

**Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí**  
**Cork City Council**

# **Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report & Screening Determination**

## **MacCurtain Street Public Transport Improvement Scheme**

**July 2020**

## **Executive Summary**

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report has been prepared to consider the requirement or otherwise of carrying out an EIA in respect of the MacCurtain Street Public Transport Improvement Scheme.

This screening exercise was undertaken in two stages. The first stage considered the requirement for a mandatory EIA, while the second stage considered the requirement or need for a sub-threshold EIA. As part of the sub-threshold screening exercise, the potential for impacts on environmental sensitivities was considered in addition to the interrelationship between those environmental sensitivities. Following on from this, the formal EIA Screening Exercise was completed, having regard to the criteria set out in the Roads Act, as amended and in the EIA Directive (2014/52/EU).

This report concludes that this is a sub-threshold type project which is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment, either by itself or in combination with other plans or projects.

## **Legislative context**

EIA legislation sets down the types of projects that may require an EIA. Annex I of Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU defines mandatory projects that require an EIA and Annex II lists projects which can be subject to case by case analysis or thresholds to be determined by member states.

## **Mandatory requirements**

The proposed scheme has been assessed in terms of the mandatory requirement for an EIA based on the nature or scale of the development, as addressed in the EU Directive 2014/52/EU and also the Roads Act 1993 - 2016. It is considered that the proposed road scheme is not one which falls within the scope of this category. It should be noted that mandatory EIA requirements for non-road type development have also been considered and discounted in this instance. As part of this, infrastructure type projects listed in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended and in Annex I and II of the EIA Directive as amended were taken into account.

## **Sub-threshold requirement for an Environmental Impact Statement**

### **Legislative context and screening methodology**

While the mandatory requirements for EIA for road schemes are straight forward, being based on type and scale, the discretionary (or sub-threshold) requirements are based on an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the proposed road development. Where a proposed road development would be located on certain environmental sites the road authority shall decide whether the proposed road development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The key issue, in the context of the possible need for EIA of sub-threshold development, is whether or not such development is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The 2014 amending EIA Directive (2014/52/EU) contains guidance for Member States in terms of deciding whether or not a development is likely to have “significant effects on the environment”. The guidance is provided by way of criteria set out in Annex III of the Directive. The criteria are grouped under three headings and are used to help in the screening process to determine whether a development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. The criteria for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment are taken from Annex III of the Directive and are grouped under the following three headings:-

1. Characteristics of proposed development
2. Location of proposed development
3. Characteristics of the potential Impacts

### **Sub threshold development assessment**

The aim of the following section is to address likely impacts, if any on the environment by the implementation of the proposed development having regard to the criteria set out in the EIA Directive, as amended. Criteria for determining whether the project would or would not be likely to have a significant effect on the environment as per the requirements of Article 120 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 and subsequent amendment 2011

<b>1. CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT</b>	
Size of Proposed Development	<p>Cork City Council plans to carry out road network and public realm improvement works on MacCurtain Street and a number of existing roads &amp; streets in Cork City Centre. Construction work is focused on upgrading traffic signals, public lighting and improved public realm including new footpaths and paved areas and provision of trees. In conjunction with the implementation the planned traffic management changes some routine maintenance of road surfaces will be undertaken in advance of relining of carriageways.</p> <p>The total construction area required for the proposed development is 1.92 hectares (ha). It does not equal nor exceed the 2-hectare threshold; therefore, a mandatory EIA is not required.</p> <p>The construction areas include for the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footpaths along the Leirim Street;</li> <li>• Footpaths along Devonshire Street;</li> <li>• All of Coburg Street, Bridge Street and MacCurtain Street;</li> <li>• Pedestrian crossings on Wellington Road with associated footpath works and a raised pedestrian gateway treatment at the junction of Sidney Hill;</li> <li>• The signalisation of the junction of Cathedral Walk and Watercourse Road;</li> <li>• The existing traffic island at the western end of Lower Glanmire Road and a small section of its northern footpath;</li> <li>• Footpath improvements along the southern side of Mulgrave Road;</li> <li>• Footpath and cycle track construction along the southern side of Camden Quay;</li> <li>• Footpath improvements at the junction of Cathedral</li> </ul>

	<p>Walk/Watercourse Road;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footpath and cycle lane construction along the southern side of St Patrick's Quay;</li> <li>• Pedestrian crossing on St Patrick's Quay opposite Mary Elmes Bridge;</li> <li>• A section of footpath on both sides of Penrose Quay;</li> <li>• Footpaths on both sides of Anderson's Quay;</li> <li>• Footpaths on both sides of Merchant's Quay and cycle track construction on its northern side; and</li> <li>• Section of footpath on the southern side of Lavitt's Quay.</li> </ul> <p>The above construction work areas will be supplemented with upgrades to the existing traffic signals within the city centre along with associated changes to existing street signs and road markings.</p>
Cumulation with other Proposed Development	<p>The Metropole Hotel Re-Development (17/37497) has been identified as a development which has the potential to result in cumulative effects with the proposed development. However, the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) implemented by the Contractor will be required to take into account the Metropole Hotel construction schedule. Therefore, significant effects are not envisaged.</p>
Use of Natural Resources	<p>Services such as power and water will be required during the construction phase. Mobile generators will be used during the construction phase. Construction materials will include paving sets, asphalt, stone fill, pipework, gullies, kerbing, cabling, ducting, traffic signal equipment etc. It is not considered that there will be significant use of these resources as part of the development.</p> <p>A Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment was prepared by Arup. It is the opinion of Arup that it is possible to rule out any significant effects on Natura 2000 sites.</p>
Production of Waste	<p>Standard construction materials will be used and will not be harmful to human health or the environment. The contractor will ensure that the proposed works are carried out in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No.291 of 2013). It is envisaged that the risk of accidents having regard to substances or technologies is very low and therefore will not result in significant effects.</p> <p>Inert construction waste generated will be removed from the site areas and disposed of at a suitable licenced facility. The production of waste will be managed in accordance with the relevant waste legislation.</p>
Pollution and Nuisances	<p>It is expected that some dust will be emitted during the construction works but this will not be significant. Emissions from construction plant and vehicles will arise during the construction phase but these will be minimal.</p>

	<p>Standard construction noise is expected during construction activities. Rock breaking will be required as part of the works but will be short term in duration.</p> <p>The extent of the works on land (in a highly urbanised area) is relatively small, excavation works are not significant, and dewatering is not required. During excavation works some water will be encountered and this will be allowed to percolate naturally through the existing soils. There will be no works carried out in the River Lee or the River Bride.</p>
Risk of Accidents	A "Project Supervisor for Construction Stage" will be appointed to manage safety issues during construction.

<b>2. LOCATION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT</b>	
Existing Land Use	<p>The land use across the area of the proposed development is classified as 'artificial surfaces' according to the EPA Corine (Coordination of Information on the Environment) land cover classification.</p> <p>No significant negative effects on land use or material assets are predicted during the construction or operational phases of the proposed development.</p> <p>The majority of the proposed development area consists of hardstanding – mostly road surface, cycle track and footpath with limited greenfield space. The proposed development spans an area that is zoned for multiple purposes. The area along MacCurtain Street, St Patrick's Quay, Merchant's Quay and Anderson's Quay are zoned for use as "<i>City Centre Retail Area</i>", Camden Quay, Leirim Street and Lavitt's Quay are zoned as "<i>City Centre Commercial Area</i>" and Wellington Road, Cathedral Walk and part of Leirim Street are zoned as "<i>Inner City Residential Neighbourhood</i>".</p> <p>There will be no change of land use within the development boundary. Services will be diverted within the road as required and surface water will be managed as is it currently, via street side gullies, some of which will be modified as part of the design works. During construction surface water will be contained within the construction areas and filter through the existing ground or gravitate towards street gullies.</p>
Relative Abundance, Quality and regenerative Capacity of Natural Resources in the Area	The extent of the works within a highly urbanised environment are relatively small. Thus, significant effects on the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area are not predicted.
Absorption Capacity of the Natural Environment	The works associated with this development are minor and construction work is frequent throughout the development area. This, along with the fact that the development area is not of significant ecological importance means the absorption capacity of this environment is high, making it less sensitive to works of this kind.

The EC Guidance on EIA Screening (EC, 2017) provides a checklist to help users decide whether EIA is required based on the characteristics of a project and its environment. This screening checklist is included in **Table 3** below.

**Screening Checklist to determine if EIA is required based on the characteristics of a project and its environment**

Brief Project Description	Yes/No	Is this likely to result in a significant impact Yes/No - Why
1. Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc.)?	No	This area of the city is already highly developed for infrastructure. The works proposed are minor and will not cause any physical changes to the surrounding environment.
2. Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes	No. Services such as power and water will be required during the construction phase. Mobile generators will be used during the construction phase. Construction materials will include paving sets, asphalt, stone fill, pipework, gullies, kerbing, cabling, ducting, traffic signal equipment etc. It is not considered that there will be significant use of these resources as part of the development.
3. Will the project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	Yes	No. Standard construction materials will be used and will not be harmful to human health or the environment. The contractor will ensure that the proposed works are carried out in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No.291 of 2013). It is envisaged that the risk of accidents having regard to substances or technologies is very low and therefore will not result in significant effects.
4. Will the project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes	No. Inert construction waste generated will be removed from the site areas and disposed of at a suitable licenced

Brief Project Description	Yes/No	Is this likely to result in a significant impact Yes/No - Why
		facility. The production of waste will be managed in accordance with the relevant waste legislation.
5. Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air or lead to exceeding Ambient Air Quality standards in Directives 2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC?	No	No  It is expected that some dust will be emitted during the construction works but this will not be significant. Emissions from construction plant and vehicles will arise during the construction phase but these will be minimal.
6. Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes.	No.  Standard construction noise is expected during construction activities. Rock breaking will be required as part of the works but will be short-term in duration.
7. Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	Yes.	No.  The extent of the works on land (in a highly urbanised area) is relatively small, excavation works are not significant, and dewatering is not required. During excavation works some water will be encountered and this will be allowed to percolate naturally through the existing soils. There will be no works carried out in the River Lee or the River Bride.
8. Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the project which could affect human health or the environment?	Yes.	No.  A "Project Supervisor for Construction Stage" will be appointed to manage safety issues during construction.
9. Will the Project result in social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	Yes.	No.  The proposed development will have a positive effect on people living, working and visiting the area as there will be improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and an improved public realm in the MacCurtain street area. This



Brief Project Description	Yes/No	Is this likely to result in a significant impact Yes/No - Why
		development will benefit traders and increase business in the area.
10. Are there any other factors which should be considered such as consequential development which could lead to environmental effects or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	Yes.	No.  Metropole Hotel Re-Development (17/37497) has been identified as a development which has the potential to result in cumulative effects with the proposed development. However, the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) implemented by the Contractor will be required to take into account the Metropole Hotel construction schedule. Therefore, significant effects are not envisaged.
11. Is the project located within or close to any areas which are protected under international, EU, or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No.  The proposed development is located along some of the quays of the River Lee. The extent of the works on land (in a highly urbanised area) is relatively small, excavation works are not significant, and dewatering is not required. During excavation works some water will be encountered and this will be allowed to percolate naturally through the existing soils. There will be no works carried out in the River Lee or the River Bride.  It is also located upstream of both Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC. A report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment was prepared by Arup. It is the opinion of Arup that it is possible to rule out likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites.
12. Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the project?	No.	No.  There are no additional areas of importance.
13. Are there any areas on or around the location which are used	Yes.	No.

Brief Project Description	Yes/No	Is this likely to result in a significant impact Yes/No - Why
by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the project?		The River Lee and Bride host a variety of flora and fauna but significant impacts as described previously will not arise.
14. Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters (or features of the marine environment) on or around the location that could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No. The River Lee and Bride are not within the development footprint and will not be affected by the works.
15. Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No.	No. The area is highly developed, and the proposed works are only to footpaths and streets and will not affect the landscape.
16. Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No. A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be implemented for the duration of the construction works in order to minimise any disruption to traffic flow on the road network at and surrounding the proposed development areas.
17. Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No. A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be implemented for the duration of the construction works in order to minimise any disruption to traffic flow on the road network at and surrounding the proposed development areas.
18. Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes.	No. The proposed development is concerned with improvements to footpaths and cycle lanes and therefore there will be no structures of significant height. The only above ground structures to be installed

Brief Project Description	Yes/No	Is this likely to result in a significant impact Yes/No - Why
19. Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	There are five protected structures listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) within the development boundary. None of these structures will be affected as the works will be carried out around them,  None of these structures are listed on the List of Protected Structures in the <i>Cork City Development Plan 2015 - 2021</i>
20. Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	No.	No.  There will be no loss of greenfield as part of this development.
21. Are there existing land uses on or around the location e.g. homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No.  There are many businesses and residential dwellings located within the proposed development boundary, particularly on MacCurtain Street. Access to these will be maintained during the construction phase. Significant impacts will not arise.
22. Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No.	No.  There are no plans for future land uses.
23. Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No.  There are many businesses residential dwelling within close proximity to the proposed development. Access to these will be maintained throughout the construction phase. Significant impacts will not arise.
24. Are there any areas on or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of	Yes.	No.  There are a number of sensitive receptors in close proximity to the proposed development such as,

Brief Project Description	Yes/No	Is this likely to result in a significant impact Yes/No - Why
worship, community facilities, which could be affected by the project?		residential dwellings, churches, schools and colleges etc.  The proposed development is located in an already busy environment. Any disturbance caused by the proposed development will be short term and temporary and will not have any long term significant effects.
25. Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	Construction works will take place along the quays adjacent to the River Lee and adjacent to the Bride. There are no instream works and there will be no significant negative effects on water quality due to the nature and extent of the works to be carried out.
26. Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	No.	No.  There are no areas around the proposed development which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage.
27. Is the project location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	No	No.  The proposed development areas along-side the quays are susceptible to flooding, however, the proposed works are minor. The proposed development will not exacerbate existing flooding. Neither will flooding cause the proposed works to present environmental problems given the minor nature of the works.

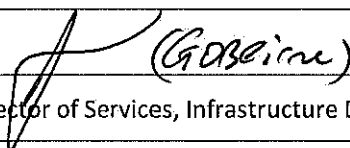
## SCREENING CONCLUSION STATEMENT

The prescribed classes of development and thresholds that trigger a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended. A review of the project types listed in the aforementioned Schedule 5, as amended has been carried out.

The proposed development is a type set out in Part 2 Class 10 (b)(iv) of Schedule 5 as described previously but it does not exceed the relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part. Therefore, it is a sub-threshold development and has been screened for EIA.

The information provided in this report and the EIA Screening Report prepared by Arup on behalf of Cork City Council provides details on the characteristics of the proposed development and its likely significant effects (if any) on the environment. It also provides the relevant details under each of the criteria set out in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended.

Based on the information provided in this report, and the attached EIA Screening Report prepared by Arup on behalf of Cork City Council, 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 required.

Name:	 (G. O'Sullivan)
Position:	Director of Services, Infrastructure Development on behalf of Cork City Council.
Date:	10 <sup>th</sup> July 2020



Cork City Council  
**MacCurtain Street Public  
Transport Improvement Scheme**  
EIA Screening Report

Issue 3 | 9 July 2020

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

Job number 262931-00

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# 1 Introduction

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Arup has prepared an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report on behalf of Cork City Council for the proposed MacCurtain Street Public Transport Improvement Scheme in Cork City.

This document provides the competent authority Cork City Council with the information necessary to undertake the EIA screening assessment in respect of the proposed development.

The 'MacCurtain Street Public Transport Improvement Scheme' (hereafter referred to as the proposed development) includes for changes in the management of traffic in the City Centre to improve the environment for pedestrians, particularly along MacCurtain Street, provide additional infrastructure to support improved access by bike into the city centre and enhancements to the public transport network to provide both improved journey times and reliability while maintaining access to the city centre off-street car parks.

The proposed development includes the following key measures.

- Enhanced pedestrian environment to include public realm improvements along MacCurtain Street/Coburg Street and Bridge Street;
- The provision of a two-way cycle facility along St Patrick's Quay and Camden Quay; and
- The provision of bus priority measures along Devonshire Street, Coburg Street and Bridge Street;
- The provision of a contra-flow bus lane along Cathedral Walk between Leitrim Street and Watercourse Road;
- The provision of two-way traffic movements along MacCurtain Street; and
- The reallocation of traffic lanes along Lavitt's Quay/Merchant's Quay and Anderson's Quay to improve capacity travelling eastbound.

The proposed works will include reconfiguration of traffic movements in the wider city centre to facilitate improved pedestrian, cyclist and bus accessibility. This traffic management plan includes the re-direction of all eastbound traffic towards Lavitt's Quay, Merchant's Quay while westbound traffic will be accommodated along St Patrick's Quay and Camden Quay. In addition, there will be public realm improvements along MacCurtain Street, Bridge Street and Coburg Street.

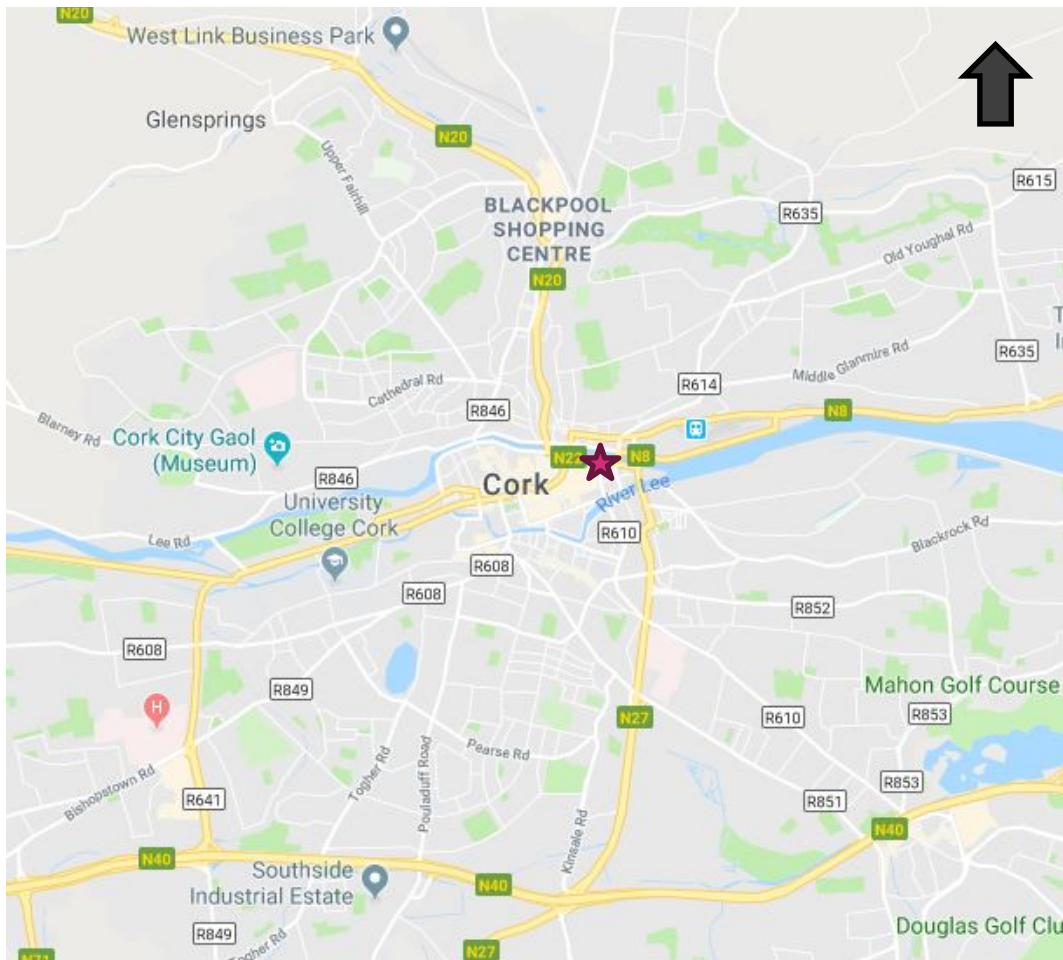
The proposed development will seek to reinforce and enhance the different uses and characteristics of MacCurtain Street, Bridge Street and Coburg Street particularly in terms of the layout of the street (footpath and roadway widths); the extent of provision for vehicles (traffic management, parking and loading); the rationalisation of street clutter (regulatory and directional signage in particular) and road markings; the introduction of appropriate streetscape elements (including surfaces, lighting, furniture and street trees).

In addition, other smaller scale construction works on Leirim Street, Wellington Road, St Patrick's Hill, Merchant's Quay, Anderson's Quay, Penrose Quay, Brian Boru Street, Brian Boru Bridge, Devonshire Street, Cathedral Walk, North Link Road, Lavitt's Quay will be required, the majority of these works include footpath re-construction, changes to traffic signals and some pavement reinstatement.

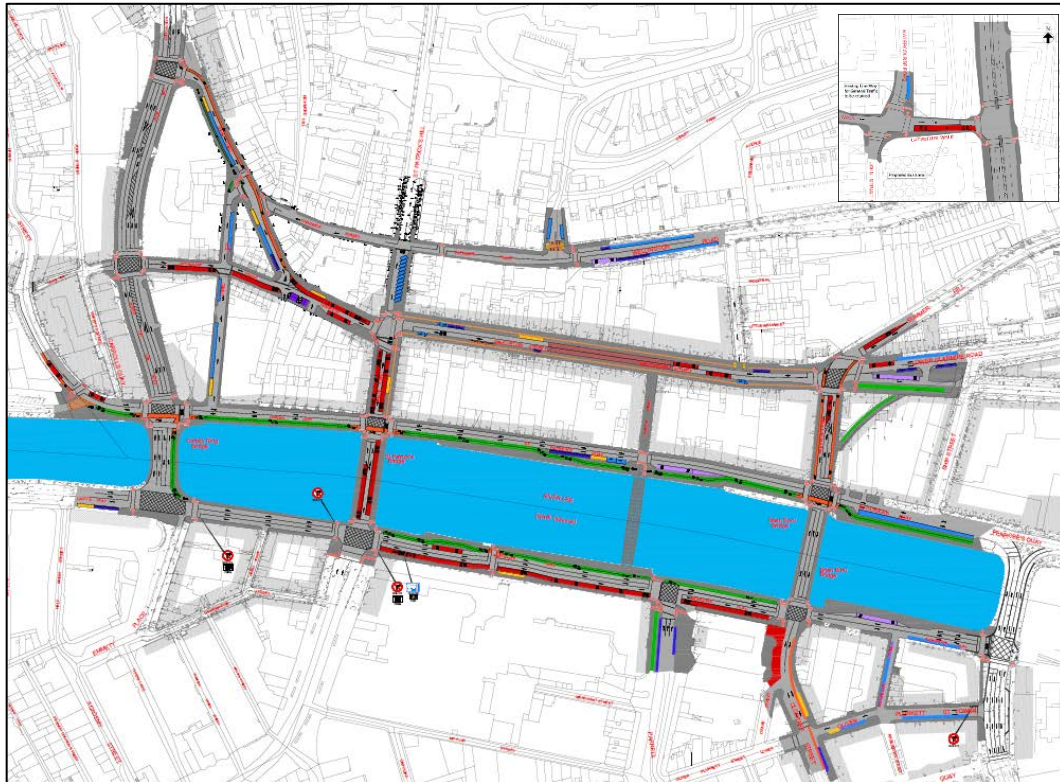
(Figure 2).

The location and boundary of the proposed development works can be seen in **Figure 1** and **2** below.

This document sets out the results of the EIA Screening and provides the competent authority, Cork City Council, with the information necessary to undertake the EIA screening assessment in respect of the proposed development.



**Figure 1: The location of the proposed development | Background Mapping © GoogleMaps**



**Figure 2: Development Boundary | Not to Scale |**

## 2 Legislation and Guidance and Requirements for EIA Screening

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### 2.1 Introduction

This section outlines the relevant legislation and guidance reviewed in the compilation of this EIA screening report. This section also examines the requirement for mandatory EIA against the relevant EIA classes and outlines the requirement for screening of sub-threshold developments.

### 2.2 Overview

The current requirements for EIA for projects are set out by the European Union in Council Directive 2011/92/EU<sup>1</sup> on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Public and Private Projects on the Environment as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU<sup>2</sup>.

The Planning and Development Acts 2000, as amended and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, were both by the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (SI No. 296 of 2018) to take account of the requirements of the EIA Directive (Directive 2014/52/EU).

Section 172 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000, as amended, sets out the requirement for EIA whilst the prescribed classes of development and thresholds that trigger a mandatory EIA are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended.

Section 103 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, sets out the requirements for screening a sub-threshold development for EIA. Finally, the information to be provided by the applicant or developer for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for EIA is set out in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2000, as amended.

A review of the above legislation was undertaken for the purpose of this EIA screening report and is further analysed in the sections below. The following guidance and consultation documents have also been considered during the preparation of this report:

- Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (2018) *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (August 2018)*;

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (codification).

<sup>2</sup> Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

- Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (2017) *Transposition of 2014 EIA Directive (2014/52/EU) in the Land Use Planning and EPA Licencing Systems*;
- Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (2017) *Implementation of Directive 2014/52/EU on the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA Directive): Advice on the Administrative Provisions in Advance of Transposition*;
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2003) *Environmental Effect Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development*;
- Environmental Protection Agency (2017) *Revised Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (Draft August 2017)*;
- Environmental Protection Agency (2015) *Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements Draft September 2015*;
- Environmental Protection Agency (2003) *Advice Notes on Current Practice in the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements*;
- Environmental Protection Agency (2002) *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements*; and
- European Commission (2017) *Guidance on EIA Screening*
- European Commission (2015) *Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive*.

## 2.3 EIA Directive 2014/52/EU

Directive (2014/52/EU) sets out the requirements of the EIA process, including screening the need for an EIA. Projects listed in Annex I of the EIA Directive require a mandatory EIA whilst projects listed in Annex II require screening to determine whether an EIA is required.

Articles 4(4) and 4(5) of the EIA Directive set out the requirements for EIA screening of Annex II projects as follows:

*“4(4) Where Member States decide to require a determination for projects listed in Annex II, the developer shall provide information on the characteristics of the project and its likely significant effects on the environment. The detailed list of information to be provided is specified in Annex IIA. The developer shall consider, where relevant, the available results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to Union legislation other than this Directive. The developer may also provide a description of any features of the project and/or measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.*

*4(5) The competent authority shall make its determination, on the basis of the information provided by the developer in accordance with paragraph 4 taking into account, where relevant, the results of preliminary verifications or assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to Union legislation other than this Directive. The determination shall be made available to the public and:*

*(a) where it is decided that an environmental effect assessment is required, state the main*



*reasons for requiring such assessment with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Annex III; or*

*(b) where it is decided that an environmental effect assessment is not required, state the main reasons for not requiring such assessment with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Annex III, and, where proposed by the developer, state any features of the project and/or measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.”*

The Planning and Development Acts 2000, as amended and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended have been amended by the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (SI No. 296 of 2018) to take account of the requirements of the EIA Directive (Directive 2014/52/EU). Refer to the sections below for further details.

## **2.4 Requirement for EIA under S.172 of Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2018**

Section 172 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2018 sets out the requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment as follows:

*[172 (1) An environmental impact assessment shall be carried out by the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, in respect of an application for consent for proposed development where either—*

*(a) the proposed development would be of a class specified in—*

*(i) Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, and either—*

*(I) such development would equal or exceed any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, or*

*(II) no quantity, area or other limit is specified in that Part in respect of the development concerned,*

*or*

*(ii) Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 and either—*

*(I) such development would equal or exceed any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, or*

*(II) no quantity, area or other limit is specified in that Part in respect of the development concerned,*

*or*

*(b)(i) the proposed development would be of a class specified in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 but does not equal or exceed the relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, and*

*(ii) the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, determines that the proposed development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.]*



## 2.5 Analysis of requirement for mandatory EIA - Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended

The prescribed classes of development and thresholds that trigger a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2018. A review of the project types listed in the aforementioned Schedule 5 has been carried out.

### Part 1

The proposed MacCurtain Street Public Transport Improvement Scheme is not a project type/class listed in Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2018.

### Part 2 Class 10

The project types that are relevant to the proposed development in Part 2 are listed below;

#### *10. Infrastructure*

*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 this paragraph, “business district” means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)*

The proposed development could be interpreted as being “urban development”<sup>3</sup> located within a “business district”. It should be noted however, that the vast majority of this project constitutes the improvement of infrastructure (urban development) that already exists rather than “new” urban development.

The total construction area required for the proposed development is 1.92 hectares (ha), refer to **Figure 2** above. It does not equal nor exceed the 2-hectare threshold; therefore, a mandatory EIA is not required. The construction areas include for the following areas:

- Footpaths along the Leirim Street;
- Footpaths along Devonshire Street;
- All of Coburg Street, Bridge Street and MacCurtain Street;
- Pedestrian crossings on Wellington Road with associated footpath works and a raised pedestrian gateway treatment at the junction of Sidney Hill;
- The signalisation of the junction of Cathedral Walk and Watercourse Road;

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<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2015) *Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive* states that “projects to which the terms ‘urban’ and ‘infrastructure’ can relate, such as the construction of sewerage and water supply networks, could also be included in the Annex II (10)(b) category.

- The existing traffic island at the western end of Lower Glanmire Road and a small section of its northern footpath;
- Footpath improvements along the southern side of Mulgrave Road;
- Footpath and cycle track construction along the southern side of Camden Quay;
- Footpath improvements at the junction of Cathedral Walk/Watercourse Road;
- Footpath and cycle lane construction along the southern side of St Patrick's Quay;
- Pedestrian crossing on St Patrick's Quay opposite Mary Elmes Bridge;
- A section of footpath on both sides of Penrose Quay;
- Footpaths on both sides of Anderson's Quay;
- Footpaths on both sides of Merchant's Quay and cycle track construction on its northern side; and
- Section of footpath on the southern side of Lavitt's Quay.

The above construction work areas will be supplemented with upgrades to the existing traffic signals within the city centre along with associated changes to existing street signs and road markings.

## 2.5.1 Conclusion

From an assessment of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, as detailed above, it is considered that none of the criteria requiring a mandatory EIA under this Schedule apply to the proposed MacCurtain Street Public Transport Improvement Scheme. Therefore, it is considered that a mandatory EIA is not required.

## 2.6 Sub-Threshold EIA

### 2.6.1 S.103 of Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended

Section 92 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended defines sub-threshold development as *'development of a type set out in Part 2 of Schedule 5 which does not equal or exceed, as the case may be, a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development.'*

The proposed development is a type set out in Part 2 Class 10 (b)(iv) of Schedule 5 as described previously but it does not exceed the relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part. Therefore, it is a sub-threshold development and requires to be screened for EIA as detailed below.

Section 103 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended sets out the requirements for screening a sub-threshold planning application for EIA as follows:

103.

*(1) (a) Where a planning application for sub-threshold development is not accompanied by an EIAR, the planning authority shall carry out a preliminary examination of, at the least, the nature, size or location of the development.*

*(b) Where the planning authority concludes, based on such preliminary examination, that—*

*(i) there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall conclude that an EIA is not required,*

*(ii) there is significant and realistic doubt in regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall, by notice in writing served on the applicant, require the applicant to submit to the authority the information specified in Schedule 7A for the purposes of a screening determination unless the applicant has already provided such information, or*

*(iii) there is a real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, it shall—*

*(I) conclude that the development would be likely to have such effects, and*

*(II) by notice in writing served on the applicant, require the applicant to submit to the authority an EIAR and to comply with the requirements of article 105.*

*(1A) (a) Where an applicant is submitting to the planning authority the information specified in Schedule 7A, the information shall be accompanied by any further relevant information on the characteristics of the proposed development and its likely significant effects on the environment, including, where relevant, information on how the available results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to European Union legislation other than the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive have been taken into account.*

*(b) Where an applicant is submitting to the planning authority the information specified in Schedule 7A, the information may be accompanied by a description of the features, if any, of the proposed development and the measures, if any, envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment of the development.*

## 2.6.2 Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended

An examination has been made as to whether the proposed development would or would not, individually and in combination with other developments, be likely to have significant effects on the environment (with reference to the criteria set out in Schedules 7 and 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2018).

The information provided in this report provides details on the characteristics of the proposed development and its likely significant effects (if any) on the environment. It also provides the relevant details under each of the criteria set out in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

Regard has also been given to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Regulations and to the Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development (DoEHLG, 2003) in the compilation of this report.

This information will assist the competent authority, Cork City Council to make a screening determination. The final determination on EIA screening will be made by Cork City Council.

The criteria in Schedule 7A is presented in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1: Criteria outlined in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018 – Information to be provided by the applicant or developer for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for Environmental Impact Assessment**

Schedule 7A requirements	Relevant section of this screening report
1. A description of the proposed development, including in particular: (a) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works; and (b) a description of the location of the proposed development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.	Section 4  Section 5
2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.	Section 6
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: (a) the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant; and (b) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.	Section 6
4. The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7	

The criteria in Schedule 7 is presented in **Table 2** below

**Table 2: Criteria outlined in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018 (Criteria 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-
(a) the size and design of the whole of the proposed development,
(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,
(c) the nature of any associated demolition works,
(d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity,

(e) the production of waste,
(f) 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, and
(h) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).
<b>2. Location of proposed development</b>
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,
(b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,
(c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;</li> <li>(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;</li> <li>(iii) mountain and forest areas;</li> <li>(iv) nature reserves and parks;</li> <li>(v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive and;</li> <li>(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;</li> </ul>
<b>3. Type and characteristics of the potential impacts</b>
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—
(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
(b) the nature of the impact,
(c) the transboundary nature of the impact,
(d) the intensity and complexity of the impact,
(e) the probability of the impact,
(f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact
(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, and
(h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

For this EIA Screening Report, the criteria outlined in Schedules 7 and 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018 are grouped under the following three headings, which are individually addressed in the following sections:

- (i) Characteristics of proposed development (**Section 4**);
- (ii) Location of proposed development (**Section 5**); and
- (iii) Characteristics of potential effects (**Section 6**).

## 3 Outline of the Proposed Development

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### 3.1 Introduction

This section describes the physical characteristics of the proposed development with regard to the design, construction and operational elements of relevance to this EIA screening report. The proposed development is primarily a traffic management scheme with complimentary public realm improvement works along MacCurtain Street, Coburg Street and Bridge Street.

The proposed development includes the following key proposals:

- Enhanced pedestrian environment to include public realm improvements along MacCurtain Street/ Coburg Street and Bridge Street;
- The provision of a two-way cycle facility along St Patrick's Quay and Camden Quay; and
- The provision of bus priority measures along Devonshire Street, Coburg Street and Bridge Street;
- The provision of a contra-flow bus lane along Cathedral Walk between Leitrim Street and Watercourse Road;
- The provision of two-way traffic movements along MacCurtain Street; and
- The reallocation of traffic lanes along Lavitt's Quay/Merchant's Quay and Anderson's Quay to improve capacity travelling eastbound.

MacCurtain Street is the premier street located within the northern part of the city centre. MacCurtain Street has a changed streetscape from its historic origins, and this change in use and character coupled with the current level of high through traffic along the street requires change which was identified in the City Centre Movement Strategy.

This strategy envisages that MacCurtain Street will no longer act as a main through route for vehicular traffic and its primary focus will be on improved street activity with enhanced pedestrian facilities and an important route for public transport traffic serving the northside of Cork City.

### 3.2 Operational

Following construction there will be a reduction in public transport times as a result of the bus priority measures put in place, improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists by means of the improved footpaths and introduction of cycle lanes, increased safety for vulnerable road users and an improved public realm including trees and street furniture.

During the operational phase, there will be an increase in traffic along some routes where there will be a reconfiguration of the road.

Possible effects on sensitive receptors due to emissions from changes in traffic flows were analysed in those reconfigured routes where there are residential dwellings, such as MacCurtain Street, Carroll's Quay, Coburg Street, Watercourse Road, Wellington Road and Leirim Street. This is discussed further in **Section 6.2** below.

Once the development is operational there will be a benefit to street traders on MacCurtain Street, Coburg Street and Bridge Street. A new public realm will encourage business in the various shops and restaurants in this area. Currently, the heavy traffic flow on MacCurtain Street and Coburg Street, makes it a noisy and unpleasant place for pedestrians and road users and a reduction in the volume of traffic passing through aims to improve this issue.

During operation, surface and storm water drainage systems will operate as they do currently via side street gullies with surface water collected flowing into the River Lee. Some gullies will be relocated as part of the proposed works and the works will be carried out over a phased duration.

### 3.3 Construction

Construction works within the proposed development area will include excavation of the street surfacing and sub base, removal of existing surface materials, installation of new utilities, build-up of the street, repaving the street to include installation of new high quality public realm, planting trees and other decorative plants, and installation of new street furniture, street lighting and artworks. No demolition works will be required to facilitate the proposed development.

The works are to be undertaken on a phased basis, with an estimated length of time for all construction works to be completed of 12 months, with an anticipated start date of Q1 2021.

It is envisaged that the maximum depth of excavation will be 1m below the existing surface level, with the majority of the excavations approximately 500mm below the existing surface level. The exact location of new tree planting and structural supports for e.g. street lighting will be determined as part of the detailed design process, in order to locate foundations such that they do not impact on services or other underground structures.

Barriers and hoardings will be installed to restrict access and to provide safety measures for workers and passers-by. Excavation works will be carried out on a phased basis to limit the impact on the activity of the street. This phasing will be set out in detail in an agreed Construction & Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Traffic Management Plan (TMP), which will be implemented for the duration of the construction phase.

Access to the city centre and the properties where construction works are proposed will be maintained at all times during the construction phase. This may require night works for final surfacing, utility installation in the vicinity of property entrances, etc. Details of this scheduling will be confirmed as part of the CEMP and TMP.



The scale of construction proposed for the North Link Road, Lavitt's Quay, Merchant's Quay, Cathedral Walk, Anderson's Quay will require the temporary closure of a traffic lane to facilitate a safe working area.

The management of the construction works will enable the retention of at least one lane of traffic on MacCurtain Street and Coburg Street at all times and it will be necessary to divert some of the through traffic onto Lavitt's Quay and Merchant's Quay to manage the flow of traffic through the city during construction.

Existing bus routes will be maintained through the city centre. Temporary relocation of bus stops will be required to facilitate construction works at their existing locations, and the reliability of cross-city services may be temporarily impacted by the construction works. Bus services currently utilising the Camden Quay contraflow bus lane will need to divert during the course of the construction works.

The number of construction staff on site will vary throughout the works. It is possible that multiple crews would be on site in different areas of the city at any one time. Typically, crews would have 4-5 members, plus the operator of an excavator and/or mini-excavator. For resurfacing of asphalt, a typical crew would consist of 12-15 members plus associated plant, and delivery trucks. At any one time on a typical day, no more than 20-25 staff would be on site.

The Contractors Traffic Management Plan will include construction site offices, the location of which will be agreed with CCC. Staff parking arrangements will need to form part of the Contractor's Traffic Management Plan and this will also be subject to agreement with CCC. Construction vehicles will require access to works areas for delivery and removal of materials, but it is anticipated that these will require parking for a short duration only for loading and unloading of material.

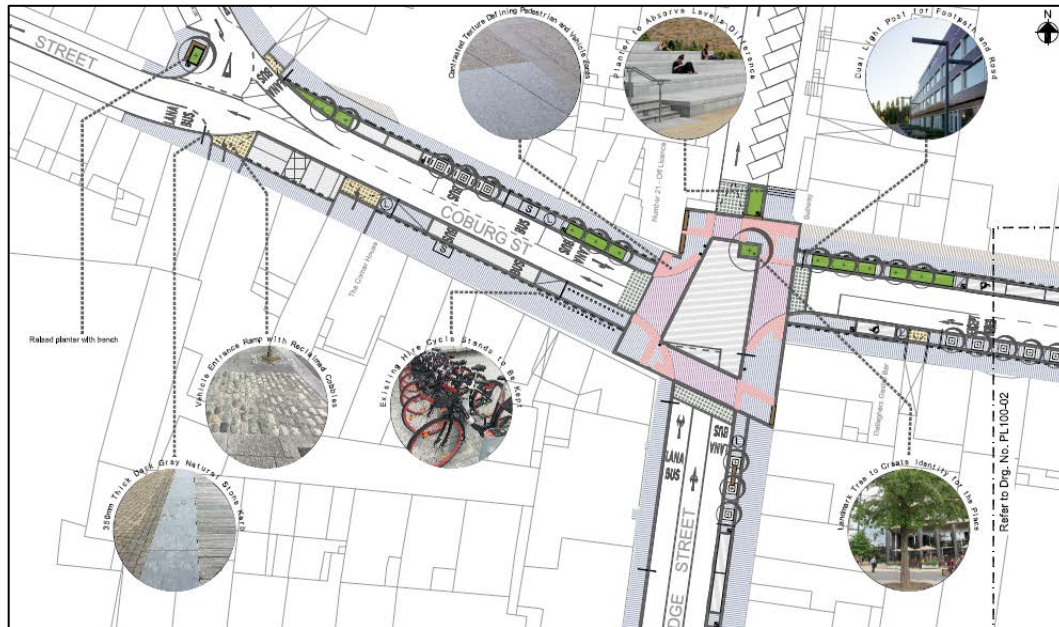
The Contractor will ensure that the proposed works are carried out in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No. 291 of 2013). There is a low probability that accidents or pollution spillages will occur as the construction works are standard in nature and are minor (such as footpath replacement, road resurfacing and service excavations). This type of work is frequently carried out throughout Cork city and other cities throughout Ireland on a regular basis. Therefore, significant environmental effects will not arise.

### 3.3.1 Coburg Street and Bridge Street

The Public Realm proposals for Coburg Street and Bridge Street are presented in **Figure 3** below and include the following key proposals:

- Convert Coburg Street from two eastbound general traffic lanes to one new westbound general traffic lane and one eastbound bus lane (24 hour);
- Provide two new bus stops on Coburg Street with associated bus shelters;
- Upgrade the southern footpath along Coburg Street to include the relocation of the public bike share scheme within the same area;

- Upgrade the northern footpath along Coburg Street;
- Provide set down spaces and loading bay on Coburg Street;
- Introduce a bus priority signalised junction at the junction of Bridge Street with Coburg Street;
- Provide new paving and enhanced pedestrian provision through the junction of Bridge Street and Coburg Street;
- Introduce a new southbound bus only lane (24 hour) on Bridge Street to replace one general northbound traffic lane;
- Upgrade the footpaths along Bridge Street to include the provision of a pedestrian ramp adjacent to the steps at the junction of Bridge Street and St Patrick's Quay;
- Provide loading bay on Bridge Street;
- Upgrade all existing traffic signals along Coburg Street and Bridge Street to include the provision of CCTV at the junctions;
- Provide enhanced public realm to include ancillary street furniture, cycle parking and trees;
- Upgrade the existing public lighting network along the streets;
- Coburg Street and Bridge Street will be resurfaced and new road markings presenting the revised traffic management along both streets will be installed.



**Figure 3: Public realm proposals for Coburg Street and Bridge Street | Not to Scale**

### 3.3.2 St Patrick's Hill, St Patrick's Place and Wellington Road

- Reverse the section of St Patrick's Hill between MacCurtain Street and St. Patrick's Place from southbound currently to northbound traffic flow;
- Relocate the existing on-street parking from the western side of the street to the eastern side of the street;
- Provide enhanced pedestrian facilities to include new pedestrian signalised crossings on St Patrick's Place and Wellington Road and a raised pedestrian table at the junction of Sidney Hill;
- Modify the existing parking in the vicinity of Sidney Hill to include the provision of set down spaces and a coach parking area.

### 3.3.3 MacCurtain Street and Harley's Street

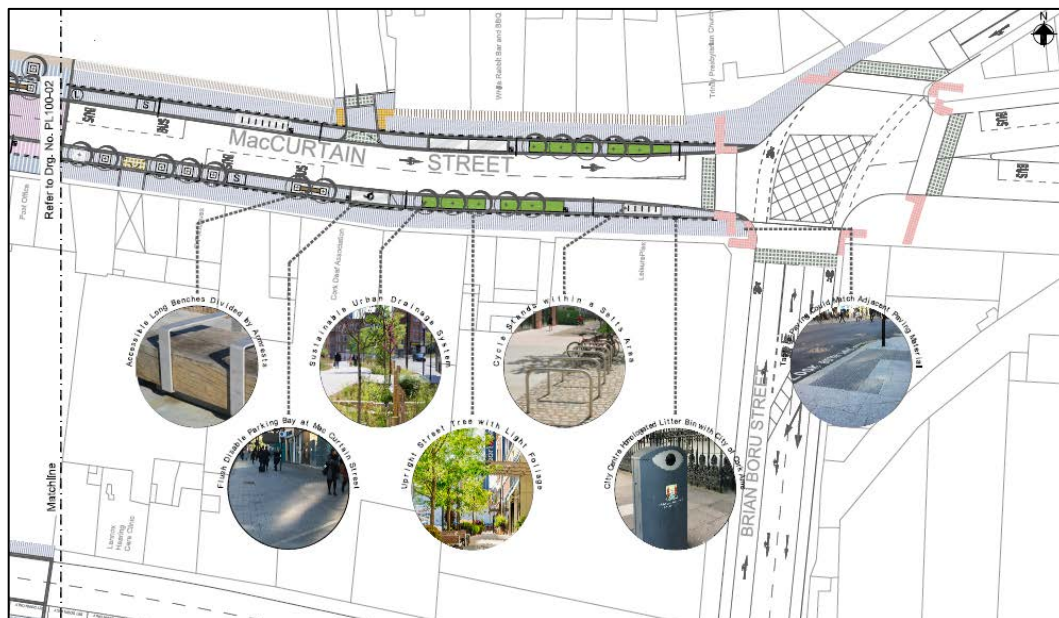
The Public Realm proposals for MacCurtain Street are presented in the **Figures 4 and 5** below and include the following key proposals:

- Convert MacCurtain Street from one way eastbound to two-way traffic;
- Provide enhanced public realm to include, wider footpaths, a spill out area, trees, cycle parking, disabled parking spaces and the provision of set down spaces which can be temporarily converted to outdoor sitting areas under licence;
- Provide a paved shared surface area within a central position along MacCurtain Street to include its junction with Harley's Street;
- Pedestrianisation of Harley's Street with service access retained for premises directly accessed from Harley's Street;

- Provide two new bus stops on MacCurtain Street with associated bus shelters to the east of Harley's Street;
- Upgrade existing traffic signals to include provision of CCTV at the junctions;
- Upgrade the existing public lighting network along the street;
- Provide night time taxi rank.



**Figure 4: Public realm proposals for MacCurtain Street | Not to Scale**



**Figure 5: Public realm proposals for MacCurtain Street | Not to Scale**

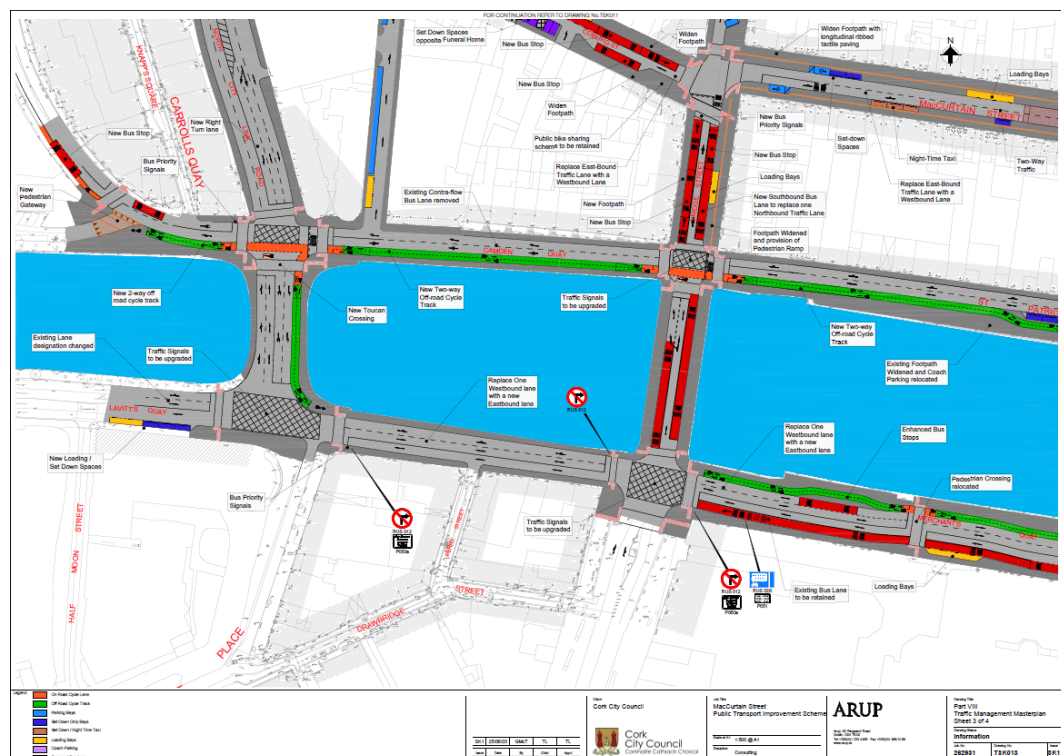
### 3.3.4 Brian Boru Bridge and Brian Boru Street

- Convert one lane of Brian Boru Street from southbound traffic flow to northbound traffic flow;
- Convert a section of the central southbound traffic lane to a northbound right turn bus lane on Brian Boru Street;
- Convert one lane of Brian Boru Bridge from southbound traffic flow to northbound traffic flow.

### 3.3.5 St Patrick's Quay

The street improvement works along St Patrick's Quay are presented in Figure 6 below and include for the following:

- Provide a new two-way cycle track on the southern side of the Quay;
- Relocate some of the existing coach parking facilities to Anderson's Quay, Lower Glanmire Road and Alfred Street;
- Provide set down spaces on the western side of Mary Elmes Bridge and relocate loading and disabled parking bays from the northern side of the street to the southern side;
- Upgrade the traffic signals at the junction of St Patrick's Quay/Bridge Street and St Patrick's Quay/ Brian Boru Bridge;
- Upgrade the existing footpaths and public lighting network along the street.

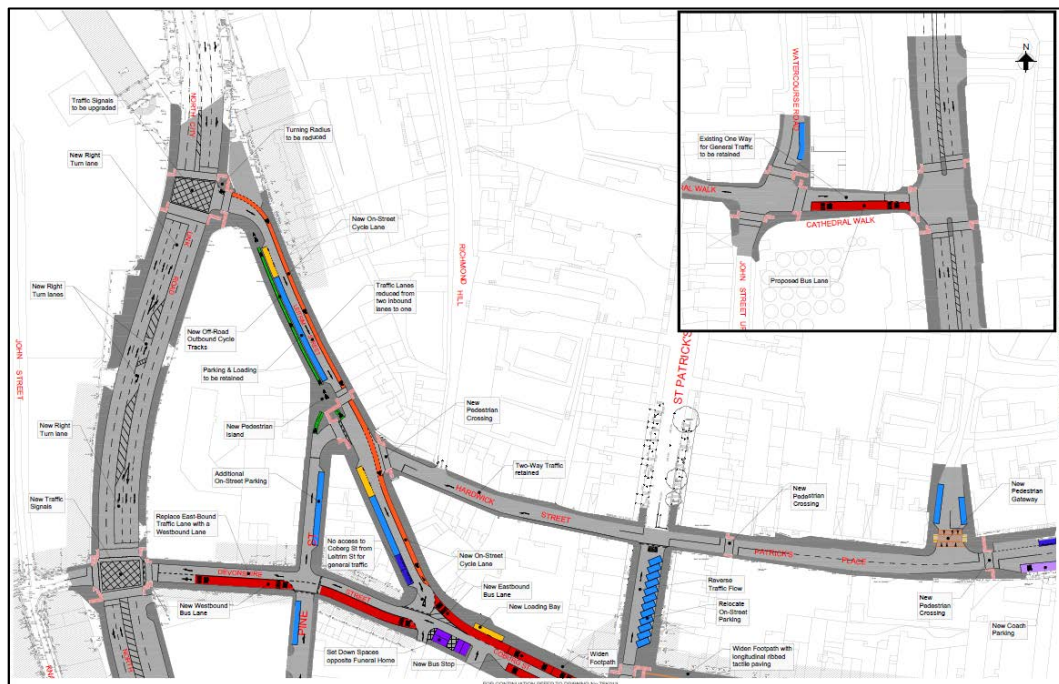


**Figure 6: Street improvement works – Sheet 1 of 4 | Not to Scale**



### 3.3.6 Camden Quay and North Link Road and Mulgrave Road

- Provide a new footpath and a new two-way cycle track to replace the existing southern footpath on Camden Quay;
- Remove the eastbound contra flow bus lane along the northern side of Camden Quay;
- Provide right turn lanes and ghost island road markings along the central median on the North Link Road within the scheme area;
- Provide new pedestrian gateway at the junction of Popes Quay and Mulgrave Road;
- Upgrade the junction of Camden Quay/Christy Ring Bridge to provide for enhanced pedestrian and cycle crossing on the bridge and revised traffic movements at the junction. The junction upgrade will include for the provision of CCTV and new traffic signals and bus priority measures;
- Provide new bus stop on Mulgrave Road and a new bus stop on Camden Quay;
- Replace a section of the existing northbound cycle lane with a new two way off road cycle track between Christy Ring Bridge and Popes Quay.



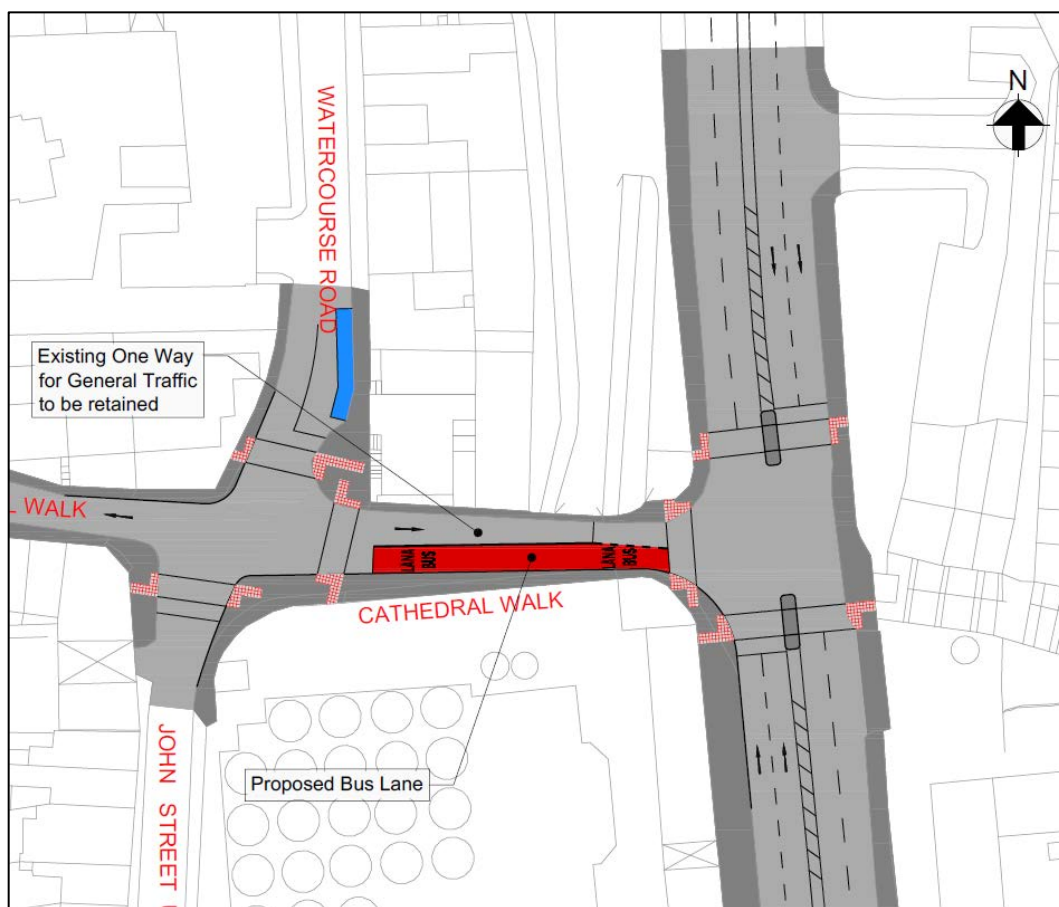
**Figure 7: Street improvement works – Sheet 2 of 4 | Not to Scale**

### 3.3.7 Leirim Street

- Provide an inbound cycle lane;
- Provide an outbound cycle track between Hardwick Street and the North Link Road;
- Provide set down spaces, on-street parking and loading bays along the western side of the street;
- Reduce two southbound traffic lanes to one southbound traffic Lane;
- Upgrade the existing public lighting network along the street;
- Upgrade all existing traffic signals along the street.

### 3.3.8 Cathedral Walk

- Convert Cathedral Walk from its junction with Watercourse Road to North Link Road (N20) from two eastbound traffic lanes to one east bound traffic lane and one westbound bus lane (24 hour);
- Provide a new signalised junction at the intersection of Watercourse Road, Cathedral Walk and Upper John Street;
- Provide bus priority at the junction of Cathedral walk and North Link Road (N20).



**Figure 8: Cathedral Walk improvement works | Not to Scale**

### 3.3.9 Lower Glanmire Road

- Provide coach set down bays with associated shelters along the northern side of the existing bus only lane;
- Provide a new bus stop on the northern side of Lower Glanmire Road to include an enhanced waiting area for passengers;
- Upgrade Footpaths on north side of the Lower Glanmire Road.

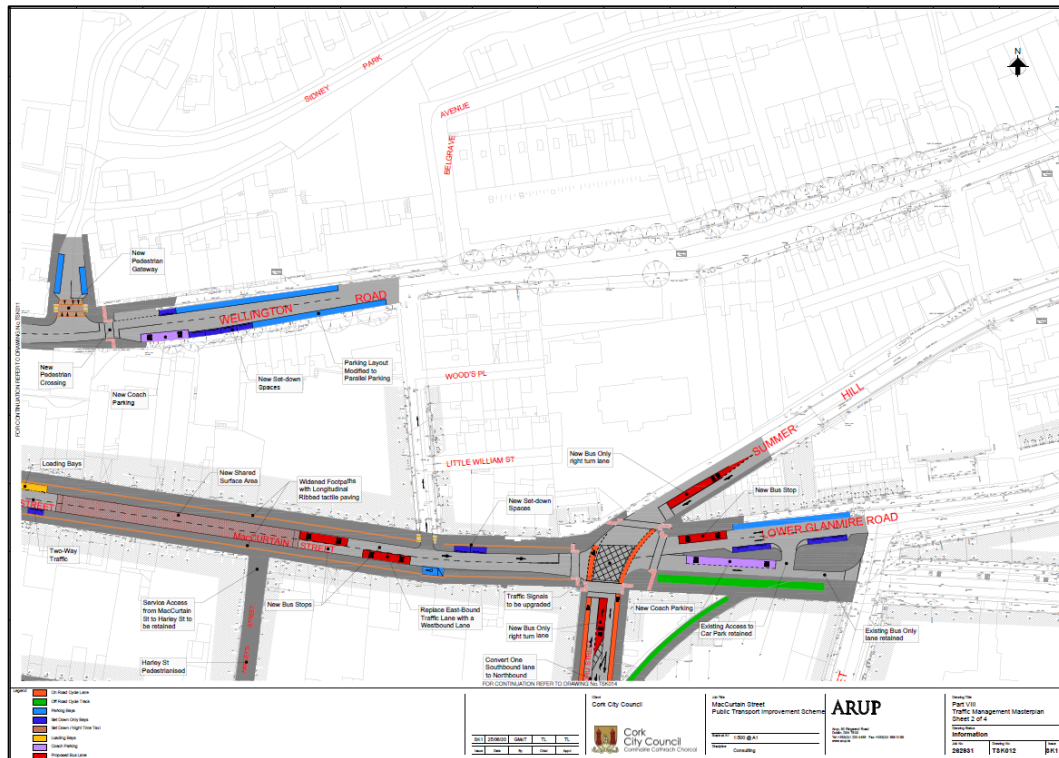


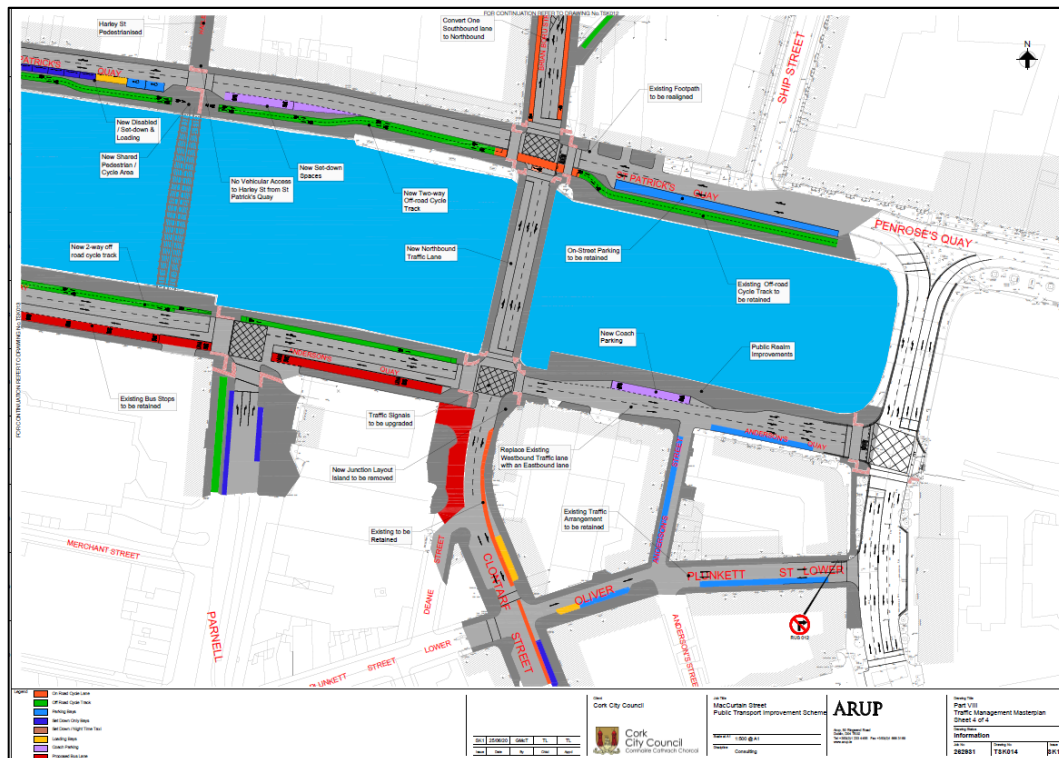
Figure 9: Street improvement works – Sheet 3 of 4 | Not to Scale

### 3.3.10 Merchant's Quay

- Replace one westbound general traffic lane with an eastbound general traffic lane;
- Replace a section of an existing eastbound cycle lane with a new two way off road cycle track;
- Relocate the existing pedestrian crossing on the street;
- Retain the existing loading bay on the southern side of Merchant's Quay;
- Upgrade all existing traffic signals along the street to include provision of CCTV;
- Install a right turn restriction for all traffic except for buses travelling between Merchant's Quay and St Patrick's Quay;
- Upgrade and modify the footpaths on both sides of the street to accommodate the new traffic management arrangements;



- Upgrade the traffic signals at the junction of Merchant's Quay/St Patrick's Street to accommodate new traffic arrangements.



**Figure 10: Street improvement works – Sheet 4 of 4 | Not to Scale**

### 3.3.11 Anderson's Quay and surrounding streets

- On Anderson's Quay replace the westbound traffic lane with an eastbound traffic lane from its junction with Clontarf Street to Custom House Street;
- Provide a new coach parking area along the northern side of the street;
- Upgrade the public realm in the vicinity of the new coach parking area to include upgrades to the public lighting along the street;
- Upgrade of the junction of Anderson's Quay and Clontarf Street.

### 3.3.12 Penrose Quay

- Modify the northern footpath on approach to its junction with Brian Boru Street.

### 3.3.13 Summerhill North

- Provide a bus only right turn lane from Summerhill North to MacCurtain Street.

### 3.3.14 Devonshire Street and Pine Street

- Replace the existing eastbound lane with a westbound general traffic lane on Devonshire Street;

- Provide a westbound bus lane (24 hour) on Devonshire Street;
- Upgrade the existing footpaths and public lighting system;
- Provide a new signalised junction at the intersection of North Link Road and Devonshire Street;
- Provide additional on street parking and loading bay on Pine Street.

### **3.3.15 Christy Ring Bridge and Lavitt's Quay**

- Provide two eastbound general traffic lanes on Lavitt's Quay;
- Install a right turn restriction for all traffic, except for buses travelling from Lavitt's Quay to Christy Ring Bridge;
- Upgrade all traffic signals along the quay to include provision of CCTV;
- Provide set down spaces and a loading bay on Lavitt's Quay west of Emmet Place;
- Provide a new two-way cycle track on the eastern side of Christy Ring Bridge to replace one existing northbound traffic lane.

## 4 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

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### 4.1 Introduction

The first criterion included in the 7<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Regulations relates to the characteristics of the proposed development, having regard to the size of the proposed development, accumulation with other proposed developments, nature associated with demolition works, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisances and risk of accidents. A brief assessment of the various elements and their location in relation to the proposed development is presented below.

The Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development (DoEHLG, 2003) outlines the information to be considered under this heading as follows:

- *“The characteristics of proposed development, in particular:*
- *the size of the proposed development,*
- *the cumulation with other proposed development,*
- *the nature of any associated demolition works,*
- *the use of natural resources,*
- *the production of waste, pollution and nuisances,*
- *the risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used.”*

### 4.2 The Size of the Proposed Development and Cumulation with Other Proposed Developments

The proposed MacCurtain Street Public Transport Enhancement Project will be carried out on a number of locations around Cork City including MacCurtain Street, Coburg Street, Bridge Street, St Patrick’s Quay, Camden Quay, Cathedral Walk, Leirim Street, Devonshire Street, Lower Glanmire Road, Merchant’s Quay, Anderson’s Quay and Lavitt’s Quay. Cork City Council online planning records were consulted as part of the preparation of this report.

In addition to the proposed development, other relevant proposed or permitted projects in the surrounding areas of Cork City have been considered. These include:

**Metropole Hotel Re-Development (17/37497)** – Permission has been granted to MacCurtain Street Hoteliers Ltd for a development. The proposed development will comprise of the part demolition of the existing structures on the site of 546sqm, the construction of a part 5, part 6, part 7 and part 8 storey over basement guest accommodation facility with an overall area of 1949sqm, the provision of a public bar facility on the ground floor with an external courtyard and all necessary site works not limited to but including ancillary works. Construction was expected to begin early 2019 and is anticipated to take 24 months to complete.

**Parnell Place Hotel Development (18/38009)** – Permission has been granted for the Parnell Place Hotel Development. The development will consist of the partial demolition, redevelopment and extension of 7/8 and 9 Parnell Street: the demolition of existing structures to the rear of 7/8 and 9 Parnell Place on Deane Street, Cork, excluding a red brick chimney; and the demolition of existing structures on Deane Street, Cork, including the demolition of a habitable house, to facilitate a hotel development of 165 no. bedrooms of between 3-7 storeys plus rooftop plant, principally accessed from Deane Street, as well as Parnell Place, with ground floor reception area, restaurant/bar, retail unit, food hall and café/retail unit. The proposed development includes a new skylight the roof of 7/8 Parnell Place: a link bridge on 3 levels connecting 7/8 Parnell Place to the new building fronting Deane Street; green roofs; rooftop plant enclosures; signage; bin stores; ESB substation; and all associated ancillary services. The proposed development also includes the re-opening of an historic laneway connecting Parnell place with Deane Street, a set down area on Deane Street and all associated site development, elevation treatment and landscaping works. The construction period for the development will be circa 18 months from the time of commencement on site.

**Woods Place Apartment Development (17/37657)** – The proposed development will comprise of: (1) the part demolition of the existing structures on the site of 546.07sqm; (2) the construction of a part 5, part 6, part 7 and part 8 storey over basement guest accommodation facility (of 73 rooms providing 90 bedspaces) with an overall area of 1,949m<sup>2</sup>; (3) the provision of a public bar facility on the ground floor with an external courtyard, and (4) all necessary site works, not limited but including ancillary works.

**Prism Office Development (18/37894)** – Permission has been granted for the construction of an office building which will comprise of 15 storeys above ground level and a gross floor area of circa 5,985sqm on a triangular site which is bounded by Clontarf Street, Deane Street and Oliver Plunkett Street Lower in Cork City. The proposed ground floor use will comprise of lobby, office rooms and building services and the first to fourteenth floors will comprise of office use and building services. A rooftop terrace will be provided for staff above the fourteenth floor and will include a canopy structure that will oversail the public footpath adjoining Clontarf Street. A glass canopy oversails Deane Street at the third-floor level. From the third floor up to the up to the roof terrace the proposed building will overhang the public footpaths along Clontarf street and Oliver Plunkett Street Lower by approximately 2 meters. The proposed development will also include a double basement with ancillary plant and equipment and a water tank.

The main pedestrian access to the building will be via Clontarf Street and existing electricity sub-station will be relocated within a secure room on the ground floor of the proposed building with secure access from Deane Street.

**Horgan's Quay Development (17/37563)** – Permission was granted for this development in April 2018. The development is currently under construction and consists of a mixed use residential, office, hotel and retail development with ancillary creche, landscaping and public realm works resulting in the creation of 4 no. public spaces with an area of 5,080 m<sup>2</sup>, services and site development works. The proposed development makes provision for the conservation, refurbishment, alteration and change of use of the Old Railway Station (Station Master's Building), Carriage Shed and the Goods Shed which are Protected Structures to facilitate their integration into the proposed development and for the demolition of structures, including the existing wall to Horgan's Quay which forms part of their curtilage. Construction commenced in August 2018 and it is anticipated that they will be complete in December 2022.

**Custom House Tower – 19/38589** - Planning permission is sought by Tower Development Properties Ltd for: Redevelopment of the Custom House site at North Custom House Quay and South Custom House Quay, Custom House Street, Cork City to provide a 240-bedroom hotel, 25 no. hotel serviced suites, and a range of commercial uses including retail, office, food and beverage, distillery, tourism and leisure. The redevelopment will have a gross floor area of approximately 31,604m<sup>2</sup>. The proposed development consists of the carrying out of works to Protected Structures PS060, PS818 and PS163. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report has been submitted to the Planning Authority with the application. A Natura Impact Statement has been submitted to the Planning Authority with the application.

**Albert Quay Build -to-Rent Scheme – ABP 305779** – Planning permission has been granted Build-to-Rent Strategic Housing Development consisting of 201no. 1 (93), 2 (104) and 3 (4) bed apartments in a building that ranges in height from 8, 11 to 24 storeys over ground floor. The project will consist of resident support facilities (concierge, management facilities, post and parcel areas, and laundry and waste management facilities) and resident services and amenities (lounge area, library, workspace, meeting rooms, coffee dock, games room, cinema room, dining area, gym, 2no. rooftop terraces and an internal amenity area on Level 24). The proposed development will also comprise a ground floor cafe; public plaza; rooftop plant; canopies; two basement levels, to include 402no. cycle spaces, 62no. car parking spaces and plant/services, as well as an additional storage area; and all associated site development, ancillary development, including 2no. ESB substations, and landscaping and public realm works. The total above ground gross floor area proposed is 21,220m<sup>2</sup> (including existing buildings). The development involves the demolition of the former Sextant pub and the retention and refurbishment of listed buildings also on the site. An NIS was prepared as part of the planning application for this development.

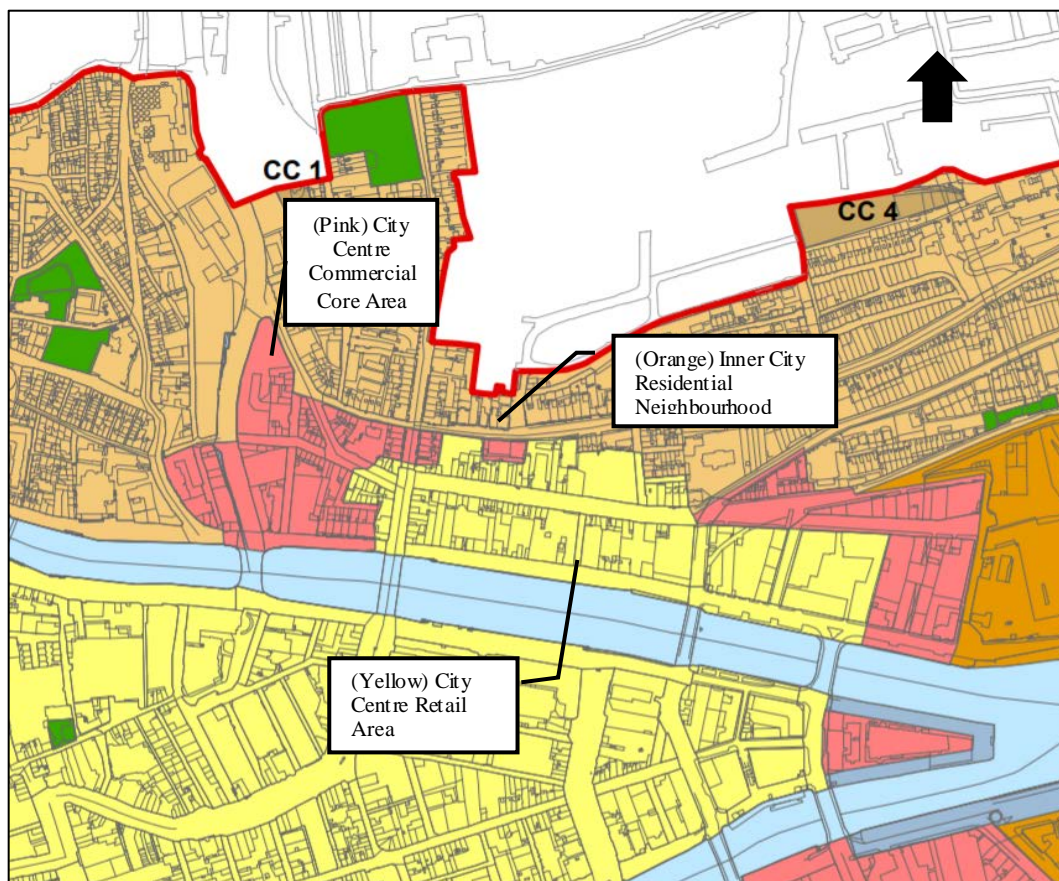
Due to the minor nature of the works associated with the proposed development and the short-term duration of the works, there is unlikely to be any significant cumulative effects in combination with the above projects.

### 4.3 Nature of Any Associated Demolition Works

No demolition works will be carried out as part of the proposed development.

### 4.4 Use of Natural Resources and Production of Waste, Pollution and Nuisances

The majority of the proposed development consists of hardstanding – mostly road surface, cycle track and footpath. The proposed development spans an area that is zoned for multiple uses (Refer to **Figure 11**). The area along MacCurtain Street, St Patrick's Quay, Merchant's Quay and Anderson's Quay are zoned for use as "City Centre Retail Area", Camden Quay, Leirim Street and Lavitt's Quay are zoned as "City Centre Commercial Area" and Wellington Road, Cathedral Walk and part of Leirim Street are zoned as "Inner City Residential Neighbourhood".



**Figure 11: Zoning objectives of the proposed development** | Not to Scale | Source: Cork City Development Plan

There will be no change of land use within the development boundary. Services such as water and power (mobile generators) will be required during the construction phase, however, it is not expected that there will be significant use of these resources due to the nature of the proposed works.

Construction materials will include paving sets, asphalt, stone fill, pipework, gullies, kerbing, cabling, ducting, traffic signal equipment etc.

It is not considered that there will be a significant use of these resources during these works as the construction works themselves are minor. Surplus construction materials, including materials that have been excavated, which are not required for use on site will be reused, recovered or disposed appropriately off-site. An appropriate waste collection permit holder will be used for removal of wastes from site. All by products and wastes removed from site will be reused, recovered or disposed of in accordance with the Waste Management Act, 1996, as amended.

Given that MacCurtain Street, Merchant's Quay and St Patrick's Quay are heavily trafficked roads and that existing traffic will need to be facilitated during the works the Contractor will be required to develop and implement a detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) at the outset to ensure that traffic disruption is kept to a minimum.

#### **4.5 The Risk of Accidents, Having Regard to Substances or Technologies Used**

The Contractor will ensure that the proposed works are carried out in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulation 2013 (S.I. No. 219 of 2013). There is a low probability that accidents or pollution spillages will occur as the construction works are standard in nature and are minor (such as footpath replacement, road resurfacing and service excavations). This type of work is frequently carried out throughout Cork city and other cities throughout Ireland on a regular basis. Therefore, significant environmental effects will not arise.

#### **4.6 Conclusions in Relation to Characteristics of the Proposed Development**

The type of construction work involves normal routine construction works. The project is not complex in nature and the effects on the environment are well known and can be managed successfully. The use of natural resources and the generation of waste will be kept to an absolute minimum. The construction methodologies for this type of works are well understood and are carried out on a regular basis in Cork city. Therefore, the risk of significant environmental effects is very low.



## 5 Location of the Proposed Development

### 5.1 Introduction

The second criterion included in Schedule 7 of the Regulations relates to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by proposed development, having particular regard to the existing land use, the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area and the absorption capacity of the natural environment. The DoEHLG guidance document (DoEHLG, 2003) outlines the information to be considered under this heading as follows:

*“The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by proposed development, having regard in particular to:*

- *the existing land use,*
- *the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area,*
- *the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:*
  - (a) *wetlands,*
  - (b) *coastal zones,*
  - (c) *mountain and forest areas,*
  - (d) *nature reserves and parks,*
  - (e) *areas classified or protected under legislation, including special protection areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC,*
  - (f) *areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the EU have already been exceeded,*
  - (g) *densely populated areas,*
  - (h) *landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.”*

### 5.2 Existing Land Use and Relative Abundance, Quality and Regenerative Capacity of Natural Resources in the Area

The land use across the area of the proposed development is classified as ‘artificial surfaces’ according to the EPA Corine (Coordination of Information on the Environment) land cover classification. The majority of the proposed development area consists of hardstanding of mostly road surface, cycle track and footpath.



The main natural resources in the vicinity of the proposed development area consist of the River Lee which flows into Cork Harbour and the River Bride which runs north to south and discharges into the River Lee. The works on Cathedral Walk will be carried out adjacent to an open section of the River Bride. Similarly, the River Lee is adjacent to the proposed development boundary but is not included in it. There will be no significant effects on the natural environment in the immediate vicinity of the development area (Refer to **Section 3.2.1** on construction methodology).

The works associated with this development are minor and construction work is frequent throughout the development area. This, along with the fact that the development area is not of significant ecological importance means the absorption capacity of this environment is high, making it less sensitive to works of this kind.

There may be short term, minor effects on the environment during construction on land due to noise or dust emissions, depending on the activity involved and the ambient conditions at the time. However, these effects will not be significant due to short duration of the works, the low level of construction vehicles, plant and construction staff required to carry out the works, the nature of the works proposed and narrow construction footprint along busy trafficked roads. The type of construction works proposed involves routine construction methodologies, they are not complex in nature, they are well understood, therefore significant environmental emissions are not predicted. Examples of measures to be implemented for noise and dust emissions can be seen in **Section 6.9** and **Section 6.8** respectively.

Careful and considered local consultation will be carried out with nearby residences to ensure that the minimum amount of disturbance will be caused. The extent of the works within a highly urbanised environment are relatively small.

Thus, significant effects on the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area are not predicted.

### **5.3 Conclusions in Relation to Locations of the Proposed Development**

It can be concluded that there is unlikely to be significant effect on the geographical area in which the works are proposed.

## 6 Characteristics of Potential Effects

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### 6.1 Overview

The third and final criterion set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment relate to the potential significant effects of the proposed development. The aforementioned guidance document (DoEHLG, 2003) describes the information to be considered under this heading as follows:

- *“the extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population),*
- *the transfrontier nature of the impact,*
- *the magnitude and complexity of the impact,*
- *the probability of the impact,*
- *the duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.”*

### 6.2 Population and Human Health

There will be some minor disruption to nearby residents, road users and pedestrians during the proposed works and some noise and dust emissions.

There will be some construction traffic associated with the construction of the proposed development; however, this traffic will be managed appropriately, in particular, with regard to hours of delivery and construction staff arrivals and departures in order to minimise effects on the operation of the local road network. It is not envisaged that significant effects will arise.

There will be some dust and noise emissions during the construction phase. However, they are not considered to be significant. They are addressed in detail in **Section 6.8** and **Section 6.9**.

Sensitive receptors are located near the proposed development and include residential developments and dwellings along a number of the works areas including MacCurtain Street, Cathedral Walk Camden Quay and Wellington Road. One example of these residential developments is Camden Wharf Apartments on Camden Quay. There are a number of places of worship, schools/colleges and hotels located along the proposed development route, for example, Cork Baptist Church on MacCurtain Street, Cork English College on Bridge Street and the Metropole Hotel on MacCurtain Street. There are no hospitals within the proposed works area. The nearest hospital is the Mercy University Hospital which is located approximately 680m away from the proposed works. Careful and considered local consultation will be carried out with nearby residences to ensure that the minimum amount of disturbance will be caused. The extent of the works within a highly urbanised area are relatively small.

During the operational phase, there will be an increase in traffic along some routes. Refer to **Section 3.1** above for details. It is not envisaged that there will be a significant negative effect on sensitive receptors due to air or noise emissions from a change in traffic flows during the operational phase. MacCurtain Street Coburg Street and Leirim Street which all have a high number of residences, will experience an overall reduction in traffic flows once the development is operational, reducing the effects of noise and emissions.

The proposed development will have a positive effect on the population of Cork City, visitors and commuters in the area, in that the proposed development will provide employment during the construction phase and benefit businesses in the community through spending. As mentioned above, the heavy traffic flow on MacCurtain Street and Coburg Street, makes it a noisy and unpleasant place for pedestrians and road users and this development aims to improve this issue by reducing the volume of traffic passing through and creating a new public realm. Overall, it is expected that this will enhance the level of trade and business on MacCurtain Street and the surrounding area.

## 6.3 Biodiversity

The entirety of the proposed development area is currently hardstanding and no planned works are to be carried out within the River Lee or the River Bride. There are a number of trees along the footpath St Patrick's Quay and some younger trees along the riverside of Merchant's Quay. Five of these trees will be removed from St Patrick's Quay as part of the installation of a new cycle lane and three along Merchant's Quay. A number of new trees will be planted along MacCurtain Street, Coburg Street and Bridge Street as part of an improved public realm. Overall, there is unlikely to be any significant impact on the habitats present within the development boundary of the proposed development.

### 6.3.1 Ecological Baseline

The proposed development incorporates MacCurtain Street, St Patrick's Quay, Camden Quay, Merchant's Quay, Anderson's Quay which are all located adjacent to the River Lee.

The River Lee, which runs adjacent to the development boundary, is influenced by the tide at this location. The north channel merges with the south channel downstream of the proposed development area, the River Lee then flows east into Cork Harbour approximately 5km downstream of the proposed development.

The risk status of the River Lee is classified as 'at risk' according to the Transitional Waterbodies Risk, while it has a 'moderate' Transitional Waterbody WFD Status 2010-2015.

Downstream of the site, both sides of the River Lee are bound by quay walls, there is no natural riparian habitat along this part of the River Lee which could be impacted by the proposed works. No instream works are required. The proposed development footprint covers a large area and is surrounded by a variety of retail, residential and commercial areas.

The River Bride is a small stream that runs under Cathedral Walk, adjacent to the North City Link Road and discharges into the River Lee approx. 530m south of the proposed works. The River Bride is mainly culverted and is overall of low ecological value.

### 6.3.1.1 Records of Protected and Invasive Species

The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) website ([www.biodiversity.ie](http://www.biodiversity.ie)) contains a mapping tool that indicates known records of legally protected species within a selected OS 10km Grid Square. The site is located within two 10km grid square W67 and data on this square was downloaded from the website in March 2020. It is noted that this list is not exhaustive, and an absence of records does not imply that they are not present within the given area. It is also noted that these squares include many aquatic habitats/fauna such as those in the River Lee and the habitats within the proposed development area will not support those species.

The following protected species have been recorded in this 10km grid square - Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*), European Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*), Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*), Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*), Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*), Common Seal (*Phoca vitulina*) and Eurasian Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*). The proposed development boundary is not a significantly important habitat for any of the above species.

The following invasive species have been recorded in this 10km grid square - Butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*), Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Narrow-leaved Ragwort (*Senecio inaequidens*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Greater White-toothed Shrew (*Crocidura russula*), European Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), House Mouse (*Mus musculus*).

### 6.3.1.2 Habitats

The habitats in the development area (according to Fossitt 2000) are considered to be of low ecological importance and consist mainly of Built and Artificial Surfaces (BL3).

### 6.3.1.3 Fish

The River Lee is a designated salmonid watercourse under S.I. No. 293/1988 – European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations, 1988. Atlantic salmon is listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. No spawning potential for fish is present along the section of river in proximity to proposed development area. Fish using the area include salmon and lamprey moving upstream and downstream. Numerous estuarine species are known to occur. The proposed development boundary is in close proximity to the River Lee, however, as there are no works within the river, there is no suitable habitat for these species within the development boundary.

### 6.3.1.4 Birds

The proposed development area consists mainly of roads, streets and road bridges and is not an important habitat for bird species. Birds species within the proposed development area are expected to be mostly typical of garden habitats and those already accustomed to a busy urban environment. Feeding Grey Heron has been observed upstream along the River Lee. Dipper (*Cinclus hibernicus*), Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*) and Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) are also known to occur on the River Lee, however the proposed development area is not of significant importance for these species. The proposed development area is not of importance for any Annex 1 bird species.

### 6.3.1.5 Mammals

The development area does not consist of any habitats of significant importance for mammal species. The River Lee and Bride which is adjacent to the development area is known as an important habitat for Otter (*Lutra lutra*), which are protected under Annex II & IV of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The proposed development site does not impact any potential otter habitat.

According to the National Biodiversity Data Centre there are records for Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentoni*), Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*), Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*) and Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*) in grid square W67, in which the development site is located. However, there is no suitable habitat for bats found within the works footprint.

There are records for Harbour Seal (*Phoca vitulina*) and Grey Seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) and Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) within this grid square (W67), however, the proposed development will have no impact on habitat of significance for these species. Badger (*Meles meles*), Irish Stoat (*Mustela erminea*), Fox (*Vulpes Vulpes*), Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*), Eurasian Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus*) and Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus*) within Cork City, however, the proposed development area has limited habitat suitability for these species and they will not be affected as a result of the proposed works.

### 6.3.1.6 Natura 2000 Sites

The closest Natura 2000 Site to the proposed development is Cork Harbour SPA, (as the crow flies) located 2.6km (more than 4.3km downstream) to the east. Great Island Channel SAC is located approx. 8.2km (as the crow flies) to the east of the proposed development.

## 6.3.2 Assessment of Effects

The River Lee is of significance for a number of faunal species which may use the channel for migration and foraging. In addition, both the Bride and Lee provide habitat for Otter. Although no breeding sites have been identified in proximity to the proposed development area, otter do use the area for foraging and commuting.

As there are no works being carried out in the River Lee or the River Bride and any emissions generated will be minor, localised and only experienced within the immediate vicinity of the site, the works will not have any impact on the biodiversity of the rivers. The extent of the works (in a highly urbanised area) is relatively small, excavation works are not significant, and dewatering is not required.

A Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment was prepared and concluded that it is possible to rule out significant effects on Natura 2000 sites.

## 6.4 Historical, Cultural and Archaeological Heritage

There are five protected structures listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) within the development boundary. The protected structures and their locations are listed below:

Reg No. 20513143 – Cast iron post box on Pine Street

Reg No. 20512623 – Cast iron mooring posts on St Patrick's Quay

Reg No. 20512501 – Cast iron post box on MacCurtain Street

Reg No. 20512441 – Cast iron post box on St Patrick's Hill

Reg No. 20513160 - Cobble on Sidney Place

There are two additional structures adjacent to the works, but these will not be affected as a result of the proposed development.

Reg No. 20506355 – Brian Ború Bridge

Reg No. 20513133 – St Patrick's Bridge

The proposed development area is within Coburg Street and St. Patrick's Street Architectural Conservation Area and Wellington Road/ St Luke's Architectural Conservation Area as detailed in Volume 3 of the Cork City Development Plan 2015 – 2021. The objectives of the development plan state that:

- Coburg Street and St Patrick's Street Architectural Conservation Area - *"where historic street furniture or paving survives. Such as limestone steps or kerbing, iron handrails etc. It is important for the character that these are retained"*.
- Wellington Road/ St. Luke's Architectural Conservation Area – *"The area contains significant lengths of footpaths, with stone steps, cast-iron railings and stretches of stone-kerbing. There are mature trees along the footpath on Wellington Road"*.

None of the above are listed under the List of Protected Structures in the *Cork City Development Plan 2015 – 2021*. The mooring posts will be kept in place while the works will be carried out around them. Post boxes will remain unaffected by the works as will the protected paving on Sidney Place. Some cobbled areas on MacCurtain Street will be repositioned to match the kerb lines and integrated into the new public realm.



Works occurring within the vicinity of these protected structures are minor and include footpath widening and the inclusion of new cycle lanes.

## 6.5 Landscape and Visual

The proposed development is located within an existing built-up area. The only structures which will be placed above ground will be a number of traffic lights street lighting columns, benches, and a railing edge protection.

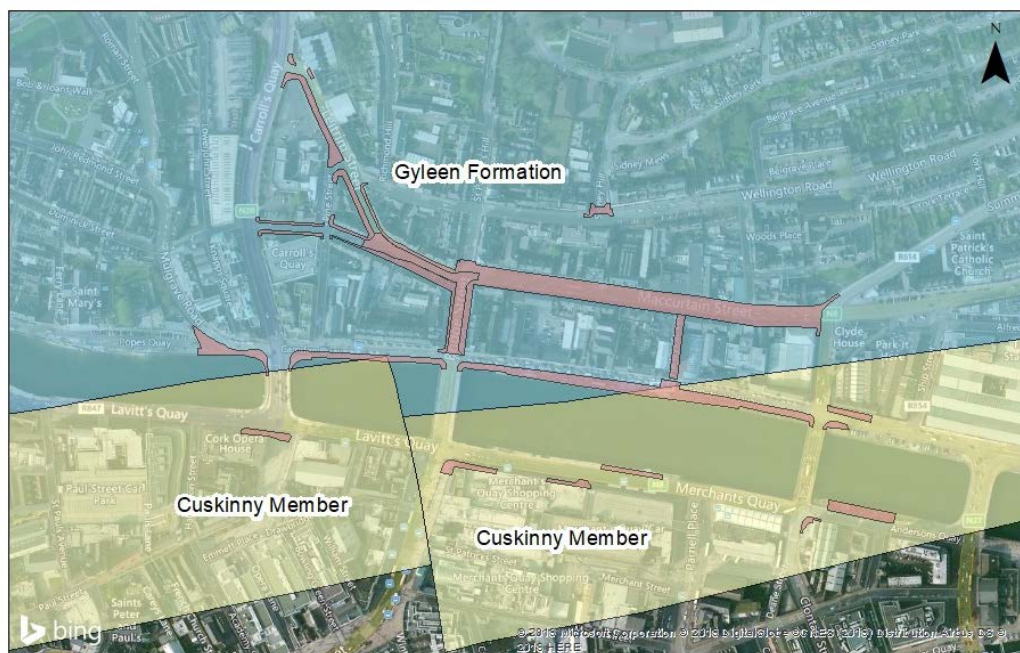
Proposed public realm works on MacCurtain Street will include the pedestrianisation of Harley's Street, new lighting and the installation of new street furniture. The details of the landscaping of this public realm will be decided in the final design of the development.

The proposed development will be in keeping with the existing character of the site by using appropriate material that reflect its context.

## 6.6 Soils and Geology

The bedrock in the proposed works are classified as "Gyleen Formation" and "Cuskinny Member" as outlined in **Figure 6** below according to the Geological Survey of Ireland Groundwater Data Viewer. The underlying soils are classified as "made ground" according to the GSI Groundwater Data Viewer. The groundwater aquifer in the area is classified as a "Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is moderately productive only in local zones".

Groundwater vulnerability within the development boundary ranges from "Extreme" to "High" to "Moderate".



**Figure 12: Bedrock Geology within the proposed development area** |Source: GSI.ie

No significant excavations will be required during the construction of the proposed development. No dewatering will be required during the excavation process or during the operational phase. The contractor will send any excavated material which cannot be re-used/recycled for disposal to a suitable licenced facility. The contractor will ensure that any interim storage or waste management facilities for excavated material have the appropriate waste licences of waste facility permits in place. It is therefore not envisaged at this stage that the proposed development will result in significant effects on soils and geology.

## 6.7 Water Quality, Hydrology and Hydrogeology

The primary water feature adjacent to the proposed development is the River Lee and the River Bride. The risk status of the River Lee is classified as ‘at risk’ according to the Transitional Waterbodies Risk, while it has a ‘moderate’ Transitional Waterbody WFD Status 2010-2015. The River Bride is also classed as “at risk”.

The extent of the works on land (in a highly urbanised area) is relatively small, excavation works are not significant and dewatering is not required. During excavation works some water will be encountered and this will be allowed to percolate naturally through the existing soils. There will be no works carried out in the River Lee or the River Bride.

The proposed development areas along-side the quays are susceptible to flooding, however, the proposed works are minor. The proposed development will not exacerbate existing flooding. Neither will flooding cause the proposed works to present environmental problems given the minor nature of the works.

Thus, significant negative effects on water quality, hydrology and hydrogeology are not envisaged.

## 6.8 Air Quality and Climate

During the construction phase, the potential for some dust emissions in the immediate vicinity of the works may arise in dry weather and during such activities the levels of dust are likely to be small. Air emissions from the exhausts of construction plant, machinery and haulage trucks will also be elevated in the immediate vicinity during construction but are not expected to be significant. No odour emissions are envisaged from the proposed construction works.

During the operational phase, there will be no significant air emissions from the proposed development. As discussed in more detail in **Section 6.2** above, there will be beneficial decreases or negligible increases in traffic movements in close proximity to sensitive receptors. As such, it is not envisaged that there will be a significant negative effect on sensitive receptors due to air emissions from a change in traffic flows during the operational phase.

There will be no significant negative air effects as a result of the proposed development.



## 6.9 Noise and Vibration

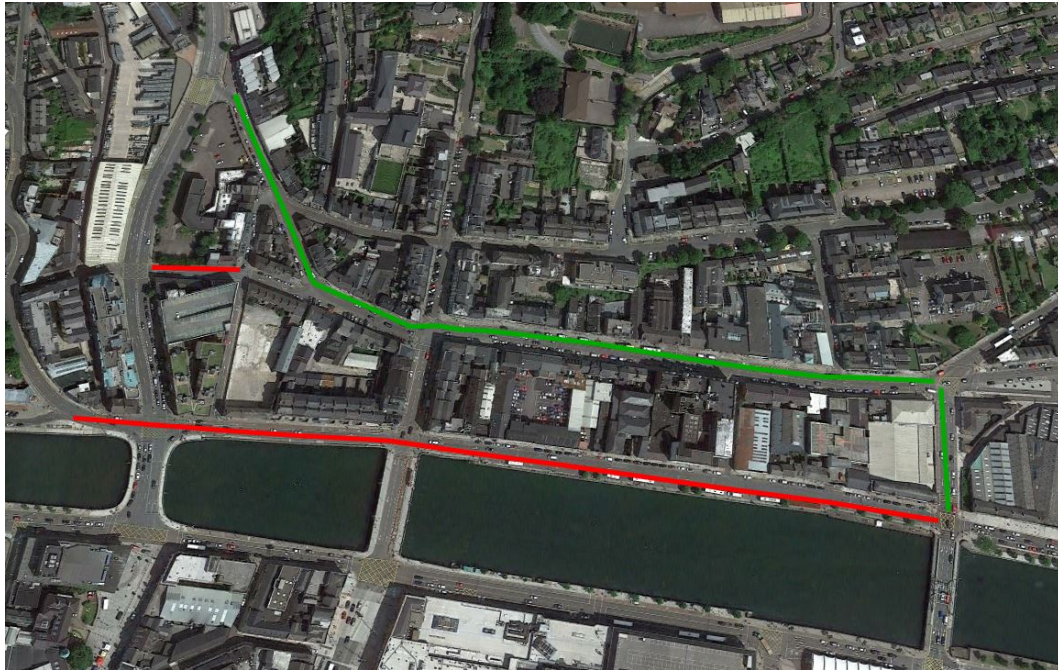
Noise will be generated in the immediate vicinity of the works during the construction of the proposed development due to construction traffic, construction machinery, increased traffic congestion etc. The effect of construction noise on sensitive receptors (residential dwellings) in the immediate vicinity of the site will be temporary due to the short duration of the construction works. Construction noise will not be experienced beyond the immediate vicinity of the works. Construction hours will be limited to 08.00-18:00 Monday to Friday and Saturday morning. Some night time works or works on bank holidays are envisaged, to facilitate resurfacing of the streets without causing excessive delays to traffic and public transport services. Any works which are required to be carried out during these times will be agreed with Cork City Council in advance.

Noise emissions that are experienced in the vicinity of the works can be controlled by the implementation of best construction practice. Examples of measures to be employed include the selection of quiet plant, not leaving plant idling and maintenance of plant to minimise noise generation.

The main vibration source during the construction phase will be from the proposed excavation works. A variety of potential vibration-causing items of plant are likely to be used such as excavators, lifting equipment and dumper trucks. Rock breaking will be required as part of the works due to the shallow nature of the rock in the proposed development area but will be short-term in duration. Vibration effects experienced in the immediate vicinity of the works can be controlled by the implementation of best construction practice.

There will be no significant negative noise or vibration effects as the result of the proposed development. As discussed in more detail in **Section 6.2** above, there will be beneficial decreases or negligible increases in traffic movements in close proximity to sensitive receptors.

As such, it is not envisaged that there will be a significant negative effect on sensitive receptors due to noise emissions from a change in traffic flows during the operational phase.



**Figure 13: Main changes in predicted traffic flows during the operation of the proposed development. (Green indicates a reduction in traffic, red indicates an increase in traffic) | Not to Scale | Source: Google Earth Pro**

## 6.10 Land Use and Materials

No significant negative effects on land use or material assets are predicted during the construction or operational phases of the proposed development.

The majority of the proposed development area consists of hardstanding – mostly road surface, cycle track and footpath with limited greenfield space. The proposed development spans an area that is zoned for multiple purposes.

The area along MacCurtain Street, St Patrick’s Quay, Merchant’s Quay and Anderson’s Quay are zoned for use as “*City Centre Retail Area*”, Camden Quay, Leirim Street and Lavitt’s Quay are zoned as “*City Centre Commercial Area*” and Wellington Road, Cathedral Walk and part of Leirim Street are zoned as “*Inner City Residential Neighbourhood*”.

There will be no change of land use within the development boundary.

Services will be diverted within the road as required and surface water will be managed as is it currently, via street side gullies, some of which will be modified as part of the design works. During construction surface water will be contained within the construction areas and filter through the existing ground or gravitate towards street gullies.

## 6.11 Conclusion in Relation to Characteristics of Potential Effects

It can be concluded that there is unlikely to be any significant effect on the environment in which the works are proposed.

## 7 Screening Checklist

The potential environmental effects associated with the proposed development have been outlined in the previous sections of this report.

The EC Guidance on EIA Screening (EC, 2017) provides a checklist to help users decide whether EIA is required based on the characteristics of a project and its environment. This screening checklist is included in **Table 3** below.

**Table 3: Screening Checklist to determine if EIA is required based on the characteristics of a project and its environment**

Brief Project Description	Yes/No	Is this likely to result in a significant impact Yes/No - Why
1. Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc.)?	No	This area of the city is already highly developed for infrastructure. The works proposed are minor and will not cause any physical changes to the surrounding environment.
2. Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes	No.  Services such as power and water will be required during the construction phase. Mobile generators will be used during the construction phase. Construction materials will include paving sets, asphalt, stone fill, pipework, gullies, kerbing, cabling, ducting, traffic signal equipment etc. It is not considered that there will be significant use of these resources as part of the development.  A Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment was prepared by Arup. It is the opinion of Arup that it is possible to rule out any significant effects on Natura 2000 sites.
3. Will the project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	Yes	No.  Standard construction materials will be used and will not be harmful to human health or the environment. The contractor will ensure that the proposed works are carried out in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No.291 of 2013). It is envisaged that the risk of accidents having regard to substances or technologies is very low and therefore will not result in significant effects.
4. Will the project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes	No.  Inert construction waste generated will be removed from the site areas and disposed of at a suitable licenced facility.

Brief Project Description	Yes/No	Is this likely to result in a significant impact Yes/No - Why
		The production of waste will be managed in accordance with the relevant waste legislation.
5. Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air or lead to exceeding Ambient Air Quality standards in Directives 2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC?	No	No  It is expected that some dust will be emitted during the construction works but this will not be significant. Emissions from construction plant and vehicles will arise during the construction phase but these will be minimal.
6. Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes.	No.  Standard construction noise is expected during construction activities. Rock breaking will be required as part of the works but will be short-term in duration.
7. Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	Yes.	No.  The extent of the works on land (in a highly urbanised area) is relatively small, excavation works are not significant, and dewatering is not required. During excavation works some water will be encountered and this will be allowed to percolate naturally through the existing soils. There will be no works carried out in the River Lee or the River Bride.
8. Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the project which could affect human health or the environment?	Yes.	No.  A "Project Supervisor for Construction Stage" will be appointed to manage safety issues during construction.
9. Will the Project result in social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	Yes.	No.  The proposed development will have a positive effect on people living, working and visiting the area as there will be improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and an improved public realm in the MacCurtain street area. This development will benefit traders and increase business in the area.
10. Are there any other factors which should be considered such as consequential development which could lead to environmental effects or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	Yes.	No.  Metropole Hotel Re-Development (17/37497) has been identified as a development which has the potential to result in cumulative effects with the proposed development. However, the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) implemented by the Contractor will be required to take into account the Metropole Hotel construction schedule. Therefore, significant effects are not envisaged.

Brief Project Description	Yes/No	Is this likely to result in a significant impact Yes/No - Why
11. Is the project located within or close to any areas which are protected under international, EU, or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No.  The proposed development is located along some of the quays of the River Lee. The extent of the works on land (in a highly urbanised area) is relatively small, excavation works are not significant, and dewatering is not required. During excavation works some water will be encountered and this will be allowed to percolate naturally through the existing soils. There will be no works carried out in the River Lee or the River Bride.  It is also located upstream of both Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC. A report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment was prepared by Arup. It is the opinion of Arup that it is possible to rule out likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites.
12. Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the project?	No.	No.  There are no additional areas of importance.
13. Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No.  The River Lee and Bride host a variety of flora and fauna but significant impacts as described previously will not arise.
14. Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters (or features of the marine environment) on or around the location that could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No.  The River Lee and Bride are not within the development footprint and will not be affected by the works.
15. Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No.	No.  The area is highly developed, and the proposed works are only to footpaths and streets and will not affect the landscape.
16. Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No.  A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be implemented for the duration of the construction works in order to minimise any disruption to traffic flow on the road network

Brief Project Description	Yes/No	Is this likely to result in a significant impact Yes/No - Why
		at and surrounding the proposed development areas.
17. Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No.  A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be implemented for the duration of the construction works in order to minimise any disruption to traffic flow on the road network at and surrounding the proposed development areas.
18. Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes.	No.  The proposed development is concerned with improvements to footpaths and cycle lanes and therefore there will be no structures of significant height. The only above ground structures to be installed
19. Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	There are five protected structures listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) within the development boundary. None of these structures will be affected as the works will be carried out around them,  None of these structures are listed on the List of Protected Structures in the <i>Cork City Development Plan 2015 -2021</i>
20. Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	No.	No.  There will be no loss of greenfield as part of this development.
21. Are there existing land uses on or around the location e.g. homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No.  There are many businesses and residential dwellings located within the proposed development boundary, particularly on MacCurtain Street. Access to these will be maintained during the construction phase. Significant impacts will not arise.
22. Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No.	No.  There are no plans for future land uses.
23. Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No.  There are many businesses residential dwelling within close proximity to the proposed development. Access to these will be maintained throughout the construction phase. Significant impacts will not arise.

Brief Project Description	Yes/No	Is this likely to result in a significant impact Yes/No - Why
24. Are there any areas on or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	No.  There are a number of sensitive receptors in close proximity to the proposed development such as, residential dwellings, churches, schools and colleges etc.  The proposed development is located in an already busy environment. Any disturbance caused by the proposed development will be short term and temporary and will not have any long term significant effects.
25. Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	Yes.	Construction works will take place along the quays adjacent to the River Lee and adjacent to the Bride. There are no instream works and there will be no significant negative effects on water quality due to the nature and extent of the works to be carried out.
26. Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	No.	No.  There are no areas around the proposed development which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage.
27. Is the project location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	No	No.  The proposed development areas along-side the quays are susceptible to flooding, however, the proposed works are minor. The proposed development will not exacerbate existing flooding. Neither will flooding cause the proposed works to present environmental problems given the minor nature of the works.

## 8 Conclusions

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The prescribed classes of development and thresholds that trigger a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended. A review of the project types listed in the aforementioned Schedule 5, as amended has been carried out.

The proposed development is a type set out in Part 2 Class 10 (b)(iv) of Schedule 5 as described previously but it does not exceed the relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part. Therefore, it is a sub-threshold development and has been screened for EIA as described below.

Arup has prepared this EIA Screening Report on behalf of Cork City Council.

The information provided in this report provides details on the characteristics of the proposed development and its likely significant effects (if any) on the environment. It also provides the relevant details under each of the criteria set out in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended.

This information will assist the competent authority, Cork City Council to undertake the EIA screening and to make an EIA Screening determination.

Based on the information provided in this report, it is the opinion of Arup that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and that an EIA is not required.

The final determination on EIA screening will be made by Cork City Council.



## 9 References

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- Cork City Council (2015) *Cork City Development Plan 2015 – 2021*.
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- Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (2017) *Implementation of Directive 2014/52/EU on the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA Directive): Advice on the Administrative Provisions in Advance of Transposition*;
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2003) *Environmental Effect Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development*;
- Environmental Protection Agency (2002) *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements*; and
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- National Biodiversity Data Centre (viewed October 2020) – [www.biodiversity.ie](http://www.biodiversity.ie)
- National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (viewed October 2020) – [www.buildingsofireland.ie](http://www.buildingsofireland.ie)
- National Parks and Wildlife Service online data on European Sites - [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie) (viewed October 2020)
- National Parks and Wildlife Service online data on protected flora and fauna (viewed October 2020)
- Ordnance Survey of Ireland mapping and aerial photography ([www.osi.ie](http://www.osi.ie)) (viewed October 2020)