



Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

Proposed Playground Development

Blackditch, Newcastle, Co. Wicklow

October 2025

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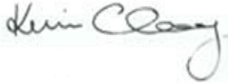
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LIMITATIONS

This report combines the outcome of desk study research and a screening exercise to assist in determining whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report is required for a proposed playground development at Blackditch, Newcastle, Co. Wicklow.

Best practice was followed at all times and within the limitations stated. This report is the property of Verdé Environmental Consultants Limited (Verde) and cannot be used, copied, or given to any third party without the explicit prior approval or agreement of Verde.

All Information contained in this report is based on the information made available to Verde, either through publicly available records or in reports and drawings presented to us which we assume to have been provided in good faith. This report represents an assessment of the site and was performed in accordance with generally accepted standards regarding environmental assessment. Verde makes no other representations whatsoever, including those concerning the legal significance of its findings or as to other legal matters touched on in this report, including, but not limited to ownership of any property or the application of any law to the facts set forth herein.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Verdé Environmental Consultants Ltd. (Verdé) was retained by Wicklow County Council to complete an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report for proposed redevelopment of Newcastle Playground at Blackditch, Newcastle, Co. Wicklow in accordance with the EIA Directive.

This EIA Screening exercise was completed to determine the potential for the Proposed Development to have significant environmental effects or not.

The exercise has been informed by a desk study of the site and its surrounds using publicly available information and through design information and reports provided by the Client. The following summary applies to the outcome of the screening exercise:

- The Proposed Development does not constitute development for which EIA is mandatory or required.
- In terms of scale, development and operations for the proposed development project do not fall under those projects requiring a mandatory EIA as prescribed in Annex I of the EIA Directive (Schedule 5, Part 1 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended). Therefore, a mandatory EIA is ruled out for reasoning set out in Section 4.2 herein.
- The Proposed Development falls within the category of “*Works of Demolition*” under Part 2 of Schedule 5(14) of the Regulations. These works are not being carried out to facilitate a project listed in Part 1 or Part 2 of Schedule 5 where such works would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.
- The Proposed Development also falls within the category of an “*Infrastructure Project*” under Part 2 of Schedule 5(10)(b) of the Regulations, however the development does not exceed any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part. Given the status of the development, it is classed as a sub-threshold development project.
- This report concludes that development as proposed will not result in significant negative impacts on the environment and as such will not require a sub-threshold environmental impact assessment.

No significant negative effects on any of the environmental factors to be considered under the EIA Directive are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development. 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 and it is therefore considered that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required in this instance.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Details

Verdé Environmental Consultants Ltd. (Verdé) has been retained by Wicklow County Council to complete an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report for a proposed playground development on a site south of the village, along the R761, in Newcastle, Co. Wicklow in accordance with the EIA Directive.

The purpose of the report is to determine whether or not an EIA Report is required for the Proposed Development as set out in the mandatory and discretionary provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended and Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended (2018). The requirement for a sub-threshold development to be subject to EIA is determined by the likelihood that the development would result in significant environmental effects which may arise due to the location of the development or the characteristics of the development. The EIA Screening exercise outlined below has examined the project with reference to the relevant thresholds and criteria.

1.2 Overview of the Proposed Development

Wicklow County Council intend to issue a Notice of Development under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, for the development of a playground and multi-use games area (MUGA) on a site of c. 0.356Ha. The development also comprises the demolition of the existing playground and band stand. The development will consist of the following elements:

- Site clearance (incl. existing playground and circular concrete band stand)
- Installation of perimeter railing
- Installation of play equipment
- Installation of safety surfacing
- Installation of new MUGA and fencing adjacent to existing MUGAs
- Provision of associated footpaths, kerbing, and landscaping
- Incorporation of any existing trees within the site layout

There is extensive planning history relating to the site and is summarised in Section 2.

1.3 Objectives and Work Brief

This EIA Screening Report is being submitted for the Proposed Development and has been prepared to assist in the decision as to whether an EIA is required. The question of whether an EIA is required arises only in relation to the projects that fall within the scope of one or more of the project classes listed in Annex I or II of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU

and/or corresponding classes or projects listed in Schedule 5, Parts 1 and 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. Projects which do not fall within the scope of the listed projects are not subject to any requirements for EIA or screening EIA under EIA Directive 2011/92/EU as amended 2014/52/EU.

This EIA screening report will be accompanied by the following reports which have been used to inform the EIA screening exercise:

- Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, Verde Environmental Consultants Ltd., October 2025.
- Various maps and drawings.

In order to meet project objectives, Verde's work brief included the following:

- A review of existing site details and Proposed Development plans.
- A review of EIA requirements under Planning and EIA Regulations, including site specific requirements.
- A review of available reports and figures.
- Desk study assessment of environmental sensitivity of the site location; and
- Review of development plans for lands adjacent to the Proposed Development.

2 EXISTING SITE DETAILS

2.1 Site Location and Setting

The Proposed Development site is located on the southern outskirts of Newcastle Village, along the R761, in Newcastle, Co. Wicklow. The site has a total area of approximately 0.356Ha and is irregular in shape. Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI) ITM coordinates for the site are 729903.46, 703735.25. Adjacent land uses are listed in Table 2.1 below. The site currently consists of the existing playground and band stand. As part of the development, it is proposed to demolish these structures.

The site is located within an area that is zoned a “*secondary development area*” by the Newcastle Town Plan 2022 – 2028. It is noted that under this zoning, the improvement of public open spaces and recreational facilities is permitted. The Proposed Development complies with the land use zoning.

The adjacent land uses are described in Table 2.1 and below.

Table 2.1 – Adjacent Land Uses

Boundary	Land Use
North	Residential dwellings associated with Sea Court are located immediately north of the site. This residential estate extends northwards, towards a combined retail unit which houses Hair by Theresa and Daybreak Newcastle.
West	The R761 is located to the west of the site. Racefield residential estate is located c. 20m west, just across the road. Beyond this, there are several agricultural fields.
East	Seamount Drive is immediately east of the site. These dwellings back on to agricultural land. The Irish Sea is located approximately 1.8km east of the site.
South	The site is bound to the south by the existing MUGAs and dwellings which are part of Seamount Drive. Newcastle Community Centre is located further south, just beyond the MUGAs

2.2 Planning Records

Planning records held by Wicklow County Council and MyPlan.ie have been consulted (on the 13th of October 2025) as part of the desktop review exercise with the results summarised in Table 2.2 below. Some of the developments within a 0.5km radius of the subject site in the past two years are listed in the table. It is noted that the applications listed in Table 2.2 reflect the information available on the MyPlan.ie portal as of the referenced date. Some applications submitted to Wicklow County Council on or before the 13th of October may not be listed, as they had not yet been uploaded to the portal and therefore did not appear in the search. The EIA Portal, an online map-based website operated and maintained by The Minister under the Amendment of Act 2000 172, identifies the location of each application for development

consent accompanied by an EIAR, and this was also consulted on the 13th of October 2025. The information on the EIA Portal is limited for the purposes of providing initial and early notification of proposed projects requiring EIA across the country. In relation to the Proposed Development, there were no projects identified within 1km of the site.

Table 2.2 Details of Relevant Planning Applications

PLANNING REF.	APPLICATION DESCRIPTION	SITE LOCATION	RELEVANT DATES	CURRENT UPDATE
2527	Extension of existing retail outlet including retail space, café and seating area. New toilet facilities. Outdoor seating areas. Alterations to front elevation of service station. Revised car parking including the provision of a service area and electric vehicle charging points. New electric access gates. New security fence. Alterations to roadside boundaries.	Approx. 150m north	February 2025 (Application Date) March 2025 (Decision Date)	Grant permission
2360359	Single storey extension to side and rear of existing dwelling.	Approx. 145m north	October 2023 (Application Date) December 2023 (Decision Date)	Grant permission
25147	Construct an end of terrace two storey dwelling with connection to public services and all associated site works.	Approx. 65m south	June 2025 (Application Date) October 2025 (Decision Date)	Grant permission
2360487	Amendments to the permitted Primary Zone Building (apartment building) permitted under Reg. ref 20/298 to include the following: (1) Change of use of 3no. permitted commercial units to 3no. 2-bed apartment units; (2) Addition of balconies/private open space for the 3no. apartment units; (3) Alteration to corresponding window sizes and positions; (4) Addition of 2no. car parking spaces; (5) All associated site works.	Approx. 195m north	December 2023 (Application Date) April 2024 (Decision Date)	Grant permission
2360476	Design amendments to the permitted Primary Zone Building (apartment building) permitted under Reg. ref 20/298 to include the following: (1) Addition of structural stone to ground floor of northern and eastern (gable) facades; (2) Alterations to canopies, ridge line, window sizes/positions, and private open space; (3) All associated site works.	Approx. 195m north	December 2023 (Application Date) N/A (Decision Date)	Application withdrawn

PLANNING REF.	APPLICATION DESCRIPTION	SITE LOCATION	RELEVANT DATES	CURRENT UPDATE
2360483	Design amendments to the permitted Primary Zone Building (apartment building) permitted under Reg. ref 20/298 to include the following: (1) Addition of structural stone to ground floor of northern and eastern (gable) facades; (2) Alterations to canopies, ridge line, window sizes/positions, and private open space; (3) All associated site works.	Approx. 195m north	December 2023 (Application Date) April 2024 (Decision Date)	Grant permission
2560248	- Construction of a dormer three-bedroom bungalow dwelling. - New vehicular entrance, water supply and drainage connections throughout the existing Chancel Way housing estate. - All together with associated site works, boundary treatments, landscaping and service connections necessary to complete this development	Approx. 230m northwest	April 2025 (Application Date) May 2025 (Decision Date)	Refuse permission
2560141	Conversion of attic space to habitable together with a new dormer window and velux rooflight to rear to facilitate the conversion and all associated site works.	Approx. 360m northwest	March 2025 (Application Date) May 2025 (Decision Date)	Grant permission
2460173	(1) Full planning permission for a 131 sqm extension to an existing 34 sq.m. residential unit to the side of Oaklawn House. The extension will incorporate the conversion of existing sheds attached to the unit and revisions to existing layout and elevations. The permission will also include for a new separate secondary treatment system including percolation area to current EPA guidelines, separate entrance and driveway and all associated site works. (2) Full planning permission is also been sought for alterations to internal layouts within Oaklawn House, with modifications and alterations to elevations in lieu of changes been sought and all associated site works.	Approx. 405m northwest	March 2024 (Application Date) N/A (Decision Date)	Incomplete application
2460259	(A) Full planning permission to reinstate as residential, the existing two storey former residential accommodation adjoining, but not connecting into, Oaklawn House totalling 34m2. (B) Full Planning Permission for the following. (1) A change of use of existing single storey barn/sheds totalling 113m2, at the side of Oaklawn House, into residential accommodation. (2) The existing	Approx. 405m northwest	May 2024 (Application Date) June 2024 (Decision Date)	Refuse permission

PLANNING REF.	APPLICATION DESCRIPTION	SITE LOCATION	RELEVANT DATES	CURRENT UPDATE
	two storey residential accommodation adjoining, but not connecting into, Oaklawn House totalling 34m ² will be incorporated into the conversion of the existing barn/sheds to form one new separate new dwelling unit. (3) A proposed new 3.5m ² porch will be added to the front of the existing barn/sheds to form an entrance to the new residential unit. (4) A proposed new 34.5 m ² upper floor extension to the existing barn/sheds will be added to the proposed new residential unit. (4) Revisions to existing layout and elevations of existing barn/sheds. (5) A new separate secondary treatment system including percolation area to current EPA guidelines, separate entrance and driveway and all associated site works relating to the new residential unit. (6) Minor changes to existing layout and elevations of Oaklawn House and all associated site works required to accommodate the proposed barn/shed conversion on lands which are a protected structure ref 13-33 under WCDP.			
2560132	Single storey extension to rear and side of existing dwelling and associated site works.	Approx. 405m northwest	February 2025 (Application Date) April 2025 (Decision Date)	Grant permission
2460724	Change of use of existing 2no. 2-bedroom terraced houses with studio workshop rooms to 2no. 3-bedroom terraced houses (ii) Change of use of existing 2no. 3-bedroom terraced houses with studio workshop rooms to 2no. 4-bedroom terraced houses. All with associated necessary site works, minor internal modifications and car parking spaces.	Approx. 395m northwest	November 2024 (Application Date) July 2025 (Decision Date)	Application withdrawn
2460347	(a) The demolition of the rear extension to Rockingham House; (b) Proposed modifications to Rockingham House's rear elevation and internal layout to achieve a 3-bed house; (c) The Construction of 2 no. 3-bed houses; all with associated private open space, communal open space, landscaping, car parking, and other necessary site works.	Approx. 375m northwest	June 2024 (Application Date) August 2024 (Decision Date)	Refuse permission

2.3 Site Physical Setting

Information on the site location, hydrology, geology hydrogeology and ecology of the area has been obtained from records held by the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI), Water Framework Directive Maps, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) databases and on-line resources of Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (myplan.ie).

Details of the site physical setting are outlined in Table 2.3 which includes desk study findings.

Table 2.3 – Site Physical Setting

FEATURE	DETAILS & COMMENTS
Topography	Topography is generally flat over the site area. Ground elevation in the vicinity of site ranges from 10m to 20m.
Geology	<u>Overburden</u> According to the Teagasc EPA Soils database, the soil beneath the site is classified as “ <i>made ground</i> ”. Quaternary sediment is classified as “ <i>Irish Sea till derived from Cambrian sandstones and shales</i> ”. The subsoil permeability is “ <i>low</i> ” for this area.
	<u>Solid Geology</u> The GSI Bedrock Geology information shows that the site is underlain by “ <i>greywacke and quartzite</i> ” that is of the “ <i>Bray Head Formation</i> ”.
Hydrogeology	<u>Regional Classification</u> According to GSI data, the bedrock aquifer beneath of the site is classified as a “ <i>poor aquifer</i> ” that is “ <i>generally unproductive except for local zones</i> ”.
	<u>Vulnerability</u> The GSI Vulnerability map for the area describes the aquifer as having a “ <i>moderate</i> ” vulnerability rating across the site.
	<u>Well Search</u> According to the Groundwater Wells and Springs map, well 3219NWW026 is located c. 760m northwest of the site. The use of this well is unknown and given its age it is not known if it is still in use.
Hydrology/Ecology	<u>Surface Water Courses</u> The Newcastle [Wicklow] River (Waterbody Code: IE_EA_10N010600, Segment Code: 10_1488, EPA Code: 10N01) is c. 300m north of the site. This flows in an easterly direction, before turning to the north and joining the Kilcoole Marsh, which ultimately discharges to the Irish Sea.
	The Newcastle [Wicklow] River has a “ <i>moderate</i> ” status according to the 2019 - 2024 Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment. It is currently “ <i>at risk</i> ” of not meeting its WFD objectives by 2027.
	<u>Groundwater</u> The Wicklow groundwater body (Groundwater Body Code: IE_EA_G_076) is located beneath the site.

	This has an overall status of “good” in accordance with the WFD 2019 - 2024. However, it is “at risk” of failing to meet its objectives by 2027.
	<u>Protected Areas</u> There are no European Sites within the development site boundary. There are two sites within the zone of influence (Zoi) of the site as noted in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report by Verde Environmental Consultants Ltd. These are: 1. Murrough Wetland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) 2. Murrough Special Protection Area (SPA) The AA Screening Report concluded that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (NIS) is not required as it is unlikely that the Proposed Development will have a significant impact on nearby European Sites.
	<u>Flood Risk</u> According to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which was prepared by JBA Consulting as part of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022 - 2028, the subject site is not located in a flood zone. According to the OPW CFRAM Flood Extents maps, the site is not at risk to fluvial, pluvial, or coastal flooding.
Licences/Permits/Seveso	There are no licenced activities or waste permitted operations at this site or immediate surroundings in accordance with EPA. There are no Seveso sites within the surrounding area of the Proposed Development.

3 EIA SCREENING LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

3.1 EIA Legislation

The EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (together, the EIA Directive) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment is designed to ensure that projects likely to have significant effects on the environment are subject to a comprehensive assessment of environmental effects prior to development consent being granted. The objective of the Directive (2014/52/EU) is to *“ensure a high level of protection of the environment and human health, through the establishment of minimum requirements for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), prior to development consent being given, of public and private development that are likely to have significant effects on the environment.”*

The environmental assessment must identify, describe, and assess the direct and indirect significant impacts of the project on specified environmental factors (Article 3 (1) of the Directive and 171a(b) and 172 of the Planning and Development Act 2000).

The requirements of the EIA Directives apply only in relation to projects listed in Annex I and II of the EIA Directive which is clear from Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Directive which provides that *“before consent is given, projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of their nature, size or location are made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects on the environment (EIA). Those projects are defined in Article 4”*. Article 4 provides that projects listed in Annex I shall be subject to a mandatory EIA and projects listed in Annex II shall be subject to determination as to whether an EIA is required through (a) case-by-case examination or (b) subject to thresholds or criteria set by the Member State.

In Ireland, EIA provisions relating to planning permissions are contained in the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended (Part X) (hereafter referred to as “the Planning Act”), and in the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended (Part 10) (“the Regulations”). Projects requiring an EIA are listed in Schedule 5 (Parts 1 and 2) of the Regulations. Where a project is listed in Part 2 of Schedule 5 but is classed as *“sub-threshold development”*, planning authorities under article 103 of the Regulations may request an EIAR where it considers the Proposed Development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Schedule 7 and 7A of the Regulations must be considered in the decision as to whether a Proposed Development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. *“‘Sub-threshold development’ means development of a type set out in Schedule 5 which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development.”* The prescribed classes of development for the purpose of section 176 of the Act are set out in Schedule 5.

The outcome of the EIA process does not, in itself, determine the outcome of an application for development consent for a project. The Planning Authority and An Bord Pleanála must consider each application for development consent on its

own merits, taking into account all material considered, including conclusions in respect of EIA, before making its decision to grant with or without conditions, or to refuse consent.

3.2 EIA Guidelines

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) revised the Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, in August 2018¹. These updated Guidelines deal with the legislative provisions resulting from the 2014 EIA Directive and the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018) and how they are to be addressed in practice.

Recently the EPA published draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports² (May 2022), which includes guidance on preparing an EIAR and the screening process. In addition, both the European Commission³ and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment⁴ (IEMA) have published guidance on various aspects of the EIA process which includes guidance on screening. This report has been prepared with reference to each of the above documents.

The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) has issued guidance in the form of the Environmental Impact Assessment Screening, Practice Note (PN02)⁵ in June 2021 which aids Planning Authorities as the Competent Authority in this area. The practice does not duplicate or replace any existing guidance or advice but focuses on the EIA screening exercise. It provides a step-by-step (3 step) approach to the process of screening for EIA.

¹ Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, August 2018

² Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, Environmental Protection Agency, May 2022

³ Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening, European Commission (2017) Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

⁴ Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to: Delivering Quality Development, IEMA (2016) Lincoln, UK

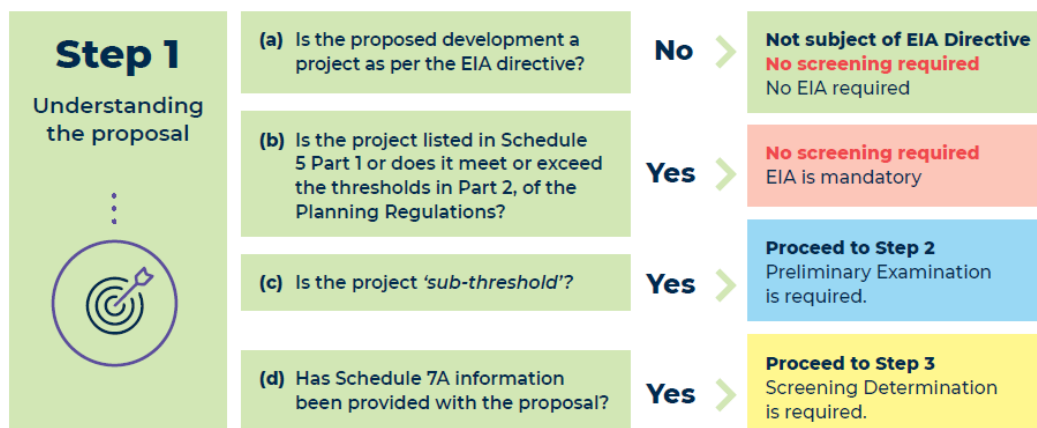
⁵ Environmental Impact Assessment Screening OPE Practice Note PN02, Office of the Planning Regulator, June 2021

4 EIA SCREENING

4.1 Screening Methodology

The Proposed Development is evaluated to determine potential EIA requirements based on the characteristics of the development, site location sensitivity, and characteristics of potential impacts. The first step is to determine whether the proposed project exceeds thresholds requiring a mandatory EIA as set out in Annex I or II of the EIA Directive. These classes have been broadly transposed into Schedule 5 (Part 1 and 2) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018 with national thresholds included for many of the Annex II classes. If the project is not subject to a mandatory EIA, EIA may still be required to determine the likelihood of a sub-threshold projects having significant effects on the environment. Criteria are included in Annex III of the EIA Directive (transposed into Irish Law in Schedule 7 of the Regulations) to determine whether a sub-threshold development should be subject to an EIA. Figure 1 outlines Step 1 “understanding the proposal” of the EIA Screening exercise extracted from the PN02 Practice Note. Step 1 will determine if no screening is required/no EIA required, an EIA is mandatory or to move on to Step 2 if the project is sub-threshold.

Figure 1 – Step 1 approach to EIA Screening for Development Proposals (extract from the OPR Practice Note).



If Schedule 7A information has been provided for the Proposed Development, it is required to proceed to Step 3 Screening Determination. The screening determination completed by the competent authority must be based on the information provided by the developer and considered in light of the precautionary principle. Criteria to determine whether projects by virtue, inter alia, of their nature, size or location should be subject to EIA, are set out in Schedule 7 to the Regulations, as amended (Annex III of the 2014 Directive). The determination made by the competent authority must include reasons with reference to Schedule 7 criteria and make reference to any mitigation features or design factors influential to the making of the determination. Particular attention should be given to potential significant impacts on sensitive areas (e.g., areas identified as important to nature conservation and/or areas of particular archaeological interest in the relevant Development Plan), and also to cumulative effects with relevant existing and/or approved projects.

For all sub-threshold developments listed in Schedule 5 Part 2, under Article 103(1) of the Regulations, where EIAR is submitted or EIA determination is requested, a screening determination exercise is required to be undertaken by the competent authority unless, on preliminary examination it can be concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. Article 103(1)(b)(i) - (iii) and 109(2)(b)(i) – (iii) of the Regulations⁶ states:

(a) “Where planning applications 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 in such preliminary examinations, 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.”*

4.2 Understanding The Proposal (STEP 1)

4.2.1 Mandatory EIA Thresholds (Schedule 5 Criteria)

Section 172 of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended, provides the legislative basis for mandatory EIA. It states that an environmental impact assessment shall be carried out by a planning authority or the Bord, 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,*

⁶ European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 S.I. No. 296 of 2018

(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 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."*

There is no class set out under Part 1 of Schedule 5 (or Annex I of the EIA Directive) in relation to the Proposed Development at Blackditch, Newcastle, Co. Wicklow and therefore an EIA is not mandatory. The Proposed Development is of a type listed in Annex II of the EIA Directive (Part 2 of Schedule 5).

Schedule 5 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, as amended sets out a number of classes and scales of development that require EIA. The proposed playground development on a plot area of c. 0.356Ha comprises the demolition of the existing playground and concrete band stand and the construction a larger playground and MUGA. The development will consist of the following elements:

- Site clearance (incl. existing playground and circular concrete band stand)
- Installation of perimeter railing
- Installation of play equipment
- Installation of safety surfacing
- Installation of new MUGA and fencing adjacent to existing MUGAs
- Provision of associated footpaths, kerbing, and landscaping
- Incorporation of any existing trees within the site layout

The Proposed Development falls within the category "*Works of Demolition*" under Part 2 of Schedule 5(14) of the Regulations which provides that a mandatory EIAR must be undertaken where:

"Works of demolition carried out in order to facilitate a project listed in Part 1 or Part 2 of this Schedule where such works would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7."

Demolition works are required to facilitate the Proposed Development. It is proposed to demolish the existing playground and concrete band stand. These works are not being carried out to facilitate a project listed in Part 1 or Part 2 of Schedule 5 where such works would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The site will be subject to regeneration/redevelopment works. Therefore, the proposed demolition works can be considered as facilitating future development, being of an "*Infrastructure Project*" which is further discussed below.

The Proposed Development also falls within the category of an “Infrastructure Project” under Part 2 of Schedule 5(10)(b) of the Regulations which provides that a mandatory EIAR must be carried out for the following projects:

“(iv) Urban development which would involve 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 exceed this threshold as the plot area is 0.356Ha. The Proposed Development site is not within a business district and is below the threshold limit size for other parts of a built-up area. Therefore, the Proposed Development falls below the threshold of 10 hectares. It is therefore referred to as a “sub-threshold” development.

Therefore, as stated above, the Proposed Development is of a class of development listed in Part 2 of Schedule 5, however the scale and nature of the Proposed Development does not meet or exceed the stated thresholds at which an EIA is a mandatory requirement, and it therefore follows the Proposed Development is classed as a “sub-threshold” development and is subject to screening for the requirement for EIA. Therefore, the next stage is Step 2 of the OPR step-by-step approach to complete a Preliminary Examination (Figure 2 for reference).

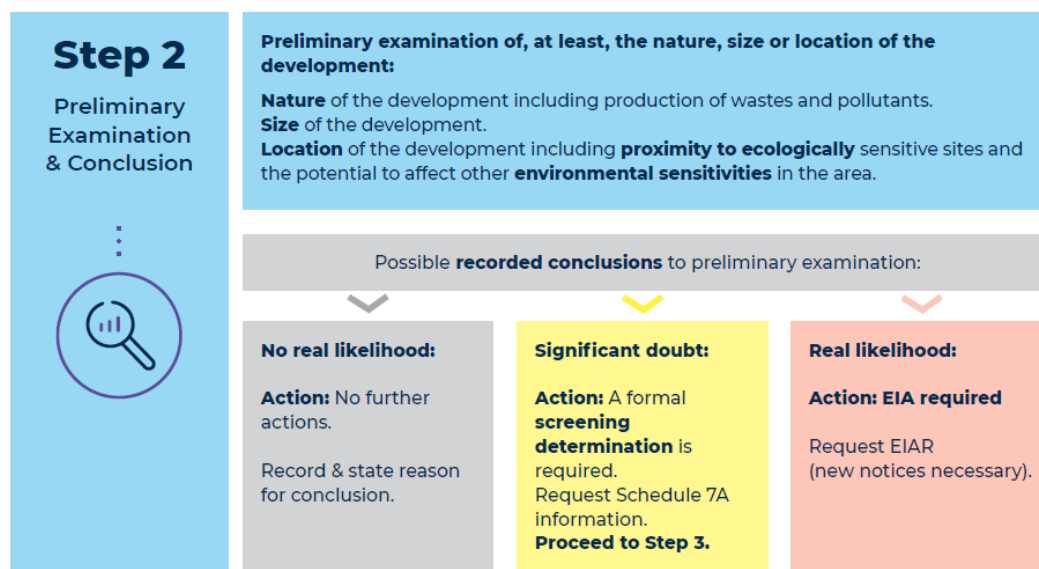
4.3 Preliminary Examination (STEP 2)

Preliminary examinations must consider at least the following:

- The **nature** of the development including the production of waste and pollutants
- The **size** of the development; or
- The **location** of the development including the potential to impact on certain ecologically sensitive sites and the potential to affect other environmentally sensitive sites in the area.

A preliminary examination should have regard to the Source-Pathway-Receptor model and regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Regulations. The OPR PN02 guidance states a number of questions to assist the preliminary examination which have been considered in the following sections.

Figure 2 – Step 2 approach to EIA Screening for Development Proposals (extract from the OPR Practice Note).



4.3.1 Nature of the Development

Is the nature of the Proposed Development exceptional in the context of the existing environment?

Land use in the area is predominately residential, with some commercial properties situated to the north of the site. The site is located within an area that is zoned a “secondary development area” by the Newcastle Town Plan 2022 – 2028. It is noted that under this zoning, the improvement of public open spaces and recreational facilities is permitted. The Proposed Development complies with the land use zoning.

While the Proposed Development complies with the overall land use zoning objectives, it is noted that the site is currently home to the existing playground, and that the development will not change this. The site currently the existing playground and concrete band stand which will be demolished and replaced, i.e., the existing environment and characteristics of the site will not be changed by the Proposed Development. It is also proposed to retain any existing trees at the site as part of the development.

The Proposed Development can be considered not exceptional in the context of the existing environment.

Will the development result in the production of any significant waste, or result in significant emissions or pollutants?

It is not anticipated that the Proposed Development will cause any significant emissions or pollutants during its operational stage.

During the demolition and construction phases, works will not be out of the ordinary for a typical commercial development. Waste will likely include mixed construction and demolition waste, timber, metals, concrete, and other forms of waste. The priority will be to promote recycling, reuse and recovery of waste and diversion from landfill where possible. Through using appropriate suitable licensed contractors and facilities for any waste removed off-site, environmental impacts arising from waste are expected to be minimal, short-term, and slight with respect to waste management. Waste classification, management, and segregation are to be discussed in detail in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which is to be prepared by the appointed Contractor.

Through mitigation measures and best practice procedures, there is possible emissions and pollutants that will be prevented or reduced. Such environmental emissions and mitigation include:

- Noise – noise monitoring stations, timber hoarding, working hours, plant for the site that complies with noise emissions, etc.
- Dust – dust monitoring, timber hoarding, water dust suppression systems, keeping the site clean and tidy etc.
- Vibration – working hours, if required vibration monitoring, ensure equipment and methods produce minimum vibration.
- Waste – segregation of waste on the site, correct disposal to licensed facilities, hazardous management plan will be created if encountered.
- Refuelling – bunded areas, fuel and oil stores, spill trays, etc.

Waste management will be applicable on the site, and the Contractor will be required to ensure that good housekeeping will be implemented throughout the construction phase. There will be potential short-term dust, air, and noise pollution during the construction stage from typical construction activities, but they can be easily managed by mitigation measures to be outlined in a site-specific CEMP Report which will be produced in advance of the commencement of the development. All plant and machinery will comply with noise regulations.

Overall, the development is unlikely to cause any significant emissions or pollutants during the construction or operational phases.

4.3.2 Size of the Development

Is the size of the Proposed Development exceptional in the context of the existing environment?

The overall size of the subject site is 0.356Ha and the proposed playground redevelopment will consist of:

- Site clearance (incl. existing playground and circular concrete band stand)
- Installation of perimeter railing
- Installation of play equipment

- Installation of safety surfacing
- Installation of new MUGA and fencing adjacent to existing MUGAs
- Provision of associated footpaths, kerbing, and landscaping
- Incorporation of any existing trees within the site layout

It is noted that all works will take place within the site boundary, and that there will be no alterations to the size of the site to construct the Proposed Development. The size of the Proposed Development is not exceptional in the context of the existing environment and will not change or transform the existing land use.

Are there cumulative considerations having regard to other existing and/or permitted projects?

The Proposed Development (which includes demolition and construction works) itself, is not considered significant, and it is noted that such works are contained within a small footprint and site area.

Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessments note cumulative impacts/effects as *“a single effect on its own may not be significant in terms of impact on the environment but, when considered together with other effects, may have a significant impact on the environment. Also, a single effect which may, on its own, have a significant effect, may have a reduced and insignificant impact when combined with other effects.”*

As part of the assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development, account has been taken of other existing or permitted development within the surrounding area that have the potential to combine with the proposed development and result in likely significant cumulative effects. It is imperative to make clear that not all projects within a study area are capable of combining with the proposed development to result in potential cumulative effects.

As regards to cumulative impacts, they are likely to arise, in respect of noise, dust and traffic during the demolition and construction phases in the absence of mitigation measures. However, best practices will be followed in relation to the demolition and construction phases, and site-specific mitigation measures will be outlined in the CEMP that is to be prepared. Such measures will ensure that the Proposed Development, along with other projects in the area, is unlikely to result in significant adverse effects on the environment.

In terms of existing developments, the subject site is currently comprised of a playground and band stand which will be demolished. In the surrounding area of the site there are residential buildings to the north, east, and west, and a community centre to the south. It is not expected that the Proposed Development will have a significant effect on the existing developments within the area.

The Wicklow County Council planning records were consulted on the 13th of October 2025 for the area. Table 2.2 in Section 2 lists planning applications from the past two years in the immediate surroundings of the subject Proposed Development. There are currently seven granted planning applications within a 500m radius of the site. There are currently no pending applications. The EIA Portal was also consulted on the 13th of October 2025, and no projects requiring an EIAR were identified within 1km of the site.

Some relevant planning applications were assessed for their potential to act in-combination with the Proposed Development and cause likely significant effects on the environment. Existing projects and long-term developments were also considered where applicable. Some of the assessed applications are discussed below in relation to the Proposed Development.

Planning Application Ref. 2527:

This application, which was approved in March of this year, sought permission to extend the existing retail outlet located to the north of the Proposed Development. Planning permission was subsequently granted, subject to certain conditions.

According to the Planner's Report, due to the nature, scale, and location of the proposed works, neither an EIA Report or an AA Report was required, as the development was not expected to result in any significant environmental effects or impacts on nearby European Sites.

It is further noted that this development, together with the Proposed Development, will be undertaken in accordance with best practice standards. Appropriate control measures will be implemented in relation to pollution prevention, site cleanliness, and environmental protection to ensure that the projects, whether individually or in combination with other plans or projects, do not result in significant adverse effects on the environment.

Planning Application Ref. 25147:

This application was approved in October, and relates to the construction of a two-storey end-of-terrace dwelling. The site is located to the south of the Proposed Development.

According to the Planner's Report, the development is not expected to have any adverse effects on the surrounding environment, local ecology, or nearby European Sites.

Both this development and the Proposed Development will be carried out following best practices and appropriate control measures. With these measures in place, neither development is anticipated to have a significant environmental impact, whether individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

Additionally, any planned or future developments within the vicinity of the Proposed Development will be required to incorporate appropriate mitigation measures (e.g. noise management, dust management, traffic management, management of water quality in run-off water, landscape, etc.) during the construction phase as part of their conditions of planning, where required.

There will be no foul or surface water discharge associated with the Proposed Development, nor will there be any requirement for water supply. It is noted however that the Contractor will put in place mitigation measures for the protection of water quality and silt and pollution control, further ensuring that any risks of watercourse pollution and sedimentation are minimised. These will include measures for spill prevention and silt control on site.

Considering the cumulative assessment and available reports, the potential for adverse environmental effects in combination with projects in the surrounding area has been considered insignificant.

4.3.3 Location of the Development

Is the Proposed Development located on, in, adjoining or does it have the potential to impact on ecologically sensitive site or location?

The subject site is not located within any European Site. Within the zone of influence (Zoi) surrounding the subject site there are two protected sites. These consist of the Murrough SPA and Murrough Wetlands SAC.

The report determined that the Proposed Development is not expected to cause significant effects on either European Site due to noise and vibration, habitat loss or fragmentation, or impacts through surface water or pollutant pathways. Furthermore, it found that the Proposed Development would not have any cumulative effects in combination with nearby developments on the European Sites.

The report concluded that a Natura Impact Statement would not be required as it is unlikely that the development will have a significant impact on the Murrough SPA and Murrough Wetland SAC.

In summary, the Proposed Development is unlikely to have the potential to impact on ecologically sensitive sites or locations during the construction or operational phases.

Does the Proposed Development have the potential to affect other significant environmental sensitivities in the area?

With the use of the online Historic Environment Viewer, there are no recorded monuments, archaeological sites, or protected sites within the Proposed Development site.

The closest National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) site is a three-story house (Reg. No. 16310001), which is c. 370m northwest of the subject site. The house dates back to 1860 – 1880. The closest Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) is a Barrow (Ref. No. WI019-079----), which is approximately 350m west of the site.

The Proposed Development does not have the potential to affect significant environmental sensitivities within the area of the site.

4.3.4 Preliminary Examination Conclusion

Following completion of the Preliminary Examination (Step 2), the competent authority is recommended to conclude that there are uncertainties regarding the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the Proposed Development, and therefore, it is recommended to proceed to a Screening Determination (Step 3).

5 SCREENING DETERMINATION (STEP 3)

5.1 Sub -Threshold Screening Determination (Schedule 7 Criteria)

Potentially, a sub-threshold EIA may be required, and a sub-threshold development is defined as “*development of a type set out in Schedule 5 which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development.*” To determine whether the project described in Section 2 above should be subject to an EIA, Annex III of the EIA Directive details the criteria to be used to determine whether a project should be subject to EIA and Schedule 7 of the Regulations implements this Directive in Ireland. The following assessment is completed on the basis of the Criteria in Schedule 7 of the Regulations and utilises the Screening Checklist provided in the Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects, Guidance on Screening (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU). Information to be provided by the applicant or developer for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for EIA comprises of the following (Schedule 7A):

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.
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.
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 Schedule 7 criteria are grouped under the following three headings:

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

Each group includes a number of criteria for consideration. The assessment of the likelihood of significant environmental effects requires professional judgment. The DoEHLG Guidance Document Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development states that “*it is not intended that special studies or technical evaluations will be necessary for the purpose of making a decision*”. In this context, this screening exercise

has relied on available information. The Schedule 7 screening criteria to be reviewed are discussed in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 below, with reference to the Proposed Development.

Where there are doubts to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development following from the Preliminary Examination (Step 2 of the OPR PN02), the next step is to proceed to Step 3 to complete the formal screening determination (Figure 3).

Figure 3 – Step 3 approach to EIA Screening for Development Proposals (extract from the OPR Practice Note).

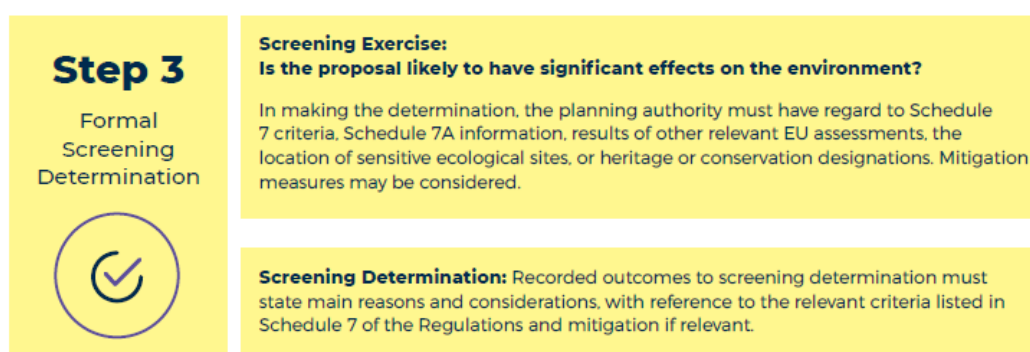


Table 5.1 presents a description of the projects likely impacts on the environment.

Table 5.1: Screening Determination

SCREENING QUESTIONS	COMMENT
1. Characteristics of the Proposed Development	Comment
Is the scale of the project considered to be significant?	The overall size of the subject site is 0.356Ha, and is surrounded by residential dwellings to the north, east and west, and a community centre to the south. It is noted that the site currently houses an existing playground. The site is located within an area that is zoned a “<i>secondary development area</i>” by the Newcastle Town Plan 2022 – 2028. It is noted that under this zoning, the improvement of public open spaces and recreational facilities is permitted. The Proposed Development complies with the land use zoning. The development consists of: • Site clearance (incl. existing playground and circular concrete band stand) • Installation of perimeter railing • Installation of play equipment • Installation of safety surfacing • Installation of new MUGA and fencing adjacent to existing MUGAs • Provision of associated footpaths, kerbing, and landscaping • Incorporation of any existing trees within the site layout

	Taking the small size of the site, the proposed works, adjacent land uses, and the existing on-site infrastructure into consideration, the scale of the project is not deemed to be significant.
Is the size of the project considered significant when considered cumulatively with existing or permitted projects (including under other legislation that is subject to EIA) that could give rise to cumulative effects?	The planning records for the area were consulted on the 13th of October 2025. Table 2.2 lists planning applications in the immediate surroundings of the Proposed Development. There are currently seven granted planning applications within a 500m radius of the site. There are no pending applications at this time. See Section 4.3.2 that identifies relevant applications for the assessment of cumulative effects. No cumulative factors have been identified.
Will the project utilise a significant quantity of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water, or biodiversity?	No, nothing out of the ordinary. Due to the nature of the development, it is not expected to use a significant amount of natural resources during either construction or operational phases. <u>Land</u> The Proposed Development will not utilise a significant quantity of land. The subject site is c. 0.356Ha in size, and it is proposed to demolish the existing playground and band stand on-site and install a new playground and MUGA. <u>Soil</u> It is noted that approximately 440m³ of soil will be excavated during the construction phase. Soil will be reused on-site, where possible. Any material excavated will be stockpiled. If suspected contaminated soil is uncovered, this will be segregated, tested and transferred to a suitably authorised waste management facility. There are no likely significant effects on the environment in relation to soil management at the site with the implementation of best practice mitigation and pollution prevention control measures. <u>Water</u> During the construction phase, the site will be supplied with water by either tanker or a temporary connection to the municipal water main that runs along the R761. A permanent connection will not be required for the operational phase. <u>Biodiversity</u> The site is currently occupied by the existing playground and concrete bandstand. The habitats within the site boundary include hedgerows, dry meadows and grassy verges, amenity grasslands, and buildings and artificial surfaces. No alien invasive species are noted to be present on-site. With regard to the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, and the assessment for likely significant effects within, it was determined that a Natura Impact Statement was not required for the Proposed Development. This conclusion was made on the basis that there is no potential for any likely significant effects on the European Sites within the Zol.
Will the project produce a significant quantity of waste?	No. The Proposed Development will not produce significant quantities of waste. Reduce, reuse, and recycle will be implemented throughout the construction stage. Skips will be provided for the disposal of wood from pallets used for transport of construction materials. Other non-hazardous waste generated will be collected in separate skips. All waste arisings will be handled by an approved waste contractor holding a current waste collection permit. All waste arisings requiring disposal off-site will be reused,

	recycled, recovered, or disposed of at a facility holding the appropriate registration, permit, or licence, as required. A high level of due diligence will be carried out, and relevant legislation/standards/acts will be followed.
Will the project create a significant amount or type of pollution and nuisance?	<u>Pollution</u> During the construction phase, the Proposed Development will have the potential to create short term, negative impacts particularly in terms of dust, noise, and surface water run-off. Best practices and environmental control measures will be implemented during this phase of the development to mitigate such impacts. These measures will be discussed further in the CEMP that will be prepared pre-construction. Implementation of control measures will ensure that the Proposed Development does not impact the surrounding environment, or nearby European Sites. The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report by Verde Environmental Consultants Ltd. concluded that that no likely significant cumulative effects will occur upon any European Sites within the ZOI as a result of the Proposed Development. <u>Nuisance</u> As with all construction projects, there will be an element of traffic and noise nuisance. However, this will be limited through mitigation measures such as arranging deliveries to take place outside of peak hours to reduce/avoid congestion and turning off heavy plant/machinery when not in use to minimise noise. Further measures will be detailed in the CEMP that is to be developed by the Contractor. Overall, it is not envisioned that the Proposed Development will give rise to a significant amount or type of pollution or nuisance.
Will there be a risk of major accidents?	No. All works will be completed in agreement with standard practices. During the construction phase utmost care will be taken by the Contractor to prevent accidental spillages through the adoption of strict best practice construction management measures. The Proposed Development is not of a type that poses a risk of major accidents. The design and construction of the development will be carried out in accordance with building and fire regulations. The development is not regulated or connected to or close to any site regulated under the Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances Regulations (COMAH) (SEVESO sites). The Proposed Development is not at risk of major accidents nor is the development as designed likely to increase the risk of major accident in this location.
Will there be a risk of natural disasters, including those caused by climate change?	No. The potential natural disasters that may occur are limited to flooding and fire. <u>Landslide</u> According to the GSI landslide database there have been no recorded landslides within the site, or the surrounding area and the site is not susceptible to landslides. The site is not within an area of subsidence. <u>Flooding</u> The Office of Public Works (OPW) collates available reports of flooding from all sources (e.g., fluvial, pluvial, coastal, etc.) on a nationwide basis. There are no historic records of flooding in the immediate vicinity of the site. According to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment that was prepared as part of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, the site is also not located within a flood zone. <u>Fire</u> In terms of fire risk, there are no planned operations during construction or operation

	that would lead to an elevated fire risk. The Proposed Development is not likely to be at risk from natural disasters including those caused by climate change.
Will there be a risk to human health, for example due to water contamination or air pollution?	No significant impacts on human health are anticipated. However, during the construction phase, there may be short-term and limited risks due to potential emissions of dust and fumes, as well as from minor quantities of wastewater, chemicals, or hazardous substances handled on-site by workers. These risks will be effectively managed through appropriate mitigation measures, including Standard Operating Procedures, bunded storage, and robust health and safety systems. Such risks are typical for developments of this nature and are not expected to result in significant human health effects.
Is the combination of the above factors likely to have significant effects on the environment?	Unlikely. As all construction activities will be confined within the site boundary and appropriate mitigation measures and best practices will be implemented, significant environmental effects are not expected.
2. Location of the Proposed Development	Comment
General description of the site location and its surroundings:	The subject site is located on the southern outskirts of Newcastle Village, Co. Wicklow. The site has a total area of approximately 0.356Ha and is irregular in shape. The site currently consists of a playground and concrete band stand which are to be demolished as part of this development. The site is located within an area that is zoned a “secondary development area” by the Newcastle Town Plan 2022 – 2028. It is noted that under this zoning, the improvement of public open spaces and recreational facilities is permitted. The Proposed Development complies with the land use zoning.
Is the project 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 - NHA/pNHA - Designated Nature Reserve - Designated refuge for flora or fauna - Birds Directive - Habitat Directive - Wildlife Act - Place, site or feature of ecological interest, the preservation, conservation, protection of which is an objective of a development plan/local area plan/draft plan or variation of a plan	The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report by Verde Environmental Consultants Ltd. found two European Sites within the Zol. The report concluded that no likely cumulative effects would occur upon any European Sites as a result of the Proposed Development, and that a Natura Impact Statement is not required. During the construction phase – Any water leaving the site will need to be passed through swales, silt fences, and/or check dams prior to leaving the site during the construction phase. This will be detailed in the CEMP that is to be prepared. During the operational phase – All surface water from the site will drain to ground. The water will not be contaminated given the nature of the development to be constructed. Through the implementation of best practices and mitigation or control measures, which will be detailed in the CEMP, the Proposed Development is not expected to have any direct or indirect impacts on designated sites, species, or habitats.
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, coastal zones, mountains, marine environment, forests, or woodlands that could be affected by the project?	<u>Park</u> – There are no National Parks within 5km of the site. <u>Nature Reserve</u> – BirdWatch Ireland’s East Coast Nature Reserve is c. 1.2km east of the site. <u>Bogs</u> – There are no bogs within 5km of the site. <u>Forest</u> – Newtownmountkennedy Woods is c. 4.6km northwest. <u>Transitional</u> – The Kilcoole Marsh is approximately 2.0km northeast of the site. <u>Coastal/Marine</u> – The Irish Sea is c. 1.8km east. <u>Surface Water</u> – The Newcastle [Wicklow] River is approximately 300m north. With implementation of the best practices and standard controls, as well as mitigation

	measures that are to be further detailed in the CEMP that is to be prepared, the Proposed Development is not likely to impact these sensitive sites.
Is the Proposed Development likely to be highly visible by 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 would be affected by the proposal?	The development will be visible by residents of the nearby dwellings, users of the community centre and road users; however, it is noted that there is an existing playground on the site, which the Proposed Development will simply be replacing. The Proposed Development will not affect or block any area or feature with high landscape or scenic value. The Proposed Development will provide an improved recreational facility for the public.
Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location that could be affected by the project?	There are no recorded monuments, archaeological sites, or protected sites within the Proposed Development site. The closest NIAH site is a three-story house (Reg. No. 16310001), which is c. 370m northwest of the subject site. The house dates back to 1860 – 1880. The closest SMR is a Barrow (Ref. No. WI019-079----), which is approximately 350m west of the site. The Proposed Development does not have the potential to affect significant environmental sensitivities within the area of the site.
(Protected structures or Recorded Monuments and Places of Archaeological Interest)	
Are there areas within or around the location 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 site is bordered by residential dwellings to the north and east, with additional dwellings to the west beyond the R761. The local community centre lies to the south. While these are in close proximity to the site and may experience temporary effects during construction – such as traffic congestion, dust, and noise – these impacts will be mitigated through best practices and measures outlined above, as well as those to be detailed in the site-specific CEMP. A summary of sensitive land uses is provided below; however, none are expected to experience long-term effects from the Proposed Development. <u>Hospitals</u> - Newcastle Hospital is c. 2.6km northwest. <u>Schools</u> - Newcastle Community Preschool is immediately south. - St. Francis' National School is c. 920m northwest. <u>Places of worship</u> - Newcastle Church is c. 820m northwest. <u>Community Facility</u> - Newcastle Community Centre is immediately south. - Newcastle Playground is within the site boundary.
Are there any areas within or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g., groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals that could be affected by the proposal?	No.
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	<u>Surface Water Courses</u> The Newcastle [Wicklow] River is c. 300m north of the site. This flows in an easterly direction, before turning to the north and joining the Kilcoole Marsh, which ultimately discharges to the Irish Sea.

affected by the proposal e.g., the status of water bodies under the Water Framework Directive?	The river has a “<i>moderate</i>” status according to the 2019 - 2024 Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment. It is currently “<i>at risk</i>” of not meeting its WFD objectives by 2027. <u>Groundwater</u> The Wicklow groundwater body is located beneath the site. This has an overall status of “<i>good</i>” in accordance with the WFD 2019 - 2024. However, it is “<i>at risk</i>” of failing to meet its objectives by 2027.
Is the site location in an area susceptible to subsidence, landslides, erosion, or flooding which could cause the proposal to present environment problems?	No, the site is not located in an area susceptible to subsidence, landslides, erosion, or flooding.
Are there any additional considerations that are specific to this location?	No significant effects have been identified. The majority of potential impacts/adverse impacts that may arise from the Proposed Development are associated with the construction stage and these effects will be temporary and short-term, reversible and “once-off”. Mitigation measures and standard best practices will be implemented and detailed in the CEMP to be prepared. Standard measures to manage noise, dust, traffic, and other potential nuisances during the construction phase will follow established best practices, policies, and guidance.
3. Type and Characteristics of Potential Impacts	Comment
Population and Human Health:	The potential impacts of the construction phase on human beings are not considered to be significant. During construction, there is the potential for short term nuisances to human beings from dust and noise. These are not likely to be at such quantity or such significance that would warrant the completion of a sub-threshold EIAR. Noise and dust will be subject to standard mitigation measures and best practices as per typical construction projects and will be set out in the CEMP that is to be prepared. There will likely be traffic inconvenience during the construction phase with delivery trucks, site workers, and other construction relation traffic going to and from the site. However, the works will be short-term and temporary in duration and active works will be limited so potential impacts will be restricted in their geographical extent as well as their duration. Construction sites pose risk to the health and safety of the public. Within the CEMP (that is to be developed), safety, health and environmental issues are a primary consideration in the construction methods adopted. The construction team will develop detailed health and safety plans to suit the construction sequence of the development. A site-specific Safety Statement and a detailed Construction Stage Safety and Health Plan will be compiled prior to works in accordance with the HSE and Local Authority guidelines. Control measures to be employed during the construction stage include storage of fuels/chemicals in designated areas, bunding of tanks, correct PPE, and spillage kits. The residual construction impacts are temporary and are not considered to be significant. There are no significant operational impacts associated with the Proposed Development that would likely cause significant effects in terms of population and human health.
Biodiversity / Species and Habitats: (Habitats Directive and Birds Directive)	The Appropriate Assessment Screening, which was prepared by Verde Environmental Consultants Ltd., concluded that the Proposed Development will not cause adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of any European Site within the ZoI, and that no significant effects to European Sites are likely to arise either alone or in combination

	with other plans and projects. Although the risk of pollution from the site is low, mitigation measures during the construction phase should be prepared to prevent any potential pollution. Water leaving the site will need to be passed through swales, silt fences, and/or check dams prior to leaving the site during the construction phase. This will be detailed in the CEMP that is to be prepared. Such mitigation measures will reduce any risk to the environment. It is not anticipated that the Proposed Development will have an impact on biodiversity, species, or habitats.
Land, Soil, Water, Air and Climate:	<u>Land</u> The subject site is 0.356Ha in size. The Proposed Development will not have a significant impact on the land as it is proposed to replace the existing playground and band stand with a new playground and MUGA. <u>Soil</u> Soil will be excavated as part of the Proposed Development for the installation of infrastructure. It is intended to reuse this material on-site. Any material excavated will be stockpiled. If suspected contaminated soil is uncovered, this will be segregated, tested and transferred to a suitably authorised waste management facility. With the implementation of best practice mitigation and pollution prevention measures, no significant environmental effects related to soil management are anticipated at the site. <u>Water</u> There are no surface water courses that run through the site and can therefore be impacted. Given the nature of the development, there will be no foul or surface water discharge from the site. All water that falls on-site (as rain) will drain to ground. The construction works for this project are typical in nature, and while there is potential for spills during the construction phase, any impacts are expected to be temporary and reversible. Mitigation measures, pollution prevention controls, and best practices to minimise these risks will be detailed in the site-specific CEMP. By incorporating best practices and mitigation measures into the construction works, the potential for significant pollutant run-off is either eliminated or greatly reduced, and no significant residual impacts on water are anticipated. <u>Air and Climate</u> There is a potential for short-term, low-probability impacts on air quality due to dust generated by construction machinery and vehicles. However, these impacts will be managed through best practice measures, which will be detailed in the site-specific CEMP. The Proposed Development is not a significant producer of greenhouse gas emissions and is not expected to contribute to climate change. Overall, air quality and the local climate are unlikely to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development. The operational phase is not expected to give rise to likely significant effect on land, soil, water, air, or climate.
Material Assets (Built Environment and Transportation), Cultural Heritage, and the Landscape:	<u>Material Assets (Built Services and Infrastructure)</u> There is potential for short-term, temporary, and minor traffic inconveniences during the construction phase. However, these will be managed throughout the works.

	Overall, the traffic generated by construction is expected to be minimal, even during peak hours, and is therefore unlikely to have any significant impact on the surrounding road network in relation to capacity or the scale of the development. Mitigation measures will ensure the presence of construction traffic will not lead to any further significant environmental degradation or safety concerns in the vicinity of the proposed works. Delivery timings and access arrangements will be undertaken to ensure smooth operation and reduce/avoid congestion. With regard to material assets (built services and infrastructure) such as foul drainage, storm/surface water drainage, potable water supplies, electricity supply, and waste, there will be an impact. During the construction phase welfare facilities will be provide on-site. The waste created from these facilities will be collected and disposed of appropriately, and therefore, there will be no adverse impacts on wastewater during construction. No silty or contaminated water from the construction works will be discharged to any stormwater network. Water leaving the site will need to be passed through swales, silt fences, and/or check dams prior to leaving the site during the construction phase. This will be detailed in the CEMP that is to be prepared. Such mitigation measures will reduce any risk to the environment. Where discharge is to a sewer network, agreement will be obtained from Wicklow County Council. Water will be required for welfare facilities, dust suppression, and general construction activities, this will be provided by either tanker or temporary connection to the public mains by agreement between the Contractor and Uisce Éireann. The construction phase will not use such a quantity of water to cause concern in relation to significant effects on the environment. During the operational phase, no foul or surface water will be discharged from the site given the nature of the development. Similarly, there will be no requirement for a water supply. The site will not require an electrical supply during either the construction or operational phases. During demolition and construction, power will be provided by generators or batteries. The Proposed Development does not require electricity during its operational phase. Waste during the construction and operational phases will be segregated for collection by permitted hauliers for transfer to suitably registered/permitted/licenced facilities for reuse, recovery, and/or disposal, as required. While construction is on-going, all waste arisings will be managed and disposed of in accordance will relevant documentation. This will be referenced in the CEMP that is to be developed prior to construction works and will ensure that there is no likelihood of significant effects on the environment. Similarly, during its operational phase, bins will be provided to promote proper waste management by the public. Overall, it is not envisioned that the Proposed Development, in respect of material assets, will cause significant effects on the environment.
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	<u>Cultural Heritage and Landscape</u> The Proposed Development will not give rise to any significant impacts on cultural heritage, protected structures, or archaeological features. The change of use of the site from its existing use to that of a construction site will give rise to short term and localised effects on landscape character. The closest NIAH site is a three-story house (Reg. No. 16310001), which is c. 370m northwest of the subject site. The house dates back to 1860 – 1880. The closest SMR is a Barrow (Ref. No. WI019-079----), which is approximately 350m west of the site. The Proposed Development does not have the potential to affect significant environmental sensitivities within the area of the site.
Cumulative Effects:	No cumulative factors have been identified. See Section 4.3.2 that identifies relevant developments/projects for the assessment of cumulative effects. Together, the Proposed Development and the other permitted and existing developments are not likely to give rise to significant effects.
Transboundary Effects:	Any minor impacts will be contained in the immediate vicinity of the site (which are likely to be insignificant) and will unlikely result in any transboundary impacts.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Having regard to the Proposed Development which is below the thresholds set out in Schedule 5 Part 1 and Part 2, the criteria in Schedule 7 and the information provided in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, and the following (OPR Practice Note PN02):

- the context and character of the site and the receiving environment
- the nature, extent, and character of the Proposed Development
- the potential impacts and proposed mitigation measures
- the results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment

It is considered that the Proposed Development 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, and that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not required in this instance. The conclusions are made under the assumption that good construction site practices and mitigation measure are implemented and will mitigate any risk of pollution to the receiving environment.

The information provided in this EIA Screening Report can be used by the competent authority, Wicklow County Council, to conclude and determine that an EIA is not required as there will be no significant effects associated with the Proposed Development. It is considered that the Proposed Development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment alone or in combination with other projects and that the preparation and submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not therefore required.

7 REFERENCES

- Planning and Development Act, S.I. No. 30 of 2000.
- Planning and Development Regulations S.I. No. 600 of 2001.
- Planning and Development Regulations S.I. No. 454/2011.
- European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 S.I. No. 296 of 2018.
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development, DoEHLG, December 2020.
- European Union (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Planning and Development) Regulations 2014.
- EIA Directive 2014/52/EU.
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (Draft), Environmental Protection Agency, August 2018.
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 S.I. No. 477 of 2011.
- SEVESO III Directive 2012/18/EU of the European parliament and of the council on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances, amending and subsequently repealing Council Directive 96/82/EC.
- Environmental Impact Assessment Screening OPR Practice Note PN02, OPR, June 2021
- Guideline for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, Environmental Protection Agency, May 2022.
- EIA Portal Online
<https://housinggov.ie/maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d7d5a3d48f104ecbb206e7e5f84b71f1> [sourced: October 2025].
- Wicklow County Council Planning Register Online <https://www.eplanning.ie/WicklowCC/searchtypes> [sourced: October 2025].