Consideration of the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development
<p>The likely significant effects on the environment of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in paragraph (b) (i) (I) to (V) of the definition of 'environmental impact assessment report' in section 171A of the Act, taking into account:</p> <p>a) the magnitude and special extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);</p> <p>b) the nature of the impact;</p> <p>c) the trans frontier nature of the impact;</p> <p>d) the magnitude intensity and complexity of the impact;</p> <p>e) the probability of the impact;</p> <p>f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;</p> <p>g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects;</p>	<p>There are no anticipated likely significant environmental effects arising from the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development, taking the following into account:</p> <p>The magnitude and spatial extent of impacts associated with the proposed development are considered negligible. The proposed development will involve the upgrade of an existing playing pitch for the provision of improved sports facilities within an existing sports complex. The proposed development has been designed to mitigate against water contamination and will be protected against future flood events through the construction of a flood berm with demountable flood barrier and the construction of drainage arrangements to prevent any pitch material entering the watercourse.</p> <p>The nature of impacts during construction will be temporary in that on site construction work, noise, dust and traffic, will have a temporary effect on existing on-site uses and surrounding uses. During operation, existing facilities are in place to manage car parking with additional plans in place to make use of an adjacent school for parking at times of increased activity. The proposed development does not involve a change to the hours of operation of the existing Finn Valley Centre and additional lighting for pitches will be in use only when pitches are in use. The project when complete will result in a positive long-term effect through the provision of improved sports and recreational facilities.</p> <p>The project will not result in transboundary impacts.</p> <p>As set out above, impacts arising during construction will be temporary and managed through best practice construction guidelines with respect of excavation, soil removal, dust, traffic and lighting. Waste generated during the construction process will be controlled through measures adopted in a waste management plan.</p> <p>Noise, lighting and traffic generated from the use of the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch is not considered to be out of character with the existing use of the Finn Valley Centre and existing playing pitches</p>

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Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria	
h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact	<p>that will form part of the proposed development upgrade. As set out, external lighting proposals include the installation of flood lighting with lux levels of 500. Flood lighting will only be in use when pitches are in use.</p> <p>As the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development is located within a floodplain, mitigation against flooding has been designed into the proposed development to protect the facilities against flooding and to prevent crumb transfer for the synthetic pitch material into any adjacent water bodies. Flood prevention measures have been designed to a 1 in 1000-year flood even which is described by the OPW as a “low probability” event.</p> <p>Regarding the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of impacts, it should be noted that no significant impacts are anticipated with respect to construction or operation of the facility. Impacts associated with construction are expected to last approximately 12 months, during standard and regularised construction hours of operation. Impacts associated with operation, such as lighting, noise and traffic will be in line with the current operating hours of the Finn Valley Centre.</p> <p>The Donegal County Council planning databases was searched to determine if any nearby plans or projects were likely to result in potentially significant cumulative impacts. The most notable approved or planned developments are located adjacent to the Finn Valley Centre directly. To the east, Reg. Ref.: 17/50788 provides for Circa 6600 capacity stadium and further beyond application Reg. Ref.: 17/50657 provides for extension of facilities at Ballybofey/Stranorlar Wastewater Treatment Plant. East of the site, permission has been granted for a new school (Reg. Ref.: 17/50443). Lastly, application Reg. Ref.: 20/51635 located on the River Finn, seeks to upgrade below ground rising main. An NIS accompanies this application and a decision on the proposed development has not yet been issued. Lastly, a signalised pedestrian crossing (Pelican) extending from the Scoil Mhuire National School development to the Finn Valley Centre site granted under PL 1160175 is currently under construction in agreement with the school and local authority.</p> <p>Therefore, there are no anticipated cumulative impacts arising from the proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development in combination with existing or approved projects.</p>

*Table 7-1: Stranorlar Multi-Use Sports Facility Improvement Project Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria*

Screening against Schedule 7 Criteria
With respect to the possibility of effectively reducing the impact the design of the project has been optimised to ensure that environmental impacts are minimised as much as possible. These impacts are not considered significant and do not result in a requirement for EIA.

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## 8.0 EIA SCREENING DETERMINATION

The proposed synthetic multi-sport all-weather pitch development does not meet or exceed Schedule 5 Part 1 or Part 2 thresholds and criteria, and as such, EIA is not mandatory. The proposed development is considered a sub-threshold project under Part 2 Class 10 (b) (iv) Urban Development, as the development is for the redevelopment of a sub-ten-hectare site within the built-up area. Following preliminary examination as above, a screening determination was required for the development.

An EIA screening has been carried out considering the nature of the proposed development, its size and location having due regard to the criteria listed in Schedule 7 of the 2001 Regulations and the relevant information listed in Schedule 7A. Having regard to same, it is determined that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and that an EIA is not therefore required. The main reasons and considerations with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Schedule 7 of the 2001 Regulations on which the determination is based are included in Section 7.0 above.

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