

Ballyguile Road, Wicklow Town

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report 2025s1595

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1 Introduction

JBA Consulting Engineers and Scientists Ltd. (hereafter JBA) has been commissioned by Wicklow County Council to prepare an EIA Screening Report for the proposed enhancement works to be carried out at Ballyguile Road, Wicklow, Co. Wicklow.

The proposed development will be submitted under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Act (2000) as amended.

1.1 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to identify whether there is a need under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, for an EIAR for the proposed development.

Schedule 5 (Parts 1 and 2) of the Act lists the groups of development projects which are subject to EIA screening under the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU. Part 1 lists those projects which are automatically subject to an EIAR due to the scale and nature of the project. Part 2 lists projects which are also likely to have significant environmental effects based on the nature and size of the development set out by threshold criteria.

An additional group of projects, which are considered sub-threshold developments under Part 2, may fall below the thresholds set but may, under further analysis, be deemed to have significant effects due to their location within a catchment, size, or proximity to sensitive areas.

This report documents the methodology employed to determine whether the proposed development falls under any of these groups and therefore will have significant environmental impacts. Rationale has been given for the decision made in reference to the relevant legislation, and additional documents have been referenced where required.

This report is intended for the project as described below. Any significant changes to the project description or location would require preparation of a new EIA screening report.

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report has been prepared by Moore Group and has identified any potential impacts to Natura 2000 sites and other ecological receptors on site, respectively. This EIA Screening document, along with the AA Screening Report, will be submitted under Part 8 of the planning process for the proposed development.

2 Description of Proposed Works

2.1 Site Location

The proposed development is situated at a site approx. 0.39 hectares in size and is bordered to the north-west by Ballyguile Road, with existing residential developments to the north-east and south-west, and green space to the south-east.

The site is in a primarily residential area. The Hillview bus stop (106071) is located on the northern boundary of the site along Ballyguile Road, providing transport to Wicklow Town.



Figure 2-1: Site Location

2.2 Proposed Development

The development will consist of 16 no. dwellings, comprising of 8 no. 1-bed apartments and 8 no. 2-bed houses. A new vehicular entrance will be provided onto Belmont Close Estate Road, along with a ramped pedestrian entrance to Ballyguile Road. The development will also include 16 no. car parking spaces, and ancillary site development and landscaping works.

3 Purpose of Screening

3.1 Legislative Context for EIAR in Ireland

The EU has set out mandatory requirements for Environmental Impact Assessments under the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU). The Directive identifies certain project types, described under Annex I, that will always have significant environmental effects due to their nature and size. These projects are required to undergo an EIAR in every Member State.

For projects listed under Annex II, the EIA Directive gives Member States discretion to decide the limits of projects requiring an EIAR. In Ireland, mandatory thresholds have been set for projects that would otherwise fall under Annex II, which are described in Schedule 5 of The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended, and in Section 50, Parts 1 (b-d) of The Roads Act 1993, as amended. These thresholds are based on project characteristics including size and location. Projects within these thresholds are always subject to an EIAR. In some circumstances, projects considered below the thresholds set under Schedule 5 Part 2 of the Planning and Development Act, or under Section 50 Parts 1 (b-d) of the Roads Act may still be considered by the Planning Authority to have significant effects on the environment, such as in cases where the projects are in a location of particular environmental sensitivity and may also be subject to an EIAR. These sub-threshold projects are reviewed by the Planning Authority on a case-by-case basis.

The principal legislation under which an EIAR may be undertaken for various developments is The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and for road developments is The Roads Act, 1993, as amended. Further regulations are explained in The Planning and Development (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2001-2018, and the European Union (Roads Act 1993) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2019.

Legislation is examined below as to whether an EIAR will be required for this project.

3.2 The Planning and Development Act 2000 - Mandatory EIAR

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, Section 172 sets out the types of projects that require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR):

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 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 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 a class specified in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 but does not 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.

3.2.1 Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended

Projects which fall under Schedule 5, Part 1 are typically large infrastructure and energy projects and by their nature will always have significant environmental effects. The proposed development does not fall under Schedule 5, Part 1.

3.2.2 Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended

With regards to Part 2 projects, the categories and thresholds were examined for the following category:

10. Infrastructure projects

(b) (i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units.

(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 does not fall under any of the categories above. The proposed development comprises 16 no. dwellings and the proposed site area is 0.39 hectares. Therefore, an EIAR has not been automatically triggered for this proposed development. However, it is necessary to consider if this development could result in significant environmental effects under the category of sub-threshold developments.

3.3 Sub-threshold EIAR

In accordance with the requirement to submit an EIAR with sub-threshold planning application (Article 103 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018), where a planning application for sub-threshold development is not accompanied by an EIAR, and the Planning Authority considers that the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment it shall, by notice in writing, require the applicant to submit an EIAR. This process therefore occurs after submission of an application, if that application is not accompanied by an EIAR.

The decision as to whether a development is likely to have 'significant effects' on the environment must be taken with reference to the criteria set out in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018. Schedule 7A requires that the following information be provided for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for EIAR:

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 regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.
2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.
3. A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the proposed development on the environment resulting from -
 - 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.
 - c. The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018 (DHPLG, 2018).

In order to assist planning and other consenting authorities in deciding if significant effects on the environment are likely to arise in the case of development below the national mandatory EIAR thresholds, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published a Guidance document in August 2003, the Environmental Impact



Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development and the Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (DHPLG, 2018b).

The criteria, as transposed in Irish legislation, are grouped under three headings:

- Characteristics of Proposed Development
- Location of Proposed Development
- Characteristics of Potential Impacts

For the purposes of assessing if the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment in reference to these three parameters, the project is examined below in further detail.

4 Overview of Environmental Impacts

An overview of the potential environmental impacts of the development, according to themes presented in an EIAR, is provided below.

4.1 Population and Human Health

During construction, there is a risk to the health and safety of workers on the development, as with any construction project. This will be mitigated against by the operational plans devised by the contractor and will not be significant considering the scale and nature of the proposed development.

Residences in the vicinity of the proposed development will experience some negative impacts during the construction phase of the development. These will be temporary and will be mitigated against by the operational plans devised by the contractor and adherence to standard best practice regarding control of noise and vibration, dust, and limitations on working hours.

Once complete, the proposed development will provide new growth and housing units in Wicklow Town and improve the existing open space by transforming a currently inaccessible area into a landscaped and usable environment. Once operational, the development will provide a positive impact to population and human health.

4.2 Biodiversity

Ecological receptors that must be examined include protected Natura 2000 sites under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), as well as species protected under the Wildlife Act (1976), and any ecological receptors which may be negatively impacted by the proposed development, both directly and indirectly.

4.2.1 Proximity to Protected Sites

An AA Screening has been completed by Moore Group for this project to determine whether there is a potential for impacts on nearby Natura 2000 sites.

Those sites within a potential Zone of Influence of the proposed development are shown in Table 4.1.

The AA Screening determined that there are no likely significant impacts on any Natura 2000 sites as a result of the proposed development.

Table 4.1: Natura 2000 sites within potential Zone of Influence of the proposed development.

Natura 2000 site	Site Code	Approximate distance from site
The Murrough Wetlands SAC	002249	1.71 km
Wicklow Head SPA	004127	1.64 km
The Murrough SPA	004186	0.92 km

4.2.2 Other Ecological Receptors

The site is located within a suburban residential area on a previously grassed site that has been cleared for development. There are no existing trees, hedgerows, or other notable vegetation present. No protected flora is present.

Significant impacts to ecological receptors are not expected during construction or operation, due to the already disturbed nature of the site.

Three new trees will be planted as part of the landscaping plan for the proposed development.

4.3 Soils and Geology

The groundwater and geological maps of the site, provided by the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI), have been consulted. The underlying bedrock at the site consists of silver-grey mica-schist. The subsoil at the site consists of bedrock at surface.

Deep excavations are not expected, with most of the development above ground. Limited shallow excavations will be required for laying of services and foundations. Excavated material will be reused as fill where appropriate. Material not required for fill will be exported from the site and disposed of at appropriate licensed facilities. The expected amount of material to be excavated is not significant.

4.4 Hydrology and Hydrogeology

4.4.1 Surface Water

The proposed site lies within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Ovoca-Vartry catchment, Vartry_SC_010 sub-catchment, and Wicklow_010 river sub-basin (WFD waterbody) (EPA, 2025).

There are no surface waterbodies within the site boundary. Surface water from the proposed development will be conveyed to the existing surface water network in the area.

Significant impacts on surface waterbodies are not expected due to the proposed development. This is due to the nature of the proposed works and the distance to any

surface waterbodies. In addition, the contractor will put in place mitigation measures for the protection of water quality and silt and pollution control during construction, further ensuring that any risks of watercourse pollution and sedimentation are minimised. These will include measures for spill prevention and silt control on site.

4.4.2 Groundwater

The site is underlain by the Wicklow (IE_EA_G_076) groundwater body, which is at Good status and At Risk.

Groundwater vulnerability, a measure of the likelihood of groundwater contamination occurring, is classified as rock at or near surface at this site. The site is therefore at a very high vulnerability to groundwater contamination.

There are no Groundwater Zone of Contribution sites listed by the EPA near the development site, nor any drinking water sites with groundwater abstraction.

While the groundwater vulnerability underlying the site is very high, the proposed development is not likely to lead to significant effects on groundwater. This is due to the nature of the proposed development, with deep excavations not required during construction. Excavations will be required for the laying of services and foundations. The risk of groundwater contamination will only be present during the construction phase of the development, and with limited shallow excavations as outlined in Section 4.3, the potential impact is not significant. Further, the appointed contractor will put in place measures for spill prevention and silt control on site, reducing the potential for negative effects on groundwater.

Once operational, the development is unlikely to result in impacts on groundwater.

4.4.3 Flood Risk

No Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out for the proposed development. The subject site is not located within a Flood Zone as shown in the Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan (LAP) 2025-2031 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), nor in the Wicklow County Development Plan (CDP) 2022-2028 SFRA.

The risk of flooding to the site is not significant given its location on high ground and lack of any existing surface waterbodies in the adjacent areas.

4.5 Cultural Heritage

There are no archaeological features or protected structures within or directly bordering the proposed site. The closest designated archaeological feature is a burial ground (WI025-065), located approximately 600m north-west of the proposed development.

There is the potential for undiscovered archaeological features to be uncovered. Any discoveries will be preserved in-situ and notified to the National Monuments Service (NMS), who may impose mitigation measures.

No significant impacts on cultural heritage are expected.

4.6 Air and Climate

There is the potential for impacts to air quality through emissions during the construction phase of the development, due to the operation of machinery on site and transport of materials to and from the site. These impacts will be mitigated against with measures outlined in the contractor's operating plans and are not likely to be significant given the scale and nature of the proposed development.

The proposed development will not lead to significant air or climate impacts during operation.

4.7 Noise and Vibration

There is potential for localised noise and vibration impacts in the vicinity of the proposed development during the construction phase due to the operation of machinery on site. These impacts would be temporary and only during the construction phase. Mitigation measures against such impacts will be outlined in the operating plans to be devised by the contractor.

The proposed development will not lead to any significant noise or vibration impacts during the operational period.

4.8 Landscape and Visual

The proposed development will give rise to temporary landscape or visual impacts to residents living in proximity to the development or people using the Ballyguile Road during the construction period. Impacts during construction will be temporary and not significant.

There are no protected landscapes or views in proximity to the site.

When constructed, the proposed development will be low in landscape and visual impact for surrounding landowners and will be in character with the surrounding residential area.

4.9 Material Assets including Traffic, Utilities, and Waste

4.9.1 Traffic

During construction, there will be temporary disruptions on local roads during deliveries or due to machinery operating. These disruptions are expected to be temporary and limited and will not be significant.

Once operational, the proposed development will not result in a significant increase in traffic in the area, given the small number of residential units proposed and provision of appropriate parking spaces.

4.9.2 Utilities

The proposed development will be serviced by new foul drainage, surface water drainage, water, gas, electrical and telecom services. Diversion of existing services will be included as required. No significant impacts on utilities are expected.

4.9.3 Waste

Waste generated from site clearance will be inert and/or organic material and is expected to be redistributed or re-used within the site extents. Significant amounts of construction waste are not anticipated, due to the shallow excavations and nature of the project. Any additional waste will be disposed of appropriately at licensed facilities.

Once operational, the proposed development will generate some amounts of domestic waste which will be collected and disposed of at appropriate licensed facilities.

4.10 Cumulative Impacts

4.10.1 Plans

4.10.1.1 Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028

The proposed development is in line with the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028. The development supports the following objective:

CPO 6.1 New housing development shall be required to locate on suitably zoned or designated land in settlements and will only be considered in the open countryside when it is for the provision of a rural dwelling for those with a demonstrable housing social or economic need to live in the open countryside.

The proposed development is situated appropriately in land zoned for new residential use. The CDP also supports the provision of social housing in the county.

4.10.1.2 Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan 2025-2031

The Wicklow CDP should be read in conjunction with the Wicklow Town - Rathnew LAP.

The proposed development is in line with the objectives of the LAP, with the site zoned RN1 New Residential. The objective for this land use zoning is:

"To facilitate for the provision of high quality new residential developments at appropriate densities with excellent layout and design, well linked to the town centre and community facilities. To provide an appropriate mix of house sizes, types and tenures in order to meet household needs and to promote balanced communities."

The proposed development also supports specific LAP growth objectives, such as WTR2:

"Development shall extend outwards from the centre of Wicklow Town and Rathnew Village with undeveloped land closest to the centre and public transport routes given priority. 'Leapfrogging' to peripheral areas shall be strongly resisted."

Part of the residential strategy under the LAP is to encourage the use of in-fill housing, under-utilised and vacant sites.

4.10.2 Projects

Recent developments or planning applications in the vicinity can have a cumulative impact with the proposed development. Larger development planning applications in the near vicinity from the last three years that have been granted permission were searched for. Applications for home extensions, internal alterations and retention are not listed as they are unlikely to contribute to a significant cumulative impact with the proposed development.

The following planning applications in the vicinity of the proposed development have been approved:

Table 4.2: Other projects within approximately 2km which may have a cumulative impact on the development project

Planning Reference	Address	Application Status	Decision Date	Summary of Development
2560386	Dunbur Lower, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow, X12 Y345	Conditional Permission	17/10/2025	completion of works on site for that previously granted permission file ref 18/1405 for which the following was applied for; 1) proposed new clubhouse building which will provide 4 no dressing rooms and ancillary rooms to facilitate the development, 2) a new car parking area, 3) 1 no new playing pitch circa 137 x 85m including 6 no. floodlights to pitch, 4) proposed new fencing to pitch, 5) a proposed secondary treatment system to current EPA guidelines and new percolation area, 6) new well and all associated site works
2460825	The former 'Veha' factory, West of The Murrough Road, to the north of Wicklow Town, Wicklow, Co. Wicklow, A67 YY27	Conditional Permission	18/06/2025	Development comprises of: 1. Demolition of all existing buildings on the site 2. Construction of a mixed use development comprising of the following uses: (a) A 116 no. bedroom hotel of circa 5,214 sq.m gross with a height of five storeys plus rooftop plant, and including ancillary hotel facilities including bar, restaurant and business centre. (b) 107 no. residential units in a mix of houses (28 no.), townhouses (60 no.) and duplexes (19 no.) with a total residential floorspace of 12,492 sq.m gross. The overall residential mix is: 12 no. one beds, 5 no. 2 beds, 78 no. 3 beds and 12 no. four beds. There will be 16 no. three bed and 12 no four bed houses, 60 no. three bed townhouses, and 12 no. one beds, 5 no. two beds, and 2 no. three bed apartment duplexes. House Type 1, Townhouse Type 1, Townhouse Type 2, and Duplex Type 2 are three storeys in height. House Type 2 and Duplex Type 1 are two storeys in height. (c) The provision of own door offices of circa 223 sq.m and a shop/café of circa 160 sq.m in a single block of 2 storeys in height (d) A creche of circa 454 sq.m in a two storey building. 3. A total of 216 no. surface car parking spaces (including visitor, accessible

Planning Reference	Address	Application Status	Decision Date	Summary of Development
				and EV charging spaces), comprising of: 6 no. spaces for the creche, 3 no. spaces for the shop/café, 3 no. spaces for the own door offices, 66 no. spaces for the hotel, and 138 no. spaces for residential. 4. A total of 72 no. bicycle parking comprising of: (a) 28 no. spaces for the duplex units; (b) 28 no. spaces visitor/public in sheltered bicycle storage; (c) 6 no. spaces for the hotel. (d) 4 no. spaces for the office use (e) 2 no. spaces for the shop/café (f) 4 no. spaces for the creche 5. Open space comprising of: (a) 4,200 sq.m public open space including pocket parks and playgrounds; (b) 598 sqm of communal open space to serve the duplex units. 6. 2 no. new vehicular access The Murrough Road, 1 no. for the hotel and 1 no. for the residential units. 7. Infrastructure works to serve the proposed development to include the internal road network, ESB substations/switchrooms, PV panels, green roofs, lighting, site drainage works including pumping station, hard and soft landscaping, boundary treatment, and all ancillary site services and development works above and below ground. A Natura Impact Statement is submitted to the Planning Authority with this application

5 Screening Assessment

5.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

To determine whether the characteristics of the proposed development are likely to have significant impacts on the environment, the following questions are answered in Table 5.1, following guidelines set out in the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) Practice Note PN02, Environmental Impact Assessment Screening (OPR, June 2021).

Table 5.1: Characteristics of the proposed development

Characteristics of the Proposed Development - Screening Questions	Comment
Could the scale (size or design) of the proposed development be considered significant (including any demolition works)?	No. The proposed development consists of approximately 16 no. dwellings, comprising a mix of types, and 16 no. car parking spaces on a small site in an existing residential area. The proposed development will be in keeping with the surrounding residential housing in terms of design and size. No demolition is required.
Considered cumulatively with other adjacent existing or permitted projects, could the effects of the proposed development be considered significant?	When considered cumulatively with other permitted projects, significant effects are not likely. Due to the size of the proposed and permitted developments, significant impacts are not likely. Once the proposed development and all permitted projects are operational, the effects will not be significant. The area is well served with existing facilities, and the number of proposed units is not significant.
Will the proposed development utilise a significant quantity of natural resources such as land, soil, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or are in short supply?	The proposed site is small, covering 0.39 ha, and is located in a previously grassed area. Excavated material will be reused as fill where appropriate, and the overall amount to be excavated is minimal. No water is required for the development. Some trees will be removed due to concreting of

Characteristics of the Proposed Development - Screening Questions	Comment
	surfaces. There will not be a significant quantity of natural resources used.
Will the proposed development produce a significant quantity of waste?	No. Significant excavations are not required. Debris or rubbish generated during construction will be collected by a suitably licenced contractor and disposed of at appropriately licenced agents. Once operational, the proposed development will generate small amounts of domestic waste which will be collected and disposed of at appropriate licensed facilities.
Will the proposed development create a significant amount or type of pollution?	No. Temporary air and noise pollution may occur during the construction phase, but the amount will not be significant and will be mitigated against by the operational plans devised by the contractor. During the operational phase, a slight increase in traffic is possible but is not likely to result in a significant effect on air or noise pollution.
Will the proposed development create a significant amount of nuisance?	No. During construction, some noise and vibration will be created, however this will be temporary and short-term. Construction works will be limited to certain times of day. Once operational, the proposed development will not create a significant amount of nuisance.
Will there be a risk of major accidents having regard to substances or technologies used?	No. The risks of this development will be those typically associated with normal construction practices. Machinery will be used during the construction phase and will be operated by licensed contractors and following best practice guidance. Traffic to and from the site should exercise heightened caution to ensure the safety of other road users,

Characteristics of the Proposed Development - Screening Questions	Comment
	particularly due to the residential nature of the surrounding area.
Will there be a risk of natural disasters which are relevant to the project, including those caused by climate change?	No. The subject site is not located within a Flood Zone, and is at low risk of flooding.
Will there be a risk to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)?	No. Any potential risk to human health will be because of the construction phase of this project. All contractors will be subject to best practice methodologies and risk assessments to minimise any risk to human health.
Would any combination of the above factors be considered likely to have significant effects on the environment?	No. The development is relatively small scale. The environmental impacts are predictable and easily mitigated using best practice guidelines during the construction phase. As such, significant impacts on the environment are not expected as a result of the proposed development.

Conclusion: The characteristics of the proposed development are not considered to result in a significant impact on the environment by virtue of its size, nature or operational activities.

Reasoning: The proposed development, 16 no. dwellings, consists of the construction of apartments and houses and associated services. The development will occupy a relatively small area, currently consisting of a previously grassed section. Any environmental or noise impacts will be during the construction phase and not during operation of the development. Construction will not require significant use of natural resources, nor will it generate significant amounts of waste.

5.2 Location of the Proposed Development

The following questions are answered below in Table 5.2 to determine whether the geographical location of the proposed development can be considered ecologically or environmentally sensitive, following guidelines set out in the OPR Practice Note PN02, Environmental Impact Assessment Screening (OPR, June 2021).

Table 5.2: Location of the proposed development

Location of the Proposed Development - Screening Questions	Comments
Is the proposed development located within, close to, or has it the potential to impact on any site specified in Article 103(3)(a)(v) of the Regulations: • European Site (SAC or SPA) • NHA/pNHA • Designated Nature Reserve • Designated refuge for flora or fauna • Place, site or feature of ecological interest, the preservation, conservation, protection of which is an objective of a development plan or local area plan	No. The AA Screening for the site concluded that there are no Natura 2000 sites likely to be directly or indirectly impacted by the development. No other designated sites are likely to be impacted either.
Are there any other areas on or around the location that are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g., wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies (including riparian areas and river mouths), the coastal zone and the marine environment, mountains, forests or woodlands, that could be affected by the project?	No. The proposed development is situated in an existing residential area. No other sensitive areas are likely to be impacted, either during construction or operation.
Is the proposal likely to be highly visible to many people? Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location, or are there any routes or facilities that are used by the public for recreation or other facilities which could be affected by the proposal?	The proposed development will be visible from the Ballyguile Road running adjacent to the site. The design of the proposed development will be consistent with existing buildings in the surrounding residential area and therefore not significant. There are no landscapes of high scenic value on or in the vicinity of the location.

Location of the Proposed Development - Screening Questions	Comments
Has the proposed development the potential to significantly impact any locations which contain important, high quality, or scarce resources, e.g., groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, or minerals?	No. The proposed development will not impact the relative abundance, availability, or regenerative capacity of natural resources.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any features of historic or cultural importance, including protected structures or Recorded Monuments and Places of Archaeological Interest?	No. There are no recorded archaeological or architectural features on site or in the near vicinity of the proposed development which will be affected.
Is the site located in an area susceptible to subsidence, landslides, erosion, or flooding which could cause the proposal to present environmental problems?	No. The proposed development is not located in a flood zone or an area susceptible to subsidence, landslides, or erosion.
Are there any areas within or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage, and where there has already been a failure in environmental standards that could be affected by the proposal e.g., the status of water bodies under the Water Framework Directive?	No. The nearest WFD waterbody is at Good Status.
Are there areas within or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, or occupied by sensitive land uses e.g., hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities that could be affected by the proposal?	The proposed development is in an existing residential area near the centre of Wicklow Town. The proposed development will be in keeping with this residential land use and will not result in significant impacts on the surrounding area.
Are there any additional considerations that are specific to this location?	No.

Conclusion: The location of the proposed development is not likely to result in a significant impact on the environment.

Reasoning: The proposed development is situated near Wicklow Town and will be in keeping with existing residential land uses. There are no Natura 2000 sites or designated ecological sites which will be impacted by the proposed development. There are no landscapes of high scenic value on or in the vicinity of the location. There is no risk of flooding within or close to the proposed development.

5.3 Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The following questions were answered in Table 5.3, following guidelines set out in the OPR Practice Note PN02, Environmental Impact Assessment Screening (OPR, June 2021), to determine whether the environmental impacts of the development can be considered significant.

Table 5.3: Characteristics of potential impacts

Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts - Screening Questions	
If relevant, briefly describe the characteristics and magnitude of the potential impacts under the headings below.	Is this likely to result in significant effects on the environment, with mitigation measures in place if applicable?
Population and Human Health:	
During construction, impacts to public access are not expected on the roads adjacent to the site. In case of disruption, impacts would be slight and temporary, and likely limited to within the site boundaries. Slight negative impacts are possible on the surrounding areas due to construction activities; however, these will be typical of construction projects and temporary. Once operational, the proposed development will provide additional housing, representing a positive impact.	No. Construction stage impacts to population and human health are typical of such developments and easily mitigated against by operational plans put in place by the appointed contractor.
Biodiversity:	
During construction, temporary impacts to biological receptors on the site include disturbance from machinery and vegetation clearance. The AA Screening found there were no habitats or flora of conservation interest (i.e., qualifying interests (QI)) related to nearby Natura 2000 sites, found on site, nor any pathways to Natura 2000 sites.	No. During construction, impacts will be slight due to the disturbed nature of the site. Planting will be incorporated into the proposed development once operational.

Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts - Screening Questions	
Land and Soil:	
The area of land used for the proposed development is not significant. Construction will be at or near the surface, with excavation only needed for laying of utility services.	No. Where possible, excavated material will be used as fill elsewhere in the project. Material not required on site will be exported as a waste to an appropriate facility. The amount is not expected to be significant.
Water:	
There are no waterbodies on site or in the immediate vicinity. Due to the shallow excavations, interactions with groundwater are not expected to be significant.	No. Impacts to waterbodies are not expected due to the location of the site in relation to nearby watercourses, and the nature of the proposed development. The site is not located in an area at risk of flooding.
Air and Climate:	
There will be slight temporary impacts to air and climate during construction due to the operation of machinery and transport of materials. Mitigation measures and best practice methodologies will minimise emissions.	No. Impacts to air and climate during construction and operation will not be significant. No impacts are expected once operational.
Material Assets:	
During construction, temporary disruptions on adjacent roads may occur. Significant impacts are not expected due to the scale of the proposed development. Appropriate signage and traffic management will be in place to ensure the safety of other road users. Impacts on utilities and waste are not expected provided appropriate mitigation measures are followed by the appointed contractor.	During construction, the contractors will need to be aware of any services crossing the site. This will require consultation with the relevant service providers in the area. No significant negative impacts on services are likely. Once operational, no significant impacts are expected on material assets.
Cultural Heritage:	

Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts - Screening Questions		
There is no archaeological feature whose Zone of Notification is within the site boundary, nor any designated architectural sites. The site is previously developed meaning encounters with undiscovered archaeology are unlikely to occur.		No. Impacts to cultural heritage are not expected due to the nature and location of the works.
Landscape and Visual Amenity:		
Typical construction stage impacts to visual amenity will occur but will be temporary. No protected landscapes or protected views are near the development. The sites are located within an existing residential area and will improve landscape and visual amenity.		No. Impacts to landscape and visual amenity during construction will be temporary and partially mitigated by the contractor's operating plans and will not be significant. Once operational, positive impacts to landscape and visual amenity are anticipated.
Cumulative Effects:		
The Wicklow CDP contains objectives to support the provision of social housing and the use of residential zoned land, which is the case here. Nearby proposed and in-progress developments are not large and considered cumulatively, they will not have a significant impact with the proposed development.		No. The proposed development contributes to the objectives of the Wicklow CDP.
Transboundary Effects:		
Transboundary effects are not expected.		No.

Conclusion: The characteristics of the potential impacts due to the proposed development are unlikely to be significant and are easily mitigated.

Reasoning: The potential impacts from this development would be primarily during the construction phase. It is easy to predict these impacts and mitigate them using standard environmental procedures.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this report was to identify whether there is a need under The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, for an EIAR for the proposed residential development at Ballyguile Road, Wicklow, Co. Wicklow.

It was determined that the proposed development does not fall under Schedule 5 (Parts 1 and 2) of the Act. As such, an EIAR has not been automatically triggered. To determine whether the development may fall under the category of Sub-threshold development, with the potential to give rise to significant environmental effects, a screening exercise was undertaken.

During construction, typical impacts such as noise, dust, traffic disruption, and the generation of small amounts of waste are to be expected. These are typical construction phase impacts and will be mitigated against by environmental operating plans devised by the on-site contractor, following best practice guidance.

An AA Screening Report completed by Moore Group for the proposed development determined that no likely significant impacts are expected as a result of the proposed development. This is due to the small size of the development and the distance and lack of pathways to Natura 2000 sites.

Once operational, the proposed development will be low in environmental impact. The proposed development will create additional housing in an area of regeneration, introducing growth and opportunities. The proposed development aligns with the objectives outlined in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Wicklow Town - Rathnew Local Area Plan 2025-2031.

It has been concluded that the proposed development does not fall under the category of sub-threshold development, and thus an EIAR is not required.

The overall conclusion is based on the details of the scheme available at the time of preparation of this report. If the extent of the scheme or the construction methods for the scheme are changed, then the EIA Screening assessment should be reviewed.

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