**To: Tim Butler, Director of Services**

**From: Arlene O’ Connor, Senior Executive Planner**

**Proposal: Part VIII proposal – Watergate Urban Park at Watergate Theatre, Parliament Street, Kilkenny.**

**Re: Environmental Impact Assessment – Screening for Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Planning Legislation:**

Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2021, Schedule 5, Part 1 and 2

European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 Article 75 which amends Article 120 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001- 2021

Planning and Development Act 2000 – 2021

**Characteristics of Project**

Under this Part VIII proposal, Kilkenny County Council are proposing to create a new Watergate Urban Park which will provide for:

An urban park, creating a link between Abbey Street and Parliament Street with the adjacent Abbey Quarter Development, for cyclists and pedestrians. Outdoor seating for everyday use will also be provided, as well as selective use for outdoor performances.

The entrance on the Parliament Street side of this urban park is formed under a canopy, composed of a steel frame structure clad in polycarbonate sheeting, to allow light filter through but which can also act as a shelter during bad weather.

**Location**

The new urban park is proposed on lands immediately adjacent to the Watergate Theatre, to the south, east and north east of the building, bounding both Parliament Street and Horse Barrack Lane. Presently the lands are used as a parking area with a small open space area. There is a mobile phone infrastructure kiosk on the car parking area presently, and this will be replaced with a smaller unit.

**Type and characteristics of potential impact**

From assessing the documentation associated with the proposed urban park, it is considered that the proposed development works are significantly below sub threshold Part 2 activities and having regard to the environmental sensitivities of this area and the potential impacts based on the following environmental factors;

* Population and human health
* Biodiversity, with particular attention to special and habitats protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives
* Land, soil, water, air and the landscape
* Climate
* Interaction between above
* Expected effects from relevant major accidents and / or disasters

it is determined that no Environmental Impact Assessment Report is required.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening report was also carried out by the Planning Authority, in relation to the proposed Part VIII works at the Watergate Theatre, Parliament Street in Kilkenny city and these concluded that significant impacts on any Natura 2000 site cannot be ruled out therefore it was determined that a Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening Report is required in relation to this project.

**Conclusion**

It is determined that based on the above preliminary examination, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development works which are for a new Watergate Urban Park and therefore it is recommended that no Environmental Impact Assessment Report is required for this Part VIII proposal at the Watergate Theatre, Parliament Street, Kilkenny.

Signed: Arlene O’ Connor,

 Senior Executive Planner,

 Kilkenny County Council.

 7/9/2021