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Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

Paulstown Playground, Kellymount, Co. Kilkenny

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1. Introduction

This project involves the proposed creation of a multifunctional local park on a greenfield site in Paulstown Playground, Kellymount, Co. Kilkenny.

Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants Ltd has been engaged by Digby Brady Landscape Architects for the provision of an environmental impact assessment screening report for the proposed works. The principal requirement for these services is to assist the relevant authorities in forming an opinion as to whether or not the proposed works should be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and if so whether an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) should be prepared in respect of it.

The screening process includes an assessment of the details of the proposal with reference to the relevant EIA legislation including the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended by Planning and Development Regulations 2015), the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU) and relevant EU Guidance including Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive, EU, 2015 and Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening, EU, 2017. The report provides a conclusion of the process and finally a recommendation.

2. Description of proposed project

2.1 Description of the Works

The creation of a multifunctional communal park with a number of amenities possibly including:

- 5-a-side all weather pitch
- Enclosed dog park
- Play area (not safety surface)
- Exercise zone
- Boules court
- Open sided bandstand
- Biodiversity pond
- Biodiversity meadow

Park will also include parking for approximately 20 cars (18 standard and 2 accessible parking) and associated pedestrian pathways. The site covers an area of 0.8 Hectares or 2.05 Acres

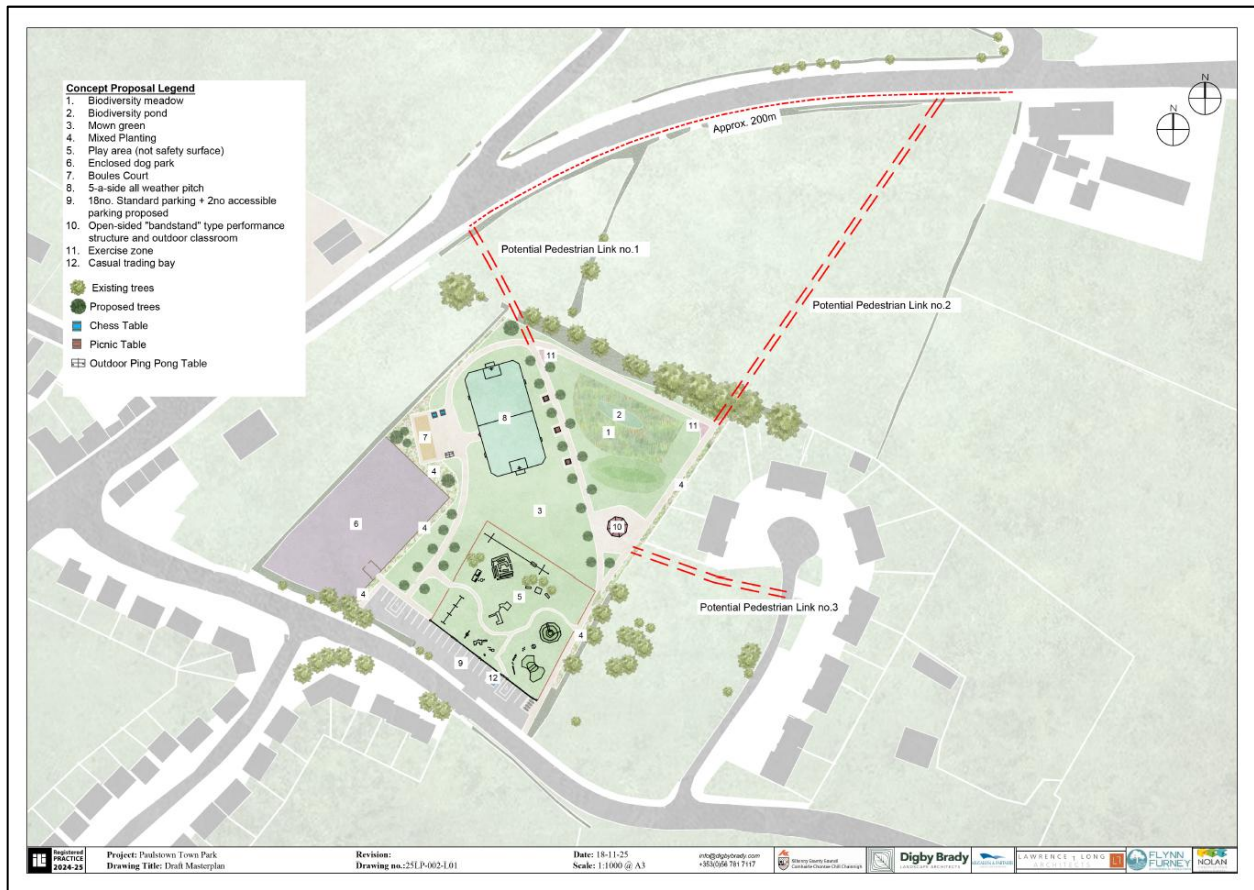


Figure 1. Proposed landscape plan

2.2 Project Location

Paulstown is a rural town located in east Co. Kilkenny, c.19km east of Kilkenny City. Project is located within greenfield sites surrounding the preexisting Paulstown playground. Playground is a small area of **GA2** amenity grassland with some **BL3** pathways while the adjacent fields are predominately **GA1** agricultural grasslands used for cattle and horse grazing, with **WL1** hedgerow and **WL2** treeline boundaries. There are no surface water networks directly adjacent to the site with the closest rivers being at least 1.2km to the north (River_Waterbody_Code - IE_SE_14M240860) or south (River_Waterbody_Code - IE_SE_14M031000) of the site. No hydrological features (drains or streams) are present on the site which form a connection to either of these waterbodies. Area lays within the Barrow_SC_120 WFD sub-catchment of the greater 14 Barrow WFD catchment. Surface water networks in the area drain into the River Barrow and River Nore SAC. Site lacks hydrological connection to the SAC or connecting waterbody and is 3.1km in distance over land.

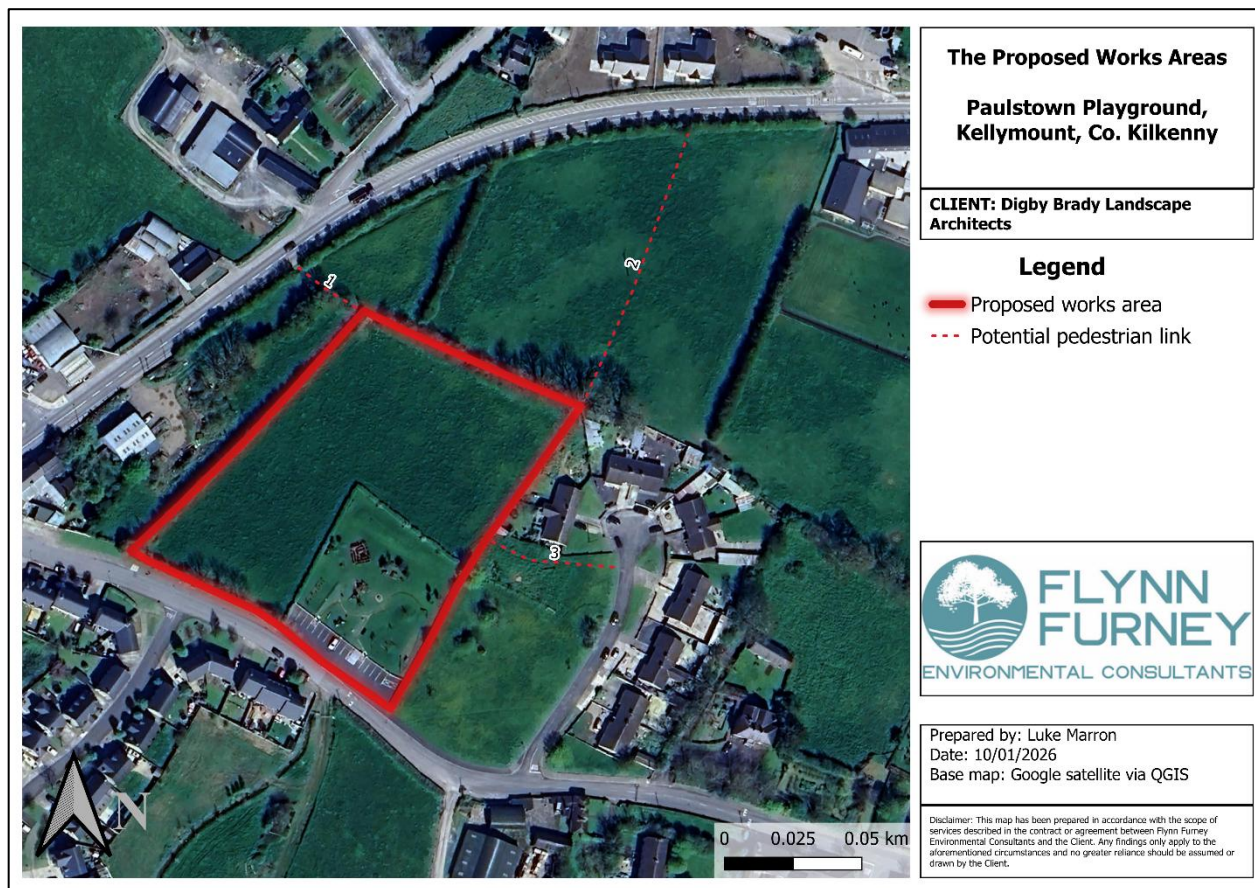


Figure 2. Overview of the proposed works area.

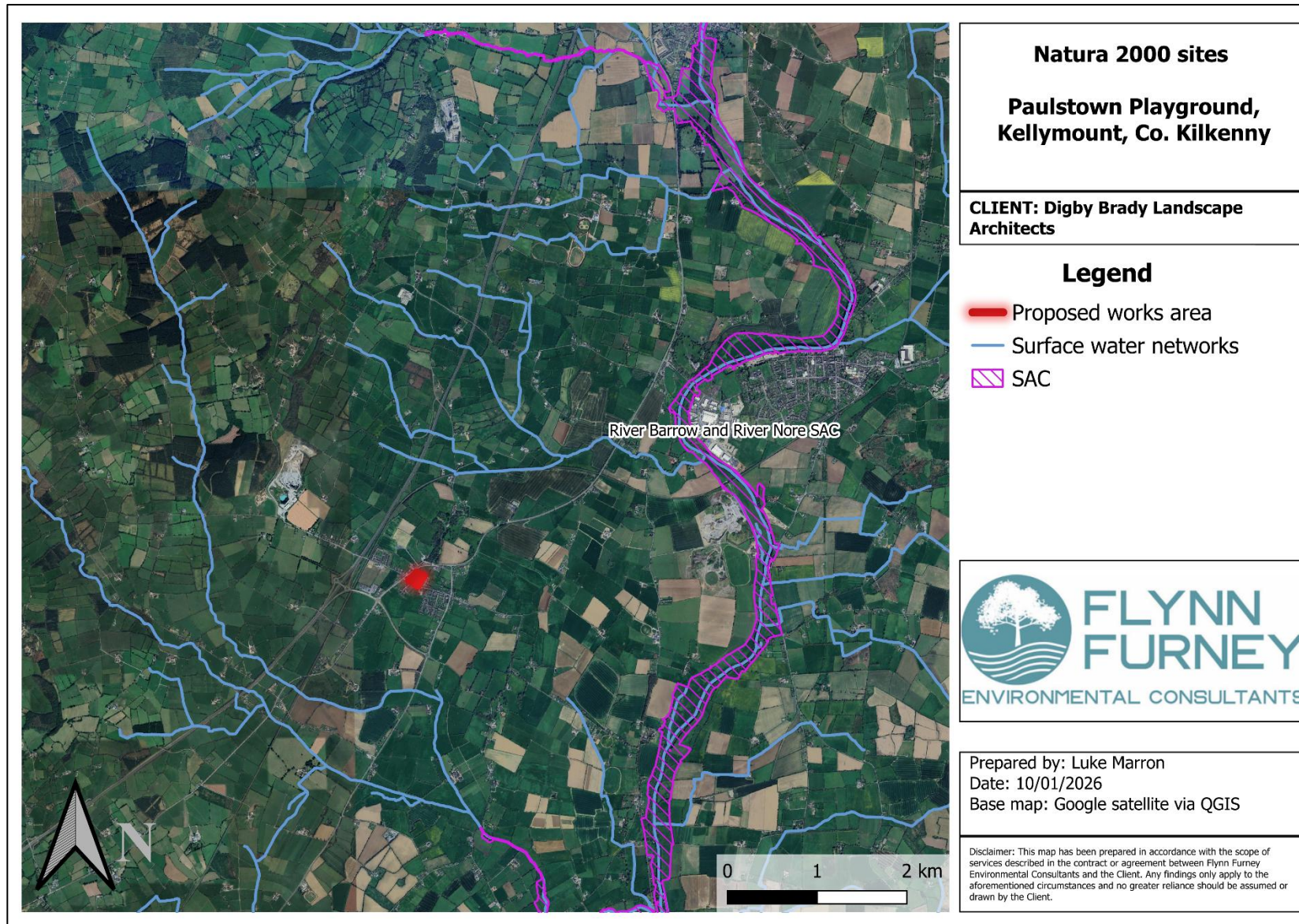


Figure 3. Designated sites in the proximity of the proposed works area including proposed natural heritage sites (pHNA)

3. Relevant legislation

Screening represents the initial phase of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, during which a determination is made regarding the necessity of conducting an EIA. The requirements for EIA are established by the EIA Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU). The amendments to the Directive took effect on May 16, 2017, and the corresponding regulations have been implemented into national law. The amended Directive does not alter the specified project types or thresholds, thus maintaining the classifications and thresholds outlined in the 2001-2010 Regulations. The legislation governing EIA in relation to the planning process has been consolidated primarily within Part X of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2018, as well as Part 10 and Schedules 5, 6, and 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018. Schedule 5, Part 1, enumerates project types listed in Annex I of the Directive, which are automatically subject to EIA. Conversely, Part 2 of the same Schedule identifies project types in Annex II. Developments that align with these project types are required to undergo EIA if no threshold is specified or if they surpass a designated threshold. For developments categorized under Part 2 that fall below the specified threshold, a screening process is necessary to ascertain whether an EIA is warranted, based on the criteria outlined in Schedule 7.

EIA legislation delineates the types of projects that require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). Annex I specifies projects that are mandatory for an EIAR, while Annex II categorizes projects that are evaluated according to established mandatory thresholds for each project class. The EIA screening exercise initially assesses the development for Mandatory EIA using classifications defined in the appropriate legislation. If no mandatory requirement is identified, the screening proceeds to sub-threshold development assessment, wherein the competent authority determines the likelihood of significant environmental effects, taking into account the project's scale, nature, location, and context.

This document outlines the findings of the Screening Assessment conducted in accordance with the aforementioned legislation.

4. Screening and assessment

4.1 Mandatory EIAR

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is mandatory for certain project categories that are likely to significantly affect the surrounding environment. These categories are listed in Annex I of the EIA Directive and are incorporated into Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. These are reported in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Project categories requiring mandatory EIA.

| Projects referred to in article 4(1) |
|--|
| Crude-oil refineries and installations for the gasification and liquefaction of materials |
| Thermal power and nuclear power stations Installations for the processing of irradiated nuclear fuel |
| Integrated works for the initial smelting of cast iron and steel, and installations for the production of non-ferrous crude metals from ore, concentrates or secondary raw materials |
| Installations for the extraction of asbestos and for the processing and transformation of asbestos and products containing asbestos |
| Integrated chemical installations |
| Construction of railway lines, airports, motorways, express roads, construction of new road with four or more lanes Inland waterways and ports, trading ports, and piers |
| Waste disposal installations for the incineration and chemical treatment |
| Groundwater abstraction or artificial groundwater recharge schemes |
| Works for the transfer of water resources between river basins |
| Waste water treatment plants |
| Extraction of petroleum and natural gas for commercial purposes |
| Dams or other installations designed for the holding back or permanent storage of water |
| Pipelines with a diameter of more than 800 mm of more than 40 km |
| Installations for the intensive rearing of poultry or pigs |
| Industrial plants |
| Quarries and open-cast mining |
| Construction of overhead electrical power lines Installations for storage of petroleum, petrochemical, or chemical products |
| Storage sites Installations for the capture of CO ² streams for the purposes of geological storage |

Conclusions: The proposed development at Paulstown playground does not fall within the list of activities requiring discretionary EIA as set out in the legislation. Therefore, the development proposed will be evaluated according to established mandatory thresholds for each project class in section 4.2.

4.2 Project Class

EIA legislation defines the types of projects that may require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). Annex I specifies the projects that require mandatory EIAR, while Annex II details those projects

that are evaluated according to set mandatory thresholds applicable to each project class. While the proposed development does not fall within the categories listed in Annex I and does not necessitate a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), it is however prudent to confirm that the proposed development does not fall within any of the project classes listed in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended, or if it does, that the project is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects. Project classes are reported in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Project categories.

| Schedule 5, Part 2 | Class of Development |
|--------------------|--|
| 1 | Agriculture, silviculture and aquaculture |
| 2 | Extractive industry |
| 3 | Energy industry |
| 4 | Production and processing of metals |
| 5 | Mineral industry |
| 6 | Chemical industry |
| 7 | Food industry |
| 8 | Textile, leather, wood and paper industries |
| 9 | Rubber industry |
| 10 | Infrastructure projects |
| 11 | Other projects |
| 12 | Tourism and leisure |
| 13 | Changes, extensions, development and testing |
| 14 | Works of demolition |
| 15 | Any other project |

The subject development does not fall within the development classes set out in Part 1 of Schedule 5. The following development class included in Part 2 of Schedule 5 is the most relevant to the development proposal:

10. Infrastructure projects;

10(b) Urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks.

10(b) (iv) 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.

In regards to category 10(b), the EU Guidance on 'Interpretation of definitions of project categories of Annex I and II of the EIA Directive' (2015) specifies that EIA is mandatory for independent parking places with a capacity of more than 400 vehicles. Similarly, category 10 (b)(iv) refers 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, where "business district" refers to a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.

Conclusion: Paulstown park

The proposed works at Paulstown playground will include 20 car parking spaces (18 standard and 2 accessible parking) which is well below the 300-vehicle threshold. Moreover, the subject site is less than 2ha (project site is 0.8ha) and as such an EIA is not mandatory for the proposed development. Therefore, it can be concluded that the project does not exceed the threshold for the mandatory EIA.

While the project does not exceed the threshold for the mandatory EIA, as the project falls within the project listed within Part 2 of Schedule 5, the development proposed will be evaluated according to established mandatory sub-thresholds for each project class. Criteria for Sub-threshold EIA screening are set out in Schedule 7 to determine the need, if any, for EIA.

In summary, while a mandatory EIA is not required, the project is still subject to EIA Screening as advised.

The criteria specified in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations have been directly derived from Annex III of the 2011 Directive, and are specified as follows:

- The characteristics of the proposed development;
- The location of the proposed development, particularly regarding the environmental sensitivity of the geographical areas that may be impacted;
- The characteristics of the anticipated impacts, focusing on the potential significant effects of the proposed development.

4.3 Sub-threshold EIA Screening Assessment

A key determinant of the necessity for Environmental Impact Assessment of sub-threshold projects is whether or not such works are likely to have significant effects on the environment. The 1997 amending Directive (97/11/EC) introduced guidance for Member States in terms of deciding whether or not a development is likely to have a “significant effect on the environment”. These criteria have been transposed fully into Irish legislation in the third schedule of the European Communities Environmental Impact Assessment (Amendment) Regulations 1999, (SI No.93 of 1999) and in Schedule 7 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (SI No 600 of 2001) as amended by Planning & Development Regulations 2008. This has been updated by transposition of the 2014 EIA Directive (2014/52/EU) which amends Directive 2011/92/EU1). Guidance is provided by use of criteria set out in Annex III of the new Directive. These criteria as transposed in Irish legislation are grouped under three headings and are used to assist the screening process in determining whether a development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. These are detailed in Table 3-5 below:

Table 3. Review of the characteristics of the proposed development.

| Characteristics of the proposed development | | |
|--|---|--|
| Screening Questions | Relevance | Is it likely to result in significant effects on the environment? |
| <i>Is the scale of the project considered significant?</i> | The proposed works aim to improve a greenfield site into a multifunctional community park. The overall project has an area of approximately 0.8 ha. The main habitats present on site consist of built GA1 agricultural grassland, WL1 hedgerow and WL2 Treeline. | Given the nature of the proposed development, it is not anticipated that impacts in terms of scale of the project will be significant. |
| <i>Is the size of the project considered significant when considered cumulatively with other adjacent developments?</i> | No permitted or proposed projects were identified which in combination with the proposed development would give rise to significant cumulative impacts. | It is not anticipated that the project will give rise to significant impacts in combination with adjacent developments. |
| <i>Will the project utilize a significant quantity of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water, or biodiversity?</i> | <p>No. The footprint of the proposed development is small in scale and will not require any natural resource for its completion. No significant impacts to land or land area will occur.</p> <p>Excavation or earthworks requirements are not considered to constitute a significant effect.</p> <p>No water will be abstracted from any watercourses during the construction or operation of this development. No water quality impacts are predicted.</p> <p>The main habitat type on site is GA1 agricultural grassland.</p> <p>No qualifying interests associated with any Natura 2000 sites were found directly within the subject site.</p> | Given the size and nature of the proposed development this project will not constitute a significant effect on natural resources. |

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| | <p>Possible impacts to the European Designated site were assessed during an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for the proposed development (FFEC, 2026). Given the lack of hydrological connection and distance of 3.1km the River Barrow and River Nore SAC, the report concluded that progression to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment was not required.</p> | |
| <p><i>Will the project produce a significant quantity of waste?</i></p> | <p>During the construction phase, normal construction waste will be produced, segregated where possible and sent to an appropriately permitted waste or materials recovery facility. The waste management hierarchy will be implemented onsite, which prioritises prevention and minimisation of waste, followed by reuse and recycling.</p> <p>During the operational phase, waste will be sorted and collected by a suitably licensed contractor and sent to an appropriately permitted waste or materials recovery facility.</p> | <p>Given the size and nature of the proposed development, it is not anticipated that this project will produce significant quantities of waste.</p> |
| <p><i>Will the project create a significant amount or type of pollution?</i></p> | <p>No significant water or air-borne pollution is envisaged. The proposed development is not a project type that will give rise to significant emissions or pollution.</p> | <p>Given the size and nature of the proposed development, it is not anticipated that this project will create a significant amount or type of pollution.</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <i>Will the project create a significant amount of nuisance?</i> | Limited disruption to local receptors may arise during the construction phase but this will be short-term in duration. | Given the size and nature of the proposed development, it is not anticipated that this project will produce significant amount of nuisance. |
| <i>Will there be a risk of major accidents?</i> | The proposed development is not of a type that poses a risk of major accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used. The proposed construction works will employ best practice methodologies and be subject to the contractor's safety statements and risk assessments. | Given the size and nature of the proposed development, it is not anticipated that this project will pose a risk of major accidents. |
| <i>Will there be a risk of natural disasters, including those caused by climate change?</i> | Based on flood analysis data from Floodinfo.ie the site is not within an area subjected to flooding. In terms of fire risk, the proposed development will comply with all relevant health and safety legislation. | It is considered that the risk of significant flooding or fire occurring, affecting the proposed development and causing it to have significant environmental effects, is limited. |
| <i>Will there be a risk to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)?</i> | There is limited potential for negative effects on human health during the construction phase as a result of potential emissions to air, or the potential emissions to land and water. Best construction site practices will prevent any risk of pollution running off the site. | The potential for negative health effects associated with the proposed development is negligible. |
| <i>Is the combination of the above factors likely to have significant effects on the environment?</i> | There are no factors above which when combined would result in any significant effect on the environment. | |

Table 4. Review of the location of the proposed development.

| Location of the proposed development | | |
|---|---|--|
| Screening Questions | Relevance | Is it likely to result in significant effects on the environment? |
| <i>Is the existing land use of the project considered significant?</i> | The site consists of GA1 agricultural grassland with WL1 hedgerow and WL2 treeline boundaries. While land use will be modified, no adverse lasting impacts are predicted that could trigger an EIAR. Landscape management plan also includes biodiversity features such as pollinator meadow and pond which may improve biodiversity. | Given the nature of the proposed development and the existing conditions of the site, it is not anticipated that impacts in terms of land use will be significant. |
| <i>Is the project likely to affect the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area and its underground?</i> | The development will not entail works that have the potential to affect the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources. | No significant impacts are anticipated given small scale and the nature of the project. No impacts on groundwater may be anticipated. |
| <i>Is the project likely to affect the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:</i> <i>-Wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;</i> <i>-Coastal zones;</i> | The proposed development is intended to provide parking spaces to visitors to Paulstown playground. The closest Natura 2000 site is River Barrow and River Nore SAC (000343) located 3.1km from the proposed works area. | Given the size and nature of the proposed development this project is not likely to affect the absorption capacity of the natural environment. |

| | | |
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| <p>-Mountain and forest areas; Nature Reserves and National Parks; -Areas classified or protected under legislation, including special protection areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC; -Areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the EU have already been exceeded; -Densely populated areas -Landscapes of historical cultural or archaeological significance;</p> | <p>No wetlands, mountains, forest areas, river mouths, or coastal zones are within the proposed works area or directly adjacent to the works.</p> <p>No buildings which are classified as national monuments or features of heritage significance (gov.ie/dataset/national-monuments-service-archaeological-survey-of-ireland) are present within the site boundary or directly adjacent to the site. No landscapes of historical cultural or archaeological significance are found within the site or the immediate area.</p> <p>As for any concern regarding population density, Ferrybank has a population density of 919 people as per the 2022 census. The improvement of the existing public realm is likely to increase the absorption capacity of the town in the future.</p> | |
| <p><i>Will there be a risk of natural disasters, including those caused by climate change?</i></p> | <p>Based on flood analysis data from Floodinfo.ie the site is not within an area subjected to flooding (Map in appendix). In terms of fire risk, the proposed development will comply with all relevant health and safety legislation.</p> | <p>It is considered that the risk of significant flooding or fire occurring, affecting the proposed development and causing it to have significant environmental effects, is limited.</p> |
| <p><i>Will there be a risk to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)?</i></p> | <p>There is limited potential for negative effects on human health during the construction phase as a result of potential emissions to air, or the potential emissions to land and water. Best construction site practices will prevent any risk of pollution running off the site.</p> | <p>The potential for negative health effects associated with the proposed development is negligible.</p> |

Table 5. Review of the characteristics of the potential impacts of the proposed development.

| Characteristics of the potential impacts | | |
|---|--|--|
| Screening Questions | Relevance | Is it likely to result in significant effects on the environment? |
| <i>Is the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population) of the project considered significant?</i> | The proposed works aim to improve a greenfield site into a multifunctional community park. The overall project has an area of approximately 0.8 ha. The main habitats present on site consist of built GA1 agricultural grassland, WL1 hedgerow and WL2 Treeline. The scale of the proposed project is in keeping with the scale of the receiving setting and surrounds in terms of size and design and is therefore not considered significant. | Given the nature of the proposed development, it is not anticipated that impacts in terms of their magnitude and spatial extent will be significant. |
| <i>What is the nature of likely impacts?</i> | Limited disruption to local receptors may arise during the construction phase but this will be short-term in duration. Temporary visual and noise impacts may be anticipated during construction phase. These will be highly localised and temporary in nature. A long-term positive impact on human welfare may be anticipated. | |
| <i>Is any transboundary impact predicted?</i> | No | It is not anticipated that the project will give rise to significant transboundary impacts. |
| <i>Are any predicted impacts considered significant in terms of their intensity and complexity?</i> | No. | Given the size and nature of the proposed development, any impacts are considered insignificant in terms of their intensity and complexity. |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p><i>Are any predicted impacts considered significant in terms of their expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility?</i></p> | <p>No</p> | <p>Given the size and nature of the proposed development, any impacts are considered insignificant in terms of their expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility</p> |
| <p><i>Are any predicted impacts considered significant in combination with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects?</i></p> | <p>A number of other projects have been considered as part of the screening process. A search of National Planning Application Database and the Kilkenny County Council planning web portal was carried out as part of this desktop study. A number of planning applications were reviewed; the majority of which related to the alteration of private and commercial dwellings or retention of dwellings such as App. 041566 for change of house types, minor site modifications and all associated works on previously approved permission ref. 00/1712. No significant alterations to road layout or other approved infrastructure are proposed. This application relates to houses 12-35 inclusive or App. 011100 for the demolition of two number existing stores, (while retaining the party wall) and construction of a two storey 2 bed town house with single storey to the rear and associated site works.</p> <p>The most relevant application in proximity to the proposed works area is App. 991102 for the erection of 6 no. dormer style houses with associated site works. Planning was conditionally approved in 2000 with an expiry date in 2005. No such properties have been constructed in this area. Construction of these properties would not cause in combination effects however due to a lack of a pathway to receptor. None of these applications, nor other applications reviewed for the purpose of this assessment are deemed likely to create in-combination effects with the proposed development.</p> | <p>No projects are known at time of writing that may result in cumulative impacts.</p> |

4.4 Summary of Potential Impacts by EIA Topic

Table 6. Review of potential impacts by EIA topics.

| Topic | Comment |
|--|--|
| <i>Population and Human Health</i> | The potential impacts of the construction phase on human beings are not considered to be significant. During construction, there is the potential for temporary minor impacts related to dust and noise. However, the work will be short-term in duration. Standard best practice construction methodologies will limit disturbance to people in the area. Once completed, the proposed development will provide a multipurpose amenity communal park. This is considered a significant positive impact, adding value to the infrastructure available in the area. |
| <i>Biodiversity/ Species and Habitat</i> | <p>The potential impacts of the construction phase on biodiversity are not considered to be significant. The site was surveyed by FFEC Ecologists as part of survey works for an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (FFEC, 2026) for the proposed development. While the report concluded that Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.</p> <p>No other protected mammal species were found to occur within or surrounding the proposed development area.</p> <p>No Annex II (Birds Directive) bird species or red-listed species were recorded during field surveys of the site and surrounds.</p> <p>No invasive species listed on the third schedule were recorded to be directly within the footprint of or directly adjacent to the proposed works.</p> |
| <i>Land and soil</i> | No significant impact: the development will be constructed in accordance with best practice environmentally sensitive methods and environmental management systems. |
| <i>Water</i> | The site is not adjacent to any surface water networks. Potential impacts to water quality have been considered in the relevant Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (FFEC, 2026) which |

| | |
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| | concluded that Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required. |
| <i>Air and climate</i> | During construction, there is the potential for short-term minor negative impacts related to dust to occur, however, this will be short-term in duration and limited to the works area. Best practice construction site management will minimise emissions. |
| <i>Noise and vibration</i> | Potential short-term noise impacts may arise during construction activities however this will be managed through best practice measures. No significant impacts are anticipated. |
| <i>Material Assets: Built Environment</i> | No significant impact that could trigger the requirement for an EIAR is predicted. |
| <i>Material assets: transportation</i> | There will be no significant long-term impacts on local traffic movements due to the nature of the proposed development. During the construction phase, appropriate traffic management and signage will be in place to ensure safe access and egress from the site, and the safety of other road users. |
| <i>Waste management</i> | The development will involve limited excavation and land re-shaping. Possible effects include the re-use / recycle / disposal of excavated material as well as other waste generated on-site i.e. construction and demolition waste, and domestic waste once occupied. Any effects will be mitigated by the implementation of best practices in construction and demolition and operational waste management procedures. |
| <i>Cultural heritage</i> | The proposed development will not give rise to any significant impacts on cultural heritage. |
| <i>Landscape</i> | No significant impact. The proposed development is located within an urban area and will not give rise to any significant landscape or visual impacts that could trigger the requirement for EIAR. |

5. Conclusions

The proposed project is not a development for which an EIA is mandatory. The proposed project, however, falls under the category of Infrastructure Projects as listed in Schedule 5, Part 2 of the Regulations, although not exceeding the threshold set in the legislation. Nonetheless, the project was subjected to screening with regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7. The sub-threshold EIA Screening exercise was carried out to determine the potential for the proposed development to have significant environmental effects or not and further inform the relevant authority.

Following the screening exercise, it was concluded that the type and characteristics of the proposed development and of the potential impacts would not be considered likely to have significant effects on the environment given that the appropriate mitigation measures are followed during the construction phase of the project, as advised in the conclusion of the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (FFEC, 2025). No negative impacts are anticipated from the operational phase of the project; similarly, no significant cumulative impacts are considered likely, and no negative transboundary impacts are anticipated.

No protected mammal species were identified within or near the proposed development area. Similarly, while two invasive species listed in the first schedule were found directly within the proposed works site, these have been addressed in a dedicated invasive species management plan.

Given the size and scale of the proposed development and the absence of other projects or plans that could interact with the present proposal known at time of writing, no significant cumulative impacts are considered likely.

The overall conclusion of this screening exercise is that there should be no specific requirement for a full Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development.

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7. Appendix

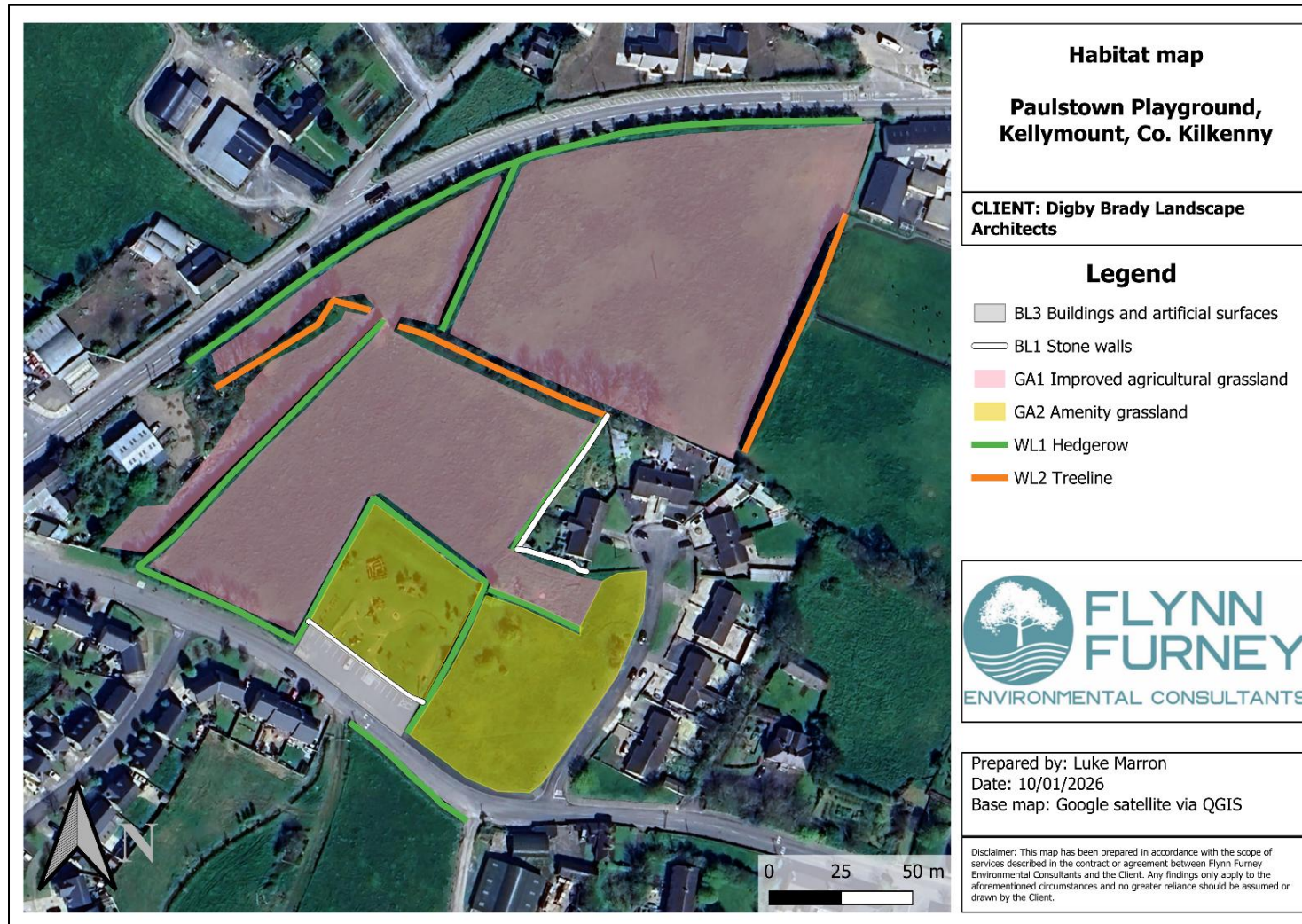


Figure 4. Habitat map of Paulstown Park and surrounding area



Figure 5. Flood map with red square indicating location of Paulstown Park