



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council

**Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe**
Our Rural
Future



**An Ciste um Athghiniúint
agus Forbairt Tuaithe**
Rural Regeneration and
Development Fund



Project Ireland 2040
Building Ireland's Future



**An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail**
Department of Rural and
Community Development

EIA Screening

Step 1 (non-statutory) – Understanding the Proposal

‘Ramelton Re-Imagined’ – A Restorative & Transformational Historic Town Centre Public Realm Scheme

| Establishing if the proposal is a ‘ <i>sub-threshold development</i> ’: | |
|---|--|
| File Reference No: | Ramelton Re-Imagined |
| Development Summary: | <p>The proposed Ramelton Re-Imagined Part 8 scheme for the site provides for the development of a Restorative & Transformational Historic Town Centre Public Realm scheme. The proposed works in question include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construction of a new public realm environment at Gamble’s Square inclusive of new materials, pavements and surfacing together with modified footpaths, new crossing arrangements, new public seating and removable bollards delivering an enhanced capacity for civic events and social purpose; ▪ Construction of a new public realm environment at the Market Cross inclusive of a new shared surface, modified junction alignment and the recreation of a civic meeting place inclusive of public seating area with a feature sculpture piece; ▪ Construction of a new multi-user public park environment at ‘the Bing’ to include a public garden and events space, children’s play park, sensory and adventure trail incorporating new levels and topography to ensure all abilities access and opportunities for rest, play and gathering; ▪ Construction of a new public realm environment at Market Square including a new paved shared surface and street furniture; ▪ Construction of a new public realm environment at the Quays with re-prioritisation for pedestrian priority use through the introduction of new surface materials and street furniture; and |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All associated ancillary works to include new and improved surface and footpath upgrades, regrading of existing profiles, enhancements to public lighting, drainage and utilities, connection to services, landscaping, development related signage & public art within the overall development area and including Shore Rd, Castle Street and Bridge Street. <p>All works shall be located in the town centre of Ramelton within the townland of Ramelton in the Letterkenny & Milford Municipal District.</p> |
| Was a Screening Determination carried out under Section 176A-C? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, no further action required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, Proceed to Part A |
| A. Schedule 5 Part 1 - Does the development comprise a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 1 , of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)? (Tick as appropriate) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, specify class <u> [insert here] </u> | EIA is mandatory No Screening required |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | Proceed to Part B |
| B. Schedule 5 Part 2 - Does the development comprise a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 2 , of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and does it meet/exceed the thresholds? (Tick as appropriate) | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 2 <i>Please refer to attached EIA Screening Report prepared by BDP.</i> | <u>No Screening required</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes the project is listed in Schedule 5, Part 2 and meets/exceeds the threshold, specify class (including threshold): <u> [specify class & threshold here] </u> | EIA is mandatory No Screening required |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes the project is of a type listed but is <i>sub-threshold</i> . | Proceed to Part C |

**Signature and Date of
Recommending Officer:**

Ruth O'Leary

26th January 2022

**Signature and Date of the
Decision Maker:**



26th January 2022

**Appendix to EIA Screening Report and
Determination in respect of the
Ramelton Re-Imagined – A Restorative &
Transformational Historic Town Centre Public
Realm Scheme**

Ramelton Public Realm Improvement Works

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

FINAL

January 2022

BDP.

| | Revision A | Revision B | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--|--|
| Date | 14/01/2022 | 24/01/2022 | | |
| Project Reference | P3001815 | P3001815 | | |
| Prepared by | HG | HG | | |
| Checked by | JB | JB | | |
| Comment | Draft issue to DCC | Final issue to DCC | | |

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Building Design Partnership (BDP) for Donegal County Council ('the Applicant') to consider the need for Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') for the proposed public realm improvement works ('Proposed Development') in Ramelton's historic town centre. This report provides an overview of the relevant EIA process and screening considerations.
- 1.2 The screening report follows the framework set by the EU Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU), which is carried down into Irish legislation in the form of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). Further guidance documents published by the European Commission, Government of Ireland and Environmental Protection Agency have informed the assessment and are referenced in section 4 of this report.
- 1.3 Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) stipulates the required information for inclusion in an EIA Screening Report. Table 1.1 identifies where the specified information can be found.

| Table 1.1 Location of Information | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations | Location of information |
| 1) a description of the development, including in particular— | |
| (i) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works; | Section 3 and Table 5.1 |
| (ii) a description of the location of the proposed development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected; | Section 2 and Table 5.1 |
| 2) a description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development; | Table 5.1 |
| 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 - | Table 5.1 |
| (i) the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant; and | Table 5.1 |
| (ii) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity; and | Table 5.1 |
| 4) The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1-3 shall take into account where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7. | Sections 2, 3 and Table 5.1 |

- 1.4 The remainder of this report has the following structure:

- **Section 2: Existing Site** – provides a description of the site and the surrounding area.
- **Section 3: Proposed Development** – provides description of the proposed development.
- **Section 4: EIA thresholds and criteria** – provides an overview of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations that have been considered in this screening report.
- **Section 5: Screening Review** – assesses the impacts of the proposed development concerning the criteria set out in Section 4.
- **Section 6: Conclusion** – summarises the EIA Screening Assessment of the proposed development.

2. Existing Site

Site Context

- 2.1 The Site includes various areas of public realm in the historic town of Ramelton in County Donegal, Ireland, totalling 1.72 hectares (as shown in Figure 2.1). The town of Ramelton is located at the mouth of the River Lennon on the western shores of Lough Swilly estuary in County Donegal. Ramelton is a small commercial centre with a population of approximately 1200 people. The town provides shopping and social amenities to communities in the surrounding area.
- 2.2 The town is one of the five designated Heritage Towns in County Donegal and is identified in the Donegal County Council (DCC) Development Plan 2018-2024 (May, 2018) as a Layer 2B Strategic Town with the potential to perform special economic functions due to its significant built heritage resources. The DCC Development Plan identifies 34 Protected Structures of Regional and Local significance within the historic town of Ramelton.
- 2.3 A large part of the Site is located within the Zone of Notification (ZoN) / Zone of Archaeological Potential (ZAP) for the historic town of Ramelton. The Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI) records a further two archaeological sites, one for the previous site of Ramelton castle adjacent to the Site boundary at the Quays, and one within the Site at Market Cross for the associated Bawn.
- 2.4 The town is categorised as an urban area in the DCC Development Plan and the landscape character of the majority of the Site is identified as an area of high scenic amenity. This denotes landscapes of significant aesthetic, cultural, heritage and environmental quality that are unique to their locality and are a fundamental element of the landscape and identity of County Donegal.
- 2.5 The Site itself is largely built public realm with limited ecological value. However, the body of water adjacent to the Site has the following designations:
- Lough Swilly Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
 - Lough Swilly Special Protection Area (SAP);
 - Lough Swilly Proposed Natural Heritage Area; and
 - River Lennon Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 2.6 The River Lennon flows through the town adjacent to the Site and outfalls to the expansive Lough Swilly estuary. The River Lennon is recognised as one of the main rivers of the Lough Swilly SAC. Species of qualifying interest at the SAC include freshwater pearl mussel, Atlantic salmon, otter and slender naiad. In addition, the SPA is of interest for a number of wetland and water bird species including the Whooper Swan. The wider Lough Swilly SPA has nationally important populations of 18 wintering water bird species.

Site Description

- 2.7 Given the nature of the public realm proposals, the Site covers various parcels of land connected in a circular route from Gamble's Square in the west of the town centre, through Shore Road to the Bing, Market Square and the Quays in the east, and looping back along Castle Street to Market Cross in the south. As identified in Figure 2.1, with the exception of the Bing, the Site excludes the buildings, structures and land located in the centre of the circular site area. The five public realm areas within the Site are described in further detail below.

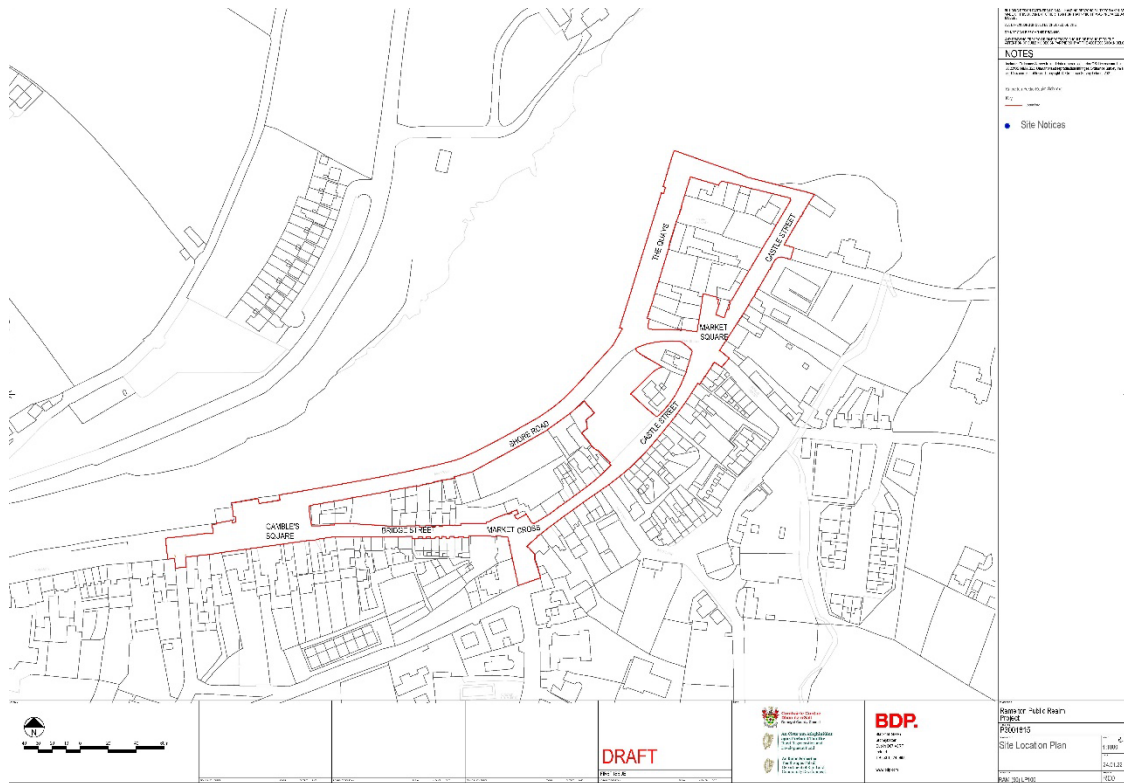


Figure 2.1 Site Location Plan

Gamble's Square and The Mall

2.8 Gamble's Square is the focal point of the Historic Town centre on entry to Ramelton. Architecturally, the Square has maintained its impressive Georgian character however, in the 20th century the pedestrian function of its original design was lost to vehicular priority. The dominance of the road detracts from the unique heritage and river-side setting of this gateway and arrival point, effectively disguising it to would-be visitors and investors. There is limited opportunity for sitting and dwelling, and the broad width of the road combined with the narrow footpaths in this area do not provide a safe pedestrian experience. Therefore, whilst the historic character of the town is retained in some aspects of its appearance, Gamble's Square and the adjacent street at The Mall are ineffective and do not maximise the potential opportunities for the Site.

The 'Bing' Park

2.9 In its current state the Bing park serves as an underused green space with challenging site levels. The Bing park landscape design is simplistic with grass, tarmac path and a number of trees to the north and south. The northern part of the Bing park has two access routes which lead down to an unattractive railing-enclosed car park on Shore Road.

Market Square

2.10 The public realm at Market Square lacks definition and separation from the carriageway, with ground surface tarmac creating an uneven, neglected appearance. The square is partly used for car parking, which encroaches on public space due to the lack of road markings and definition of the public realm.

The Quays

2.11 The Quays, where Ramelton Castle once stood, is one of the town's most ambient spaces. Flanked by the River Lennon to the north and east and historic industrial buildings to the south, the setting attracts many people to stop for a while and take in the views. However, at present the historic Quays are dominated by parked cars and unattractive boundary treatments including yellow railings and road guards. Pedestrian flows are unclear and the presence of the road bumper at the edge of the Quay does not create a sense of pedestrian safety. Historic Sandstone edging is intact in places offering a glimpse of older Quay materials, however, the majority of the space comprises a top layer

of tarmac and gravel surfacing. In the north of the Quays lies an area of unattractive, neglected green space littered with rocks, tyres and gravel, which may have been used as improvised flood defences in the past.

Market Cross

- 2.12 At present, Market Cross retains its historic architectural integrity, however, as a public space it is uninviting for pedestrians. The footpaths are narrow and there is no safe crossing points, whilst the central space to the north has uneven levels creating trip hazards for users. Furthermore, as with the rest of the town centre the space lacks definition between the public realm and carriageway, and therefore prioritises traffic flows over pedestrian environment.

Surrounding Area

- 2.13 There are two schemes in their initial research stages which seek to improve the flood defences and utilities provision in Ramelton. A brief overview of both schemes and their status is provided below.

Ramelton Flood Relief Scheme (Donegal County Council CFRAMS)

- 2.14 ByrneLooby has been commissioned by Donegal County Council as Engineering & Environmental Consultants to prepare a flood relief scheme for Ramelton. To address flooding issues nationally, the Office of Public Works (OPW) commissioned and completed Catchment and Flood Risk Management (CFRAM) studies covering the entire country. The North Western – Neagh – Bann CFRAM Study was completed with support from Donegal County Council. An output of the study identified flood risk areas, including Ramelton, and the associated impacts of flooding. The flood relief scheme also sets out the measures and policies to be pursued in order to achieve the most cost effective and sustainable management of flood risk. The flood relief scheme is in the initial Scheme Development and Design stage which is due to run through to Spring 2023, with construction targeted for 2025-26. The flood relief scheme designs are currently being explored as flood defence structures along the bank of the River Lennon. DCC Regeneration & Development Team in collaboration with BDP, have been liaising with ByrneLooby to ensure that the proposed public realm scheme does not prejudice any future flood relief requirements.

Ramelton Sewerage Scheme (Irish Water)

- 2.15 Irish Water is progressing plans for investment in wastewater infrastructure in Ramelton to safeguard the environment and protect public health. At present the town of Ramelton has no wastewater treatment and is discharging untreated or partially treated wastewater into the environment. The proposed project will involve the design and construction of a new wastewater treatment plant in Ramelton. At Ramelton the main pumping station is proposed to be located to the east of the Quays next to Castle Street. Along the shore areas, a gravity sewer is proposed by upsizing the existing 225mm \varnothing foul sewer to 300mm \varnothing by trenchless technology. DCC Regeneration & Development Team in collaboration with BDP, have been liaising with Water Capital Office to ensure that the proposed public realm scheme aligns with the sewerage upgrades which are due to commence construction in the fourth quarter 2022.

3. Proposed Development

Background

- 3.1 The DCC Development Plan identifies the Ramelton as a Layer 2B Strategic Town with the potential to perform special economic functions due to its significant built heritage resources. The DCC Development Plan recognises the importance of rural towns in supporting the wider rural community and seeks to enable their revitalisations and regeneration as a key strategic intervention. Following the adoption of the DCC Development Plan in 2018 the Ramelton Action Plan 2020 (July, 2020) was published providing a number of key heritage-led actions intended to support the renewal and regeneration of Ramelton. Action 1 from this plan is to restore historic buildings and streets, and Action 2 is to create public spaces for people, utilising the opportunities that the historic town offers.

Subsequently, the proposed public realm improvement scheme has been developed to contribute towards the future vision for Ramelton.

Public Realm Improvement Scheme

- 3.2 The proposals comprise public realm improvement works in Ramelton for five central public spaces including Gamble's Square, Market Cross, The Bing Park, Market Square and The Quays and connecting roads. As identified in Figure 3.1 below, the proposals also include improvements to pedestrian footpaths and the provision of safe crossings at various points to enhance the pedestrian environment.
- 3.3 The proposed design has taken a sensitive approach to creating a series of enlivened public spaces connected by a walk-able continuous path that wraps around the historic core centre. The total Site area for the proposed works encompasses 1.72 hectares. There are no changes to the level of existing parking provision.
- 3.4 In summary, planning permission is sought for:
- Widening of existing footpaths at Gamble's Square, Shore Road, Castle Street and Market Cross;
 - Creation of new footpaths including a connecting footpath between The Quays and Market Cross, a new footpath at the Eastern part of Castle Street and reinstatement of a kerb at Market Cross;
 - Repaving of all public footpaths within the Site;
 - Provision of 11 no. safe crossing areas;
 - Enhancement of the Bing Park; and
 - Revised hard and soft landscaping for the creation of public spaces at Gamble's Square, Market Cross, Market Square and The Quays.
- 3.5 Details of the key interventions for each of the five spaces are shown in Figure 3.1 and described below.
- Gamble's Square*
- 3.6 Introduction of a new Green Gateway to Gamble's Square of low-level native shrubs. Installation of high quality paving and street furniture throughout. Inclusion of a new wide walkway linking the Mall to the Shore Road creating a smooth pedestrian flow. Creation of a flexible market and events space, through telescopic bollards. Electricity sockets along the new retaining wall with seating will provide weekly market vendors with a source of energy and the public with a levelled pitching area. Retention of parking and placement of a sensitive lighting scheme. Improved spill out areas for potential restaurants. Strategically located crossing points.
- 3.7 Shore Road will be enhanced with a wider footpath along the riverside providing a seamless pedestrian link from Gamble's Square and the Quays to help encourage leisure walking and activity along the banks of the River Lennon. The footpaths will have new paving surface to enhance character and designated crossing areas will provide safe pedestrian access to the park.
- The Bing Park*
- 3.8 A series of garden spaces, both visual and sensory, which will vary in planting palette and/or theme from garden to garden and level to level will be created at the Bing Park. Proposals will create a new elevated entrance, amphitheatre for social, cultural and educational events. An adventure play trail will be created in the centre of the park, with an integrated inclusive play area for all ages such that the park becomes a regular 'day out' destination. The Bing Park will be a space that responds to the social needs of all age groups, with biodiverse planting buffer and natural shelter from the elements.
- Market Square*
- 3.9 Market Square will be re-established as an identifiable space for activities, and as part of the overall public realm experience in Ramelton. New paving will enhance the setting of the Square and create a destination for visitors, whilst aiding in the definition between the carriageway and public realm. Provision of pedestrian linkages to nearby

public spaces and the addition of a central feature tree with circular bench will enhance the pedestrian experience. Some parking will be retained to provide everyday access and new footpaths will link Market Square to The Quays and beyond.

The Quays

- 3.10 The Quays are in the north of the Site will be sensitively regenerated to prioritise pedestrians, with the addition of street furniture reflecting Ramelton’s geographical and cultural heritage and encouraging visitors to enjoy the tranquil riverside location. The industrial history of the town will be celebrated with stone pavers and grass joints, there will also be formal forecourt areas to encourage trade and outdoor dining. The Site will include bespoke and weather resilient street furniture inspired by maritime and cultural heritage, and an ecologically sensitive lighting scheme will encourage night time trade.

Market Cross

- 3.11 A new public plaza with stone paving, planting, cycle stands and seating is proposed at Market Cross with the installation of a sculpture to replace the original Market Cross, re-instatement of kerb lines and the introduction of two crossings allowing full accessibility and circulation of the site. As proposed elsewhere on the Site, widened footpaths will create a safer turning point onto Bridge Street for pedestrians.

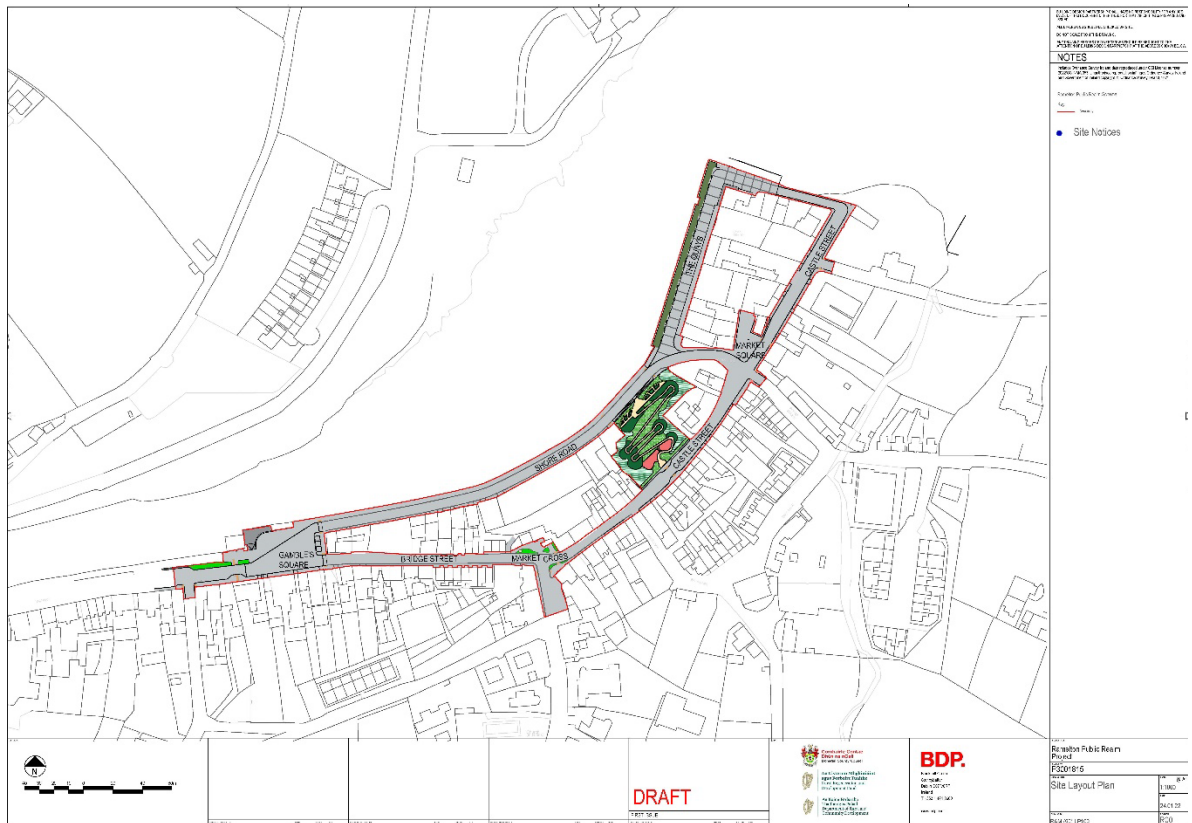


Figure 3.1 Proposed Site Layout Plan

4. EIA Thresholds and Criteria

Legislation and Guidance

- 4.1 The thresholds and criteria for developments that may require EIA Screening are set out in EU and Irish Legislation. The EU legislation is comprised of the original EIA Directive and two further amendment Directives which complete the EIA Directive:

- Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985
- Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011
- Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014.

4.2 The EIA Directive is subsequently carried through to Irish Legislation in the form of:

- Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)
- The Roads Act 1993 (as amended)

4.3 Part 10 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) ('the 2001 Regulations') identifies the requirements for EIA, with Schedule 5 Parts 1 & 2, respectively aligned with Annexes I & II of the EIA Directive, providing the relevant criteria and thresholds for potential EIA development in Ireland.

4.4 Section 50 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) sets out the types of road projects that may require the road authority to prepare an EIS. These are large-scale projects such as new or realigned roads of four lanes or more, new bridges or tunnels that are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

4.5 The EIA Screening report also references the following documents from relevant bodies:

European Commission

- Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive, 2015.
- EU and Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects - Guidance on Screening, 2017.

Government of Ireland

- EIA Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding sub-threshold development, 2003.
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, 2018.
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) Practice Note PN02: Environmental Impact Assessment Screening, 2021.

Environmental Protection Agency

- Draft Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, 2017.

Project Type

4.6 Schedule 5 Part 1 of the 2001 Regulations is aligned with Annex I of the EIA Directive, and identifies those developments for which EIA and the submission of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is mandatory. This includes major infrastructure projects such as airports, motorways or power stations, for which the proposed public realm improvements scheme at Ramelton does not meet the criteria.

4.7 Schedule 5 Part 2 is aligned with Annex II of the EIA Directive, and lists the type of development that may require an EIA depending on whether the site area and quantum of development exceeds certain thresholds and criteria and subsequently if there is potential for likely significant environmental effects. The only potential relevant category for the proposed public realm improvements at Ramelton would be urban development (Schedule 5 Part 2, 10b, iv). Guidance published by the European Commission on *Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive* (2015), details potential project types that would meet the definition of 'urban development' and includes the following:

- i. Projects with similar characteristics to shopping centres and car parks, such as bus garages, train depots;
- ii. Construction projects such as housing development; concert halls; cultural venues;
- iii. Projects to which the term 'urban' and 'infrastructure' may relate such as construction of sewerage and water supply networks.

- 4.8 The proposed public realm improvement works do not correspond or have similar characteristics to any of the suggested project definitions, and would therefore not be considered under the ‘urban development’ criteria of Schedule 5 Part 2.
- 4.9 Furthermore, the thresholds for EIA for this project category are listed as development in a business district with a site area over 2 hectares, in a built-up area with a site area of over 10 hectares and elsewhere with a site area over 20 hectares. For the purposes of EIA, the 2001 Regulations define ‘business district’ as a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use. As identified in the Ramelton Action Plan 2020 (July, 2020; p7 & p10), the area surrounding the Site includes some commercial use, but is largely comprised of residential with a number of derelict and vacant buildings, and is therefore not considered a ‘business district’ for the purposes of EIA. Therefore, in addition to not corresponding to the ‘urban development’ project definition set by the European Commission, at approximately 1.72 hectares, the Site area does not meet the thresholds for EIA in this project category.
- 4.10 With reference to the criteria for EIA development set out in Section 50 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended), given the scale and nature of the proposed works, which include resurfacing of existing footpaths, creation of safe crossings and improvements to the pedestrian public realm, the Proposed Development does not meet the criteria for EIA.
- 4.11 Therefore, given the scale and nature of the Proposed Development, the public realm improvement works at Ramelton do not correspond to any project type, nor do they meet the thresholds and criteria for the most appropriate potential project type of ‘urban development’ as set out in the relevant legislation and guidance.
- 4.12 As such, as defined in Article 92 of the 2001 Regulations, the proposals would not be identified as ‘sub-threshold’ development. Therefore, the proposals are not required to be assessed against the Schedule 7 criteria of the 2001 Regulations and do not require EIA.
- 4.13 Nonetheless, for the avoidance of doubt Section 5 (Assessment) provides a brief assessment of the Proposed Development against the Schedule 7 criteria to which sub-threshold development is required to be assessed.

5. Screening Review

Schedule 7 Criteria: Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)

- 5.1 Schedule 7 of the 2001 Regulations sets out the considerations for determining whether development that is within the criteria listed in Schedule 5 Part 2 should be subject to an EIA. Considerations relate to the characteristics of the development, the location of the development and the types and characteristics of the potential impacts.
- 5.2 Schedule 7A of the Regulations sets out the information to be provided by the applicant for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for EIA. The following tables assess the Proposed Development against the criteria set out in Schedule 7.

Table 5.1 Review of Proposed Development against Schedule 7 Criteria

| Schedule 7 Criteria | Review |
|--|--|
| 1. Characteristics of Proposed Development | |
| The characteristics of proposed development, in particular: | |
| (a) the size and design of the whole of the proposed development | The Proposed Development covers public realm and resurfacing of three sections of carriageway across an area of 1.72 ha. |

| | |
|---|--|
| (b) 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 Proposed Development will interact with the wider tourism and local pedestrian network and environment, creating beneficial impacts for community, heritage, local wildlife and local economy. With regard to particular forthcoming developments, the proposals have been designed such that they will not prejudice the future development of the <i>Ramelton Flood Relief Scheme</i> and <i>Ramelton Sewerage Scheme</i> . The Proposed Development design has been informed by the initial plans for both schemes, and the proposals will complement each other by providing a safe town centre environment. |
| (c) the nature of any associated demolition works | Proposed demolition works would be limited to the removal of existing poor quality carriageway and footpath surfacing, and the re-levelling of the Bing Park. |
| (d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity | All areas of proposed public realm have been previously developed and therefore no significant natural resources will be used as a result of the Proposed Development. On the contrary, with the creation of a series of garden spaces, both visual and sensory, at the Bing Park, the Proposed Development will enhance the biodiversity value and quality of the natural resources present on Site. |
| (e) the production of waste, | No significant waste streams will be generated by the Proposed Development in its construction or operation phase. Best practise measures in line with DCC Development Plan Policy MRCM-O-2 will be employed during construction for safe and effective site waste management. |
| (f) pollution and nuisances | The Proposed Development will not result in significant pollution or nuisances in the operation phase. During the construction phase, appropriate management technical will be applied to reduce the risk of pollution and nuisances. |
| (g) 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 | There is no significant potential for the Proposed Development to give rise to significant adverse effects on the environment due to accidents and/or disasters. |

2. Location of proposed development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, with particular regard to:

| | |
|---|--|
| (a) the existing and approved land use | The Proposed Development includes the public realm and three adjacent carriageways only, therefore the proposals will not have any material impact on legal land use. However, the Proposed Development will improve the pedestrian experience and enhance the use of the land itself, creating a more effective and sustainable use of the land in the Historic Town. |
| (b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground | The Site is located adjacent to the River Lennon which is a Special Area of Conservation and forms part of the designated Lough Swilly Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation. The Proposed Development does not encroach on this designated area. The majority of the Site itself is of limited ecological and biodiversity value. |
| c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas: | |

| | |
|--|--|
| (i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths | As above, the Site is located adjacent to the River Lennon which is part of the designated Lough Swilly Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation. The Proposed Development does not encroach on this designated area. |
| (ii) coastal zones and the marine environment | As above, the Site is located adjacent to the River Lennon which is part of the designated Lough Swilly Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation. The Proposed Development does not encroach on this designated area. |
| (iii) mountain and forest areas | N/A |
| (iv) nature reserves and parks | N/A |
| (v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive | As above, the Site is located adjacent to the River Lennon which is part of the designated Lough Swilly Special Protection Area under the Wild Birds Directive, Special Area of Conservation and the Proposed Natural Heritage Area. The Proposed Development does not encroach on this designated area. |
| (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 | None relevant to the characteristics of the scheme. |
| (vii) densely populated areas | The total population of the wider town of Ramelton is approximately 1200 people, and there are no densely populated areas within the Site itself. |
| (viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance | <p>As discussed in Section 2 (Existing Site) of this report, the Site is located within Ramelton which is itself designated as a Historic Town. The majority of the Proposed Development, with the exception of Gamble's Square, is located within the <i>Zone of Archaeological Potential</i> (ZAP) for the historic town of Ramelton (DG046-005----). The <i>Archaeological Survey of Ireland</i> (ASI) records a further two archaeological sites, one for the previous site of Ramelton castle adjacent to the Site boundary at the Quays, and one within the Site at Market Cross for the associated Bawn.</p> <p>The DCC Development Plan identifies 34 Protected Structures of Regional and Local significance within the surrounding area in the historic town of Ramelton. None of these Protected Structures are located within the Site.</p> <p>The landscape character of the majority of the Site is identified as an area of 'high scenic amenity' DCC Development Plan.</p> |

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—

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| a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) | The Proposed Development will affect an area of 1.72ha of existing roads, pedestrian paths, squares and green open space. |
| (b) the nature of the impact | The Proposed Development comprises the redevelopment and improvement of existing public realm and carriageway surfaces, and the enhancement of green space. |

The nature of potential impacts is limited to any effects related to the re-provision of hard and soft landscaping proposals. All works are identified as small scale and are expected to provide long term moderate operational phase effects due to the below features which are discussed in further detail in Section 3 of this report:

- **Cultural Heritage & Townscape:** Positive impacts on the setting of the historic townscape and numerous heritage assets, in line with DCC Development Plan Policy BH-P-15 to preserve, protect and enhance the special built character and functions of the 'Heritage Towns'.
- **Archaeology:** Ground works will be limited to resurfacing the top surface level of the proposed Site. However, as noted in the Archaeological Desktop Constraints Report submitted with the planning application, any groundworks that take place within the ZoN will be subject to licensed archaeological monitoring and may require testing and excavation. A range of pre-construction mitigation measures will be developed prior to the works commencing. In line with Policy AH-P-2 the proposals will not hinder the conservation and protection of the Zone of Archaeological Notification or Zone of Archaeological Potential, and as such there is not expected to be significant effect on the archaeological deposits.
- **Landscape and Views:** Improvements to the landscape character and scenic amenity of the Site, in line with DCC Development Plan Policies NH-P-7 and NH-P-13 which seek to facilitate developments of a scale, location and nature that allow it to integrate within and reflect the character and amenity of the designation area, whilst preserving and enhancing the area.
- **Ecology & Biodiversity:** Beneficial ecological and biodiversity measures provided at the Bing Park in line with DCC Development Plan Policy NH-P-5, and as confirmed in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted with the planning application, there is no potential for significant effects to occur in relation to the Lough Swilly SPA, Lough Swilly SAC and River Lennon SAC.
- **Transport & Access:** Enhanced pedestrian environment, extension to footpaths, creation of public squares and safe crossing areas in line with DCC Development Plan Policy T-P-12;
- **Population & Socio-Economic:** Enhanced markets squares with opportunities for flexible market and event spaces will provide additional commerce and encourage tourism in line with DCC Development Plan Policies TOU-P-4 & BH-P-15;
- **Water:** The proposals seek to encourage visitors to engage with the riverside location. As stated above, there is no encroachment on the Special Protection Area and Special Conservation Area of the Lough Swilly in line with DCC Development Plan Policy NH-P-1;

There is the potential for temporary adverse effects on human health and population, water, ecology and biodiversity during construction phase as a result of the emission dust, noise and air pollution. In line with DCC Development Plan Policy MRCM-O-2, the construction works will be carried out with best practise measures including effective site waste management, dust mitigation and limited construction hours, in order to safeguard the amenity of the surrounding population and the health of the

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| | <p>adjacent Marine ecosystem SPA and SAC at Lough Swilly. Works will also follow Best Practice Guidelines for working near water, as outlined by Inland Fisheries Ireland (2016). There is also the potential for temporary adverse effects on transport and access during the proposed road works. Due to the limited scale and temporary nature of the works, the construction effects are not significant and would not warrant EIA.</p> <p>Therefore, the nature of the potential impacts are not considered to be significant within the meaning of the EIA Directive.</p> |
| (c) the transboundary nature of the impact | N/A |
| (d) the intensity and complexity of the impact | Impacts will be of low intensity and complexity. |
| (e) the probability of the impact | All above effects can reasonably be expected to occur with all mitigation measures to be properly implemented. The impacts are not considered to be significant within the meaning of the EIA Directive. |
| (f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact | There would be temporary and long term effects as described in 3(b) above. |
| (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 | <p>As described in Section 2 of this report and 1 (b) of this table, there are a number of other proposed developments in the surrounding area, in particular the Ramelton Flood Relief Scheme and Ramelton Sewerage Scheme. Given the nature and location of these schemes, there are no characteristics of the Proposed Development in its operational phase that would give rise to cumulative significant environmental effects.</p> <p>Whilst both the flood relief and sewerage schemes are progressing at a slower pace and are not yet at planning application stage, it is acknowledged that the Ramelton Sewerage Scheme includes areas of overlap with the Proposed Development. This could result in a potential cumulative impact on archaeology which will need to be mitigated through a co-ordinated approach and monitoring as per the recommendations outlined in the supporting Archaeological Desktop Constraints Report. In addition the programmes of the two projects will need to be aligned to minimise construction impacts.</p> <p>As such, whilst there is the potential for some cumulative effects, these would be mitigated through site monitoring and coordination. These effects are not considered to be significant within the meaning of the EIA Directive.</p> |
| (h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact | Construction impacts can be reasonably anticipated to be within the normal range of effects that would be expected during public realm works. No significant effects are anticipated therefore no mitigation measures in addition to those noted above are proposed. |

5.3 Following the review of the Proposed Development against the Schedule 7 criteria, construction works are anticipated to be temporary adverse, whilst operational effects are anticipated to be long term moderate positive. All anticipated effects are not likely to be significant within the meaning of the EIA Directive.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 As established in Section 4 of this report (EIA Thresholds and Criteria), given the nature and scale of the proposed public realm improvement works at Ramelton, the proposals do not correspond to any project type, nor do they meet the thresholds and criteria for the most appropriate potential project type of 'urban development' as set out in the EIA Directive and Schedule 5 of the 2011 Regulations.
- 6.2 Notwithstanding this, the EIA Screening Report has provided an overview assessment of the Proposed Development against the Schedule 7 criteria of 2011 Regulations. Section 5 examined the nature of the development including the size and location of the development, and the types and characteristics of likely potential effects. Construction works are anticipated to result in temporary adverse effects, whilst the operational phase is anticipated to result in long term moderate positive effects.
- 6.3 The Proposed Development does not have the potential to cause significant environmental effects and an Environmental Impact Assessment will not be required to support a planning application.

Appendix 1: EIA Reports Draft Guidelines: Description of Effects (EPA, 2017)

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| <p>Quality of Effects</p> <p>It is important to inform the non-specialist reader whether an effect is positive, negative or neutral</p> | <p>Positive Effects</p> <p>A change which improves the quality of the environment (for example, by increasing species diversity; or the improving reproductive capacity of an ecosystem, or by removing nuisances or improving amenities).</p> <p>Neutral Effects</p> <p>No effects or effects that are imperceptible, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error.</p> <p>Negative/adverse Effects</p> <p>A change which reduces the quality of the environment (for example, lessening species diversity or diminishing the reproductive capacity of an ecosystem; or damaging health or property or by causing nuisance).</p> |
| <p>Describing the Significance of Effects</p> <p>‘Significance’ is a concept that can have different meanings for different topics – in the absence of specific definitions for different topics the following definitions may be useful (also see Determining Significance below.).</p> | <p>Imperceptible</p> <p>An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.</p> <p>Not significant</p> <p>An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.</p> <p>Slight Effects</p> <p>An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.</p> <p>Moderate Effects</p> <p>An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.</p> <p>Significant Effects</p> <p>An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.</p> <p>Very Significant</p> <p>An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment.</p> <p>Profound Effects</p> <p>An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics</p> |
| <p>Describing the Extent and Context of Effects</p> <p>Context can affect the perception of significance. It is important to establish if the effect is unique or, perhaps, commonly or increasingly experienced.</p> | <p>Extent</p> <p>Describe the size of the area, the number of sites, and the proportion of a population affected by an effect.</p> <p>Context</p> |

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| | Describe whether the extent, duration, or frequency will conform or contrast with established (baseline) conditions (is it the biggest, longest effect ever?) |
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| <p>Describing the Probability of Effects</p> <p>Descriptions of effects should establish how likely it is that the predicted effects will occur – so that the CA can take a view of the balance of risk over advantage when making a decision.</p> | <p>Likely Effects</p> <p>The effects that can reasonably be expected to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.</p> |
| | <p>Unlikely Effects</p> <p>The effects that can reasonably be expected not to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.</p> |
| <p>Describing the Duration and Frequency of Effects</p> <p>‘Duration’ is a concept that can have different meanings for different topics – in the absence of specific definitions for different topics the following definitions may be useful.</p> | <p>Momentary Effects</p> <p>Effects lasting from seconds to minutes</p> |
| | <p>Brief Effects</p> <p>Effects lasting less than a day</p> |
| | <p>Temporary Effects</p> <p>Effects lasting less than a year</p> |
| | <p>Short-term Effects</p> <p>Effects lasting one to seven years.</p> |
| | <p>Medium-term Effects</p> <p>Effects lasting seven to fifteen years.</p> |
| | <p>Long-term Effects</p> <p>Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years.</p> |
| | <p>Permanent Effects</p> <p>Effects lasting over sixty years</p> |
| | <p>Reversible Effects</p> <p>Effects that can be undone, for example through remediation or restoration</p> |
| | <p>Frequency of Effects</p> <p>Describe how often the effect will occur. (once, rarely, occasionally, frequently, constantly – or hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, annually)</p> |

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| <p>Describing the Types of Effects</p> | <p>Indirect Effects (a.k.a. Secondary Effects)</p> <p>Impacts on the environment, which are not a direct result of the project, often produced away from the project site or because of a complex pathway.</p> |
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| | <p>Cumulative Effects</p> <p>The addition of many minor or significant effects, including effects of other projects, to create larger, more significant effects.</p> |
| | <p>'Do-Nothing Effects'</p> <p>The environment as it would be in the future should the subject project not be carried out.</p> |
| | <p>'Worst case' Effects</p> <p>The effects arising from a project in the case where mitigation measures substantially fail.</p> |
| | <p>Indeterminable Effects</p> <p>When the full consequences of a change in the environment cannot be described.</p> |
| | <p>Irreversible Effects</p> <p>When the character, distinctiveness, diversity or reproductive capacity of an environment is permanently lost.</p> |
| | <p>Residual Effects</p> <p>The degree of environmental change that will occur after the proposed mitigation measures have taken effect.</p> |
| | <p>Synergistic Effects</p> <p>Where the resultant effect is of greater significance than the sum of its constituents, (e.g. combination of SOx and NOx to produce smog).</p> |