



# **Chapter 01**

## Introduction

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# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Introduction

This Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is for the BusConnects Galway: Cross-City Link (University Road to Dublin Road) (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Scheme). The extent of the Proposed Scheme (i.e., the extent of the road and street network where physical and / or transport management interventions are proposed) is presented in Diagram 1.1.

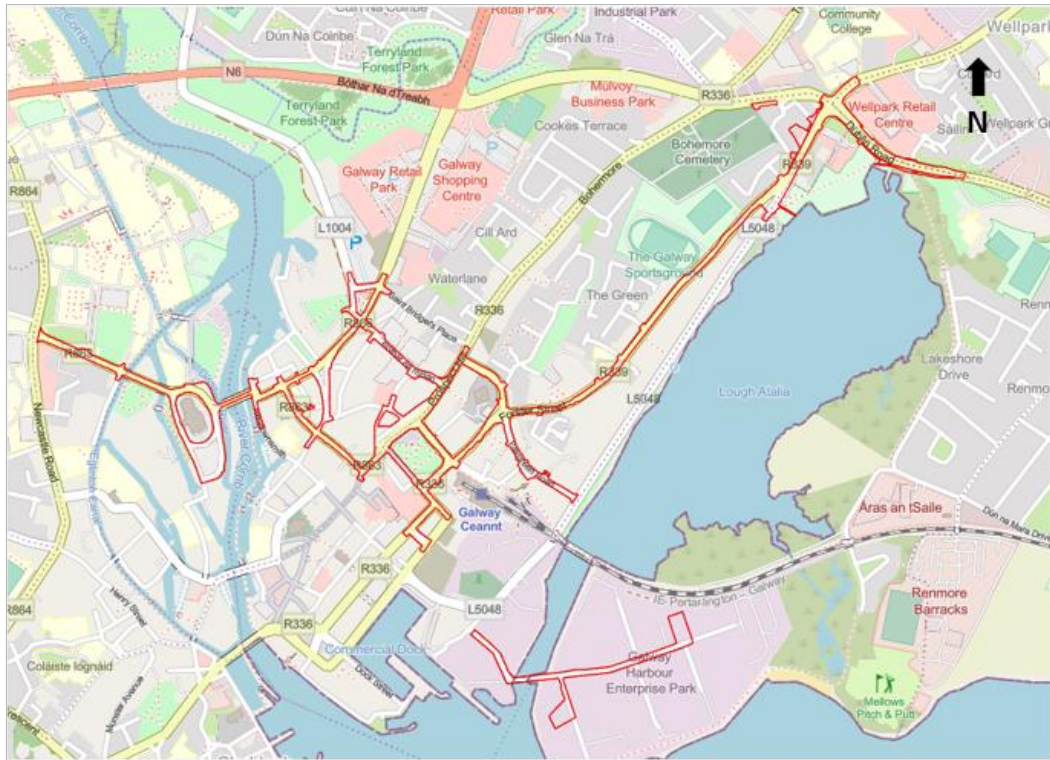
This Chapter introduces the Proposed Scheme, summarises the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, describes the methodology used to prepare this EIAR and outlines the non-statutory consultation activities that have been carried out to date.

The Proposed Scheme comprises the ‘Cross-City Link’, supporting sections of the ‘Inner-City Access Route’ and other associated traffic management measures considered necessary to enable the introduction of the Cross-City Link.

The Proposed Scheme has an overall length of approximately 6.7km. The Cross-City Link will begin from R863 University Road at the intersection of R864 Newcastle Road. It proceeds along R863 University Road, across the Salmon Weir Bridge and staying on the R863, before turning onto R866 St Francis Street / Eglinton Street, at the Galway Courthouse junction. The Proposed Scheme continues along the R866 on St. Francis Street and Eglinton Street and around the northern (R866) and eastern (R336) perimeter of Eyre Square and on to R339 Forster Street. It then continues through the Fairgreen Road Junction and along R339 College Road as far as the junction with Lough Atalia Road. From here, the Proposed Scheme continues on R339 College Road to Moneenageisha junction and terminates on R338 Dublin Road immediately prior to the entrance to the Woodlands Campus for Brothers of Charity.

The Proposed Scheme also encompasses numerous roads within the city centre including Fairgreen Road, Bothar Uí Eithir, Prospect Hill, Bothar na mBan, St. Brendan’s Avenue, Headford Road, Dyke Road, Woodquay, Daly’s Place, Merchants Road, Forthill Street, Queen Street and Dock Road.

The Proposed Scheme will support integrated sustainable transport usage through infrastructure improvements and transport management measures for active travel (both walking and cycling), and the provision of enhanced bus priority measures for existing (both public and private) and all future services who will use the Proposed Scheme.



**Diagram 1.1: Extent of the Proposed Scheme. Source Google Earth. Not to scale.**

The Proposed Scheme will form a central route for public transport, cyclists and better connect places of interest for pedestrians along an east-west corridor through the city centre.

The Proposed Scheme will provide for considerable journey time reliability for existing bus services coming into and running through the city centre while also complementing the proposed new city bus network cross-city spine routes, proposed as part of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS, 2016). The city bus network routes will be designed to coalesce along this high-quality corridor, providing high-frequency services with journey time reliability and opportunities for interchange.

The Proposed Scheme will ensure that public transport services can access key areas such as the retail and recreational centre of the city; public transport hubs at the rail and bus stations; City and County Halls; along with the city centre hotels and Bed & Breakfasts on College Road to the east of the city centre and key areas such as University Hospital Galway, NUI Galway, the Sportsgrounds, and the Galway Cathedral.

The Proposed Scheme will include reconfiguration of traffic movements to facilitate improved pedestrian, cyclist and bus accessibility and movement, infrastructural works at certain roads and junctions, and improvements to the public realm at a number of locations within the city centre, including Eyre Square North, Woodquay and in the vicinity of Galway Cathedral.

## 1.2 Aims and Objectives

Galway City Council's strategic objectives for transport as outlined in the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS, 2016) are:

- to promote and encourage sustainable transport;
- to manage the traffic in a way which maximises mobility and safe movement; and
- to maintain and develop/upgrade infrastructure.

The Proposed Scheme aims to improve access along the Proposed Scheme which will enable and deliver efficient, safe, and integrated sustainable transport movement to meet travel demand. The objectives of the overall BusConnects programme are to:

- Enhance the capacity and potential of the public transport system by improving bus speeds, reliability and punctuality through the provision of bus lanes and other measures to provide priority to bus movements over general traffic movements;
- Enhance the potential for cycling by providing safe infrastructure for cycling, segregated from general traffic wherever practicable;
- Support the delivery of an efficient, low carbon and climate resilient public transport service, which supports the achievement of Ireland's emission reduction targets;
- Enable compact growth, regeneration opportunities and more effective use of land, for present and future generations, through the provision of safe and efficient sustainable transport networks;
- Improve accessibility to jobs, education and other social and economic opportunities through the provision of improved sustainable connectivity and integration with other public transport services; and
- Ensure that the public realm is carefully considered in the design and development of the transport infrastructure and seek to enhance key urban focal points where appropriate and feasible.

The planning and design of the Proposed Scheme has been guided by these aims and objectives, with the need for the Proposed Scheme described in detail in Chapter 2 (Need for the Proposed Scheme) of this EIAR.

The outcomes achieved from delivering the Proposed Scheme will be:

- An attractive, resilient, equitable public transport network better connecting communities and improving access to work, education and social activity (refer to Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) for further details);
- Facilitate a transport infrastructure network that prioritises walking and cycling and a mode shift to public transport resulting in better air quality and reduced carbon emissions (refer to Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport), Chapter 7 (Air Quality) and Chapter 8 (Climate) for further details); and
- Support increased economic and social potential through integrated land-use and transport planning to reduce the time burden of travel (refer to Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) and Chapter 10 (Population) for further details).

## 1.3 Programme

In the event of approval by ABP under Section 51 of the Roads Act and confirmation of the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for the Proposed Scheme to allow property acquisition, it is envisaged that construction would commence early 2023, with an expected construction programme to completion of approximately 18 – 20 months.

## 1.4 Role of Galway City Council

Galway City Council fully recognises that Galway currently has a traffic and transport problem, due to its reliance on the private car, which has been influenced by the existing public transport network, limited cycling facilities, a large rural hinterland and being the key gateway in and out of Connemara.

Combined with this, it has a road and street network which is ill-suited to the high traffic flows currently prevalent, contributing to increased congestion and delay which is affecting quality of life and impacting on the functionality of the City.

To address this, a fundamental shift is needed towards sustainable travel within the city, reducing the dependency on the private car and taking action to make Galway more accessible and connected, enhancing quality of life within the City for all.

In order to meet the objectives, set out in Section 1.2, Galway City Council with Galway County Council and in partnership with the National Transport Authority, developed the GTS, an Integrated Transport Strategy for Galway City & Environs. The Strategy aims to address the current and future transport requirements of the city and surrounding towns and villages.

One of the key proposals in the GTS is the Cross-City Link (i.e. the Proposed Scheme), a corridor linking the western and eastern suburbs of the city, through the city centre – linking homes with places of work, study, retail and recreation.

The Proposed Scheme is being delivered by Galway City Council and funded by the National Transport Authority under the Sustainable Measures Transport Grant.

## 1.5 EIAR – Process, Screening, Content and Methodology

### 1.5.1 Statutory Requirements

As set out in the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (DHPLG 2018) (hereafter referred to as the “2018 Guidelines”), the EIA Directive requires that public and private projects that are likely to have significant effects on the environment be made subject to an assessment prior to development consent being given.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process to be undertaken in respect of applications for specified classes of development listed in the EIA Directive before a decision in respect of development consent is made. The process involves the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) by the applicant, consultations with the public, relevant prescribed bodies and any other affected Member States, and an examination and analysis of the EIAR and other relevant information leading to a reasoned conclusion by the competent authority on the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment. Again, as observed in the 2018 Guidelines, the provisions of the EIA Directive are aimed at enhancing the EIA process through ensuring the completeness and quality of the EIAR submitted by the applicant and the examination undertaken by the competent authority and by providing for early and effective public participation before the development consent decision is made.

The EIA Directive requires that public and private projects listed in the Directive that are likely to have significant effects on the environment be made subject to an assessment prior to development consent being given. Annex II of the EIA Directive lists class 10(b) Urban development projects and class 10(d) lists Construction of roads.

The Roads Act 1993, as amended by S.I. No. 279/2019 – European Union (Roads Act 1993) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2019, provides at section 50(1)(a) that a road development that consists of any of the following shall require EIA: (i) the construction of a motorway; (ii) the construction of a busway; (iii) the construction of a service area; (iv) any prescribed type of road development consisting of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road.

The Roads Regulations 1994 (S.I. No. 119/1994), as amended, prescribes the following types of road development for the purposes of section 50(1)(a)(iv) of the Roads Act:

*(a) the construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500 metres or more in length in an urban area;*

*(b) the construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length.*

Section 50(1)(b) of the Roads Act provides that ABP may direct that a proposed road development, other than a development to which s.50(1)(a) applies, be subject to an EIA.

Section 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act provides that, where a road authority considers that a proposed road development, other than a development to which s.50(1)(a) applies, consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, it shall inform ABP in writing prior to making any application to ABP for an approval of the proposed development.



Galway City Council's EIA screening determination was notified to ABP in writing on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2022 in accordance with Section 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act.

Section 50(1)(e) of the Roads Act provides that a decision on whether proposed development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment shall take into account the relevant selection criteria in Annex III of the EIA Directive.

Section 50(1)(f) requires the road authority to make its EIA screening determination available for inspection by members of the public, and to make an electronic version of it available on its website. Galway City Council's EIA screening determination was made available for public inspection on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2022 and an electronic version of it was published on its website <https://www.galwaycity.ie/busconnects-galway-cross-city-link> on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2022 in accordance with s.50(1)(f) of the Roads Act.

In accordance with section 50(1B) of the Roads Act, it is the road authority, in this case Galway City Council, that shall prepare the EIAR in respect of the proposed development that is subject to a requirement for EIA.

This EIAR has been prepared to comply with the requirements for a valid EIAR as set out in:

- The Roads Act 1993, as amended by S.I. No. 279/2019 – European Union (Roads Act 1993) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2019
- The Roads Regulation 1994 (S.I. No. 119/1994) as amended by S.I. No. 279/2019 – European Union (Roads Act 1993) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2019
- S.I. No. 296/2018 - European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018, (hereafter referred to as the 2018 EIA Regulations), and
- Article 5 of and Annex IV to the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU as revised by Directive 2014/52/EU.

### 1.5.2 Relevant Policy, Plans and Guidelines

This EIAR has been prepared in accordance with, but not limited to, the following legislation and guidance:

- The Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU as revised by Directive 2014/52/EU);
- Roads Act 1993, (as amended);
- Roads Regulations 1994, (as amended);
- Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended;
- Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (hereafter referred to as the EPA Guidelines) (EPA, May 2022);



- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (hereafter referred to as the 2018 Guidelines) (DHPLG 2018);
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects – Guidance on the Preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (hereafter referred to as the European Commission EIAR Guidance) (European Commission 2017);
- European Commission (2006). Clarification of the application of Article 2(3) of the EIA Directive.
- European Commission (2012). Interpretation suggested by the Commission as regards the application of the EIA Directive to ancillary/associated works.
- Guidelines for the Assessment of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts as well as Impact Interactions (European Commission 1999);
- Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Environmental Impact Assessment (European Commission 2013);
- Clarification of the application of Article 2(3) of the EIA Directive (European Commission, 2006).
- Interpretation suggested by the Commission as regards the application of the EIA Directive to ancillary/associated works (European Commission 2012).
- National Roads Authority (NRA) Environmental Impact Assessment of National Road Schemes – A Practical Guide (NRA 2008); and
- Advice Note 17: Cumulative Effects Assessment Relevant to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (The Planning Inspectorate 2019).

Key policy documents that inform the examination of all environmental topic areas include:

- Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (Government of Ireland 2018);
- Project Ireland 2040 National Development Plan 2021 – 2030 (Government of Ireland 2021);
- Climate Action Plan 2021 (Government of Ireland 2021);
- Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Strategy for Ireland 2009 – 2020 (DTTAS 2009);
- Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (RSES);
- Galway Transport Strategy (2016);
- Galway City Development Plan (2017-2023);
- Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028), including the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan;
- Draft Galway City Development Plan (2023-2029).

This EIAR takes into account the results of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the above policy documents, where applicable.

In addition to the applicable EIA legislation and guidance, European Union (EU) and national legislation relating to the specialist areas have also been considered as part of the process and are addressed in the relevant assessment chapters.

### 1.5.3 EIA Process

EIA is a systematic and an iterative process that examines the potential environmental impacts of a proposed scheme and establishes appropriate design and mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or offset impacts. The assessment of anticipated and predicted significant environmental impacts from the Proposed Scheme has been conducted in accordance with best practice as detailed in the chapters and associated appendices for each environmental topic.

The EIA process followed for the assessment of the Proposed Scheme can be summarised as follows:

- Screening – Determining whether or not an EIA is required for the Proposed Scheme. This included a review of the Proposed Development and understanding the legislative requirement for EIA under the Roads Act 1993;
- Consideration of the EIAR's Scope – For the preparation of this EIAR the EIA team considered the characteristics of the Proposed Scheme and the likely relevant issues which could arise due to its construction and operation;
- Consideration of reasonable alternatives – refer to Chapter 3.
- Baseline Data Collection – Establishment of a robust baseline of the existing environment in the study area of the Proposed Scheme, including a review of existing available information and undertaking any surveys identified as required during the Scoping phase;
- Impact Assessment – Assessment of the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Scheme with and without mitigation measures, and an iterative process of informing design to avoid impacts;
- Mitigation – Formulation of mitigation measures to ameliorate the potential impacts of the Proposed Scheme which cannot be avoided through design;
- Consultation – With Statutory Authorities, Stakeholders, the public and other bodies;
- Reasoned conclusion - The Competent Authority, in this case ABP, on the significant effects of the Project on the environment, based on the examination of the EIA Report.
- Decision – The competent authority, in this case ABP, will decide if the Proposed Scheme can be authorised, and if so, may specify conditions that must be adhered to;
- Announcement – The public is informed of the decision;
- Right of review – The public concerned have the right to seek a legal review of the decision, subject to meeting the necessary procedural requirements; and
- Monitoring – When required, monitoring of the effectiveness of implemented mitigation measures during construction and operation.

### 1.5.4 Screening and the Legislative Requirement for EIA

Screening is the first stage of the EIA process, whereby a decision is made on whether or not an EIA is required. As set out in section 1.5.1 (Statutory Requirements), Section 50(1)(a) of the Roads Act provides that EIA is mandatory for the following project types:

- (i) *The construction of a motorway;*

- (ii) *The construction of a busway;*
- (iii) *The construction of a service area;*
- (iv) *Any prescribed type of road development consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road’.*

The Road Regulations prescribe the following for the purposes of Section 50(1)(a)(iv):

- *‘(a) The construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500 metres or more in length in an urban area’; and*
- *‘(b) The construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length.’*

The Proposed Scheme does not fall within any of these categories or criteria, therefore it is necessary to carry out screening to determine whether *the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road would be likely to have significant effects on the environment*, as provided under Section 50(1)(c). Section 50(1)(e) of the Roads Act requires the screening to be carried out by reference to the criteria specified in Annex III of the EIA Directive.

Galway County Council made an EIA screening determination on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2022 which was notified to ABP in writing on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2022 in accordance with section 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act, and which was made available for inspection by the public on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2022 and published on <https://www.galwaycity.ie/busconnects-galway-cross-city-link> on 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2022 in accordance with section 50(1)(f) of the Roads Act. Following the consideration of the accumulation of the environmental effects of the Proposed Scheme, it was concluded by Galway City Council, in accordance with the statutory scheme, that the Proposed Scheme has the potential to have a significant effect on the environment, and that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report be prepared.

### 1.5.5 Consideration of the EIAR Scope

The scope of the EIA was developed having regard to the characteristics of the Proposed Scheme and all likely relevant issues which could arise due to its construction and operation.

In addition, during the development of the EIAR, prescribed bodies and relevant non-statutory consultees (Section 1.6 of this Chapter) were consulted to apprise them of the proposed approach to the EIAR and they were afforded the opportunity to provide comment on the approach.

Comments received during this consultation with prescribed bodies and non-statutory bodies were reviewed and considered in the preparation of this EIAR.

Moreover, as a result of the non-statutory public consultation in respect of the Proposed Scheme, submissions and observations received from the public were considered and, where appropriate, included in the EIAR.

### 1.5.6 Contents of EIAR

As set out in the European Commission’s Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (2017):

*“the EIAR is the document prepared by the developer that presents the output of the assessment. It contains information regarding:*

- *the Project;*
- *the likely significant effect of the Project;*
- *the Baseline scenario;*
- *the proposed Alternatives;*
- *the features and Measures to mitigate adverse significant effects;*
- *as well as a Non-Technical Summary; and*
- *any additional information specified in Annex IV of the EIA Directive.”*

The EPA EIA Guidelines (EPA, 2022) set out a similar description of the EIAR, based on the EIAR definition in the revised EIA Directive 2014/52/EU.

Article 5 of and Annex IV to the EIA Directive, as well as and Section 50(2) of the Roads Act specify the information to be contained in an EIAR in relation to this Proposed Scheme.

For clarity on the information to be contained in the EIAR, the relevant sections of the legislation are reproduced in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Annex IV of the EIA Directive**

Annex IV – Information Referred to in Article 5(1) (Information for the EIAR)
<p>1. Description of the project, including in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A description of the location of the project;</li> <li>• A description of the physical characteristics of the whole project, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases;</li> <li>• A description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the project (in particular any production process), for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quantity of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used; and</li> <li>• An estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation) and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases.</li> </ul>
<p>2. A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of project design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.</p>

<b>Annex IV – Information Referred to in Article 5(1) (Information for the EIAR)</b>
3. A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the project as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.
4. A description of the factors specified in Article 3(1) likely to be significantly affected by the project: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for example land take), soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydro morphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.
<p>5. A description of the likely significant effects of the project on the environment resulting from, inter alia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The construction and existence of the project, including, where relevant, demolition works;</li> <li>• The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources;</li> <li>• The emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste;</li> <li>• The risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters);</li> <li>• The cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources;</li> <li>• The impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change;</li> <li>• The technologies and the substances used.</li> </ul> <p>The description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in Article 3(1) should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the project. This description should take into account the environmental protection objectives established at Union or Member State level which are relevant to the project.</p>
6. A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.
7. A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.

<b>Annex IV – Information Referred to in Article 5(1) (Information for the EIAR)</b>
8. A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the project on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the project to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments pursuant to Union legislation such as Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council or Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom or relevant assessments carried out pursuant to national legislation may be used for this purpose provided that the requirements of this Directive are met. Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies.
9. A non-technical summary of the information provided under points 1 to 8.
10. A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments included in the report’.

Section 50(2) of the Roads Act 1993 specifies the information to be contained in an EIAR and is reproduced in Table 1.2.

**Table 1.2: Section 50(2) of the Roads Act**

<b>Section 50(2) of the Roads Act</b>
<p><i>“50(2) The road authority or the Authority, as the case may be, shall ensure that an environmental impact assessment report referred to in subsection (1B) —</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>(a) is prepared by competent experts;</i></li> <li>• <i>(b) subject to subsection (3), contains the following information:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>(i) a description of the proposed road development comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the development;</i></li> <li><i>(ii) a description of the likely significant effects of the proposed road development on the environment;</i></li> <li><i>(iii) a description of any features of the proposed road development and of any measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment;</i></li> <li><i>(iv) a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the road authority or the Authority, as the case may be, which are relevant to the proposed road development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the proposed road development on the environment;</i></li> <li><i>(v) a non-technical summary of the information referred to in subparagraphs (i) to (iv);</i></li> <li><i>(vi) any additional information specified in Annex IV that is relevant to the specific characteristics of the particular proposed road development or type of proposed road development and to the environmental features likely to be affected,</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>c) takes into account the available results of other relevant assessments carried out pursuant to any Act of the Oireachtas or under European Union legislation with a view to avoiding duplication of assessments.”</i></li> </ul>

### 1.5.7 EIAR Structure

In order to ensure accessibility and to cover each of the topics included in Table 1.1, this EIAR presents the data in line with the outline structure provided in Table 1.3. The EIAR for the Proposed Scheme is presented in four volumes as follows:

- **Volume 1 – Non-Technical Summary:** This summarises the findings of the EIAR in a clear, accessible format that uses non-technical language and supporting graphics. The non-technical summary describes the proposed development, alternatives considered, existing environment, impacts and mitigation measures and relevant aspects of the EIAR in a manner that can be easily understood by the general public.
- **Volume 2 – Main Report:** This includes introductory chapters in addition to ‘assessment’ chapters for each environmental topic in accordance with Article IV of the EIA Directive. The introductory chapters provide the relevant project context whilst the assessment chapters provide a description of the relevant environmental topics and likely significant impacts with summary chapters provided thereafter.
- **Volume 3 – Figures:** This provides the drawings, maps and graphics (including photomontages) which support and are cross-referenced in Volume 2.
- **Volume 4 – Appendices:** This provides the technical reports that support and are cross-referenced within Volume 2. This includes other relevant drawings, modelling outputs, background reports and/or supporting documents.

**Table 1.3: EIAR Structure**

<b>EIAR</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary</b>	
NTS	Summary of the EIAR in non-technical language.
<b>Volume 2: Main Report</b>	
1	Introduction & Environmental Impact Assessment Process
2	Need for the Proposed Scheme
3	Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives
4	Proposed Scheme Description
5	Construction
6	Traffic & Transport
7	Air Quality
8	Climate
9	Noise & Vibration
10	Population
11	Human Health
12	Biodiversity
13	Water
14	Land, Soils, Geology & Hydrogeology
15	Archaeological Cultural Heritage and Architectural Heritage
16	Landscape (Townscape) and Visual
17	Waste & Resources
18	Material Assets
19	Risk of Major Accidents and / or Disasters
20	Cumulative Impacts and Environmental Interactions
21	Summary of Mitigation & Monitoring Measures
22	Summary of Significant Residual Impacts



EIAR	Description
Volume 3: Figures	
Figures	Graphics and plans supporting the EIAR chapters, illustrating the Proposed Scheme and environmental information. Figure reference numbers correspond to the relevant EIAR chapter (e.g. Figure 8.1 relates to Chapter 8)
Volume 4: Appendices	
Appendices	Technical reference information supporting the EIAR chapters, such as calculations and detailed background data. Appendix numbers correspond to the relevant EIAR chapter (e.g. Appendix 8.1 relates to Chapter 8)

While the EIAR has been prepared in compliance with the EIA Directive, it has also been written to make it accessible to a wider, non-specialist audience. Where technical terminology is used, an explanation is provided in the text, and / or in the glossary of terms which is provided at the beginning of Volume 2 of the EIAR.

Generally, the structure of Volume 2 (Environmental Assessment) Chapters of this EIAR aligns with both the European Commission EIAR Guidance (2017) and EPA Guidelines (EPA, 2022), and includes the following headings:

- **Introduction:** Provides an overview of the aims and objectives of the specific chapter in assessing the Proposed Scheme and outlines the scope of the assessment;
- **Methodology:** Describes the forecasting methods and evidence used to identify and assess the significant impacts on the environment;
- **Baseline Environment:** The baseline refers to the current state of environmental characteristics. It involves the collection and analysis of information on the condition, sensitivity and significance of relevant environmental topics which are likely to be significantly impacted by the Proposed Scheme;
- **Predicted Impacts:** Reporting in the EIAR is structured to ensure that criteria and standards of significance, sensitivity and magnitude used as part of the assessment are identified and documented and that the level of certainty of data is recorded. An explanation is provided for the assessment criteria that have been applied within each environmental topic area, including reference to the appropriate published guidance and the results of any other relevant assessments under other EU law;
- **Mitigation and Monitoring Measures:** This section sets out measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse impacts on the environment and, where appropriate, identifies any monitoring arrangements. This section covers both the Construction and Operational Phases; and
- **Residual Impacts:** Any significant impacts that are predicted to remain after all mitigation measures have been implemented are referred to as 'Residual Impacts'. These are the remaining environmental impacts of the Proposed Scheme that could not be reasonably avoided.

A number of the Environmental Assessment chapters also consider a 'Do-Nothing' scenario. This scenario outlines what is likely to happen to the environment should the Proposed Scheme not be implemented, taking account of the continuation or change of current management regimes as well as the continuation or change of trends currently evident in the environment.

In line with Transport Infrastructure Ireland's (TII) most recent Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (TII 2014), Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) considers a 'Do-Minimum' and a 'Do-Something' scenario. A 'Do-Minimum' scenario considers conditions where permanent improvements or changes to the road or public transport network that have taken place, or have been approved to take place, but the Proposed Scheme is not constructed. The 'Do-Something' scenario considers where the Proposed Scheme is constructed and all elements of the design are implemented. The Do-Minimum and Do-Something scenarios are also assessed in assessments that rely on traffic outputs such as Air Quality (Chapter 7), Climate (Chapter 8) and Noise & Vibration (Chapter 9).

The assessments evaluate the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme, with the likelihood, extent, magnitude, duration and significance of potential impacts described. The interactions in impacts between different environmental aspects and the potential for cumulative impacts to arise are also considered. For all environmental topics, the significance of any residual impacts remaining are assessed and presented.

The assessment criteria used generally follow the European Commission EIAR Guidance (European Commission 2017) and EPA EIAR Guidelines (EPA 2022), as reproduced in Table 1.4 unless otherwise stated and described within the relevant EIAR Chapter.

**Table 1.4: Description of Effects from the EPA Guidelines (EPA 2022)**

Assessment Criteria	
Quality of Effects	
It is important to inform the non-specialist reader whether the effect is positive, negative or neutral.	Positive Effects A change which improves the quality of the environment (for example, by increasing species diversity or improving the reproductive capacity of an ecosystem; or by removing nuisances; or improving amenities).
	Neutral Effects No effects or effects that are imperceptible, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error.
	Negative / Adverse Effects A change which reduces the quality of the environment (for example, lessening species diversity or diminishing the reproductive capacity of an ecosystem; or damaging health or property or by causing a nuisance).
Significance of Effects	
'Significance' is a concept that can have different meanings for different topics – in the absence of specific definitions for the different topics the following definitions may be useful.	Imperceptible An effect capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.
	Not Significant An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
	Slight Effects An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
	Moderate Effects An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.
	Significant Effects An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity, alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.
	Very Significant Effects

Assessment Criteria	
	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment
	Profound Effects An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics
Extent and Context of Effects	
Context can affect the perception of significance. It is important to establish if the effect is unique or, perhaps, commonly or increasingly experienced.	Extent Describe the size of the area, the number of sites, and the proportion of a population affected by an effect.
	Context Describe whether the extent, durations, or frequency will conform or contrast with established (baseline) conditions (is it the biggest, longest effect ever?)
Probability of Effects	
Descriptions of effects should establish how likely it is that the effect will occur so that the Competent Authority can take a view of the balance of risk over advantage when making a decision.	Likely Effects The effects that can reasonably be expected to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.
	Unlikely Effects The effects that can reasonably be expected not to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.
Duration and Frequency of Effects	
'Duration' is a concept that can have different meanings for different topics in the absence of specific definitions for different topics the following definitions may be useful.	Momentary Effects Effects lasting from seconds to minutes.
	Brief Effects Effects lasting less than a day.
	Temporary Effects Effects lasting less than a year.
	Short-term Effects Effects lasting one to seven years.
	Medium-term Effects Effects lasting seven to fifteen years.
	Long-term Effects Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years.
	Permanent Effects Effects lasting over sixty years.
	Reversible Effects Effects that can be undone, for example through remediation or restoration.
	Frequency of Effects Describe how often the effect will occur. (once, rarely, occasionally, frequently, constantly – or hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, annually)

### **1.5.8 Details of Competent Experts**

This EIAR for the Proposed Scheme has been prepared by a team of competent experts and the main author(s) and details of the expertise of each competent expert for each environmental topic are provided in Table 1.5.

**Table 1.5 : Details of Competent Experts**

Topic	Main Author – Competency Details
Chapter 1 (Introduction & Environmental Impact Assessment Process)	<p><b>Sinead Whyte MSc CMIWEM, Arup</b> Sinead Whyte is an Associate Director with Arup and has over 25 years’ experience as an Environmental Consultant. She holds a MSc in Experimental Physics and is Chartered for over 15 years with the Institute of Water and Environmental Management. She has been responsible for the preparation of EIARs for numerous major infrastructure schemes including a number of EIAR prepared for Dublin BusConnects schemes. Sinead presented expert witness evidence at the An Bord Pleanála oral hearings into these developments. Sinead Whyte was the lead co-ordinator for the Proposed Scheme EIAR and supervised the preparation of Chapter 1 of the EIAR.</p> <p><b>Brian Burke BE CEng, Arup</b> Brian Burke is an Associate with Arup and has over 18 years’ experience as a Transportation Engineer. He holds a degree in Civil Engineering and is a Chartered member of Engineers Ireland. He has lead and managed design teams for multiple transportation related schemes, including BusConnects Dublin, Little Island Sustainable Transport Interventions, Lough Atalia Bridge Road Lowering Project and Bothar na dTreabh (N6) Multi-Modal Corridor Improvement Scheme. Brian presented expert witness evidence at the An Bord Pleanála oral hearings for the Galway Harbour Expansion Oral Hearing and a proposed large retail development in Galway City. Brian Burke was the Project Manager for the BusConnects Galway: Cross-City Link (University Road to Dublin Road) project and supervised the review of Chapter 1 of the EIAR.</p> <p><b>Donal McDaid BEng, MSc, Arup</b> Donal McDaid is a Director and leads Arup’s Transport &amp; Resources Group in Arup Ireland. Donal has over 25 years’ experience working on, and leading multi-disciplinary teams on transport planning and environmental studies and large-scale transport infrastructure project planning, design and implementation, both in Ireland and overseas.  Donal is the Arup director with overall responsibility for the Arup involvement in the 12 EIARs for Dublin Bus Connects. Donal was the Project Director for the BusConnects Galway: Cross-City Link (University Road to Dublin Road) project and approved Chapter 1 of the EIAR.</p>
Chapter 2 (Need for the Proposed Scheme)	<p><b>Sinead Whyte</b> See above</p> <p><b>Brian Burke</b> See above</p> <p><b>Donal McDaid</b> See above</p>
Chapter 3 (Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives)	<p><b>Sinead Whyte</b> See above</p>

Topic	Main Author – Competency Details
	<p><b>Brian Burke</b> See above</p> <p><b>Donal McDaid</b> See above</p>
Chapter 4 (Proposed Scheme Description)	<p><b>Sinead Whyte</b> See above</p> <p><b>Brian Burke</b> See above</p> <p><b>Donal McDaid</b> See above</p>
Chapter 5 (Construction)	<p><b>Sinead Whyte</b> See above</p> <p><b>Brian Burke</b> See above</p> <p><b>Donal McDaid</b> See above</p>
Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport)	<p><b>Sean Kearns MSc SYSTRA</b> Sean is a Senior Director in SYSTRA’s consultancy business with 20 year’s professional experience in transport modelling and appraisal. He is the technical director for the development of the NTA’s Regional Modelling System and has participated in the development of numerous significant transport strategies and appraisal projects throughout Ireland.</p> <p><b>Michael Hornung MSc, BA, SYSTRA</b> Michael is a Principal Consultant working in SYSTRA’s consultancy business with over 6 years of experience in transport modelling and has prior work experience in the aviation industry. He holds a MSc in Transport Planning and Engineering and a B.A. in Business Economics. Michael is leading the transport modelling work for the Galway Cross City Link Project which is a key input to Chapter 6 of the EIAR.</p>
Chapter 7 (Air Quality)	<p><b>Sinead Whyte</b> See above</p>

Topic	Main Author – Competency Details
	<p><b>Elsie O’Gorman, BEng MIEI iChemE, Arup</b>  Elsie is a Design Engineer in Arup’s Environmental Consulting team. Elsie graduated from University College Cork in 2019 with a BEng (Hons) in Process and Chemical Engineering. Elsie is experienced in air quality and climate impact assessments for planning across a range of different projects including infrastructure and industrial schemes.</p>
Chapter 8 (Climate)	<p><b>Sinead Whyte</b>  See above  <b>Elsie O’Gorman</b>  See above</p>
Chapter 9 (Noise & Vibration)	<p><b>Mhairi Riddet BSc, MSc, MIOA, Arup</b>  Responsibility: Undertaking of noise and vibration impact assessment and preparation of Chapter 9.</p> <p>Mhairi Riddet is an experienced acoustic consultant, with over 5 years of specialist experience, and over 10 years of general project experience. She holds an MSc in Acoustic Engineering and is a Member of the Institute of Acoustics. Mhairi has prepared numerous acoustic assessments for planning purposes, both in Ireland and Australia, and has experience assessing noise for many different purposes.</p> <p><b>David Hiller, BSc, MSc, PhD, Arup</b>  David has managed and undertaken a diverse range of infrastructure and buildings projects, covering planning, environmental and building design aspects.  He has provided expert witness for a variety of planning and litigation inquiries, including acting on behalf of hospitals and a theatre potentially affected by vibration from Dublin Metro North, a legal claim in the High Court in Dublin relating to construction traffic vibration, and providing expert evidence in relation to noise from shale gas exploration in NW England.  David is a member of the British Standards committees that revised BS5228 on construction noise and vibration and BS8233 on sound insulation for buildings. He is on the Association of Noise Consultants’ panel revising the Guidelines on Measurement and Assessment of Groundborne Noise and Vibration.</p>
Chapter 10 (Population)	<p><b>Paul Fingleton BSc, MSc.</b>  Paul is a member of the International Association for Impact Assessment as well as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. Paul has over twenty years’ experience working in the area of Environmental Assessment. Paul has been involved in a diverse range of projects including contributions to, and co-ordination of, a number of complex EIARs, NISs and / or IPPCL Applications for projects.</p> <p><b>Conor Crowther BSc, MSc.</b></p>



Topic	Main Author – Competency Details
	<p>Conor attained a masters degree from the University of Akureyri where his masters thesis focussed on an environmental assessment of a theoretical offshore wind farm development in Ireland.</p> <p>Conor is a corporate member of the Irish Planning Institute and sits on their Marine Spatial Planning Committee. Conor has experience working as part of team projects and in the preparation of planning documents and EIAR chapters on behalf of multi-nationals and infrastructural providers, such as pharmaceutical, waste management, renewable energy and IT manufacturing providers. Conor also liaises with the various government agencies and local authorities as part of the preparation of the various planning documentation and EIAR chapters.</p>
Chapter 11 (Human Health)	<p><b>Paul Fingleton</b> See above</p> <p><b>Conor Crowther</b> See above</p>
Chapter 12 (Biodiversity)	<p><b>Ger O'Donoghue B.Sc. M.Sc.</b></p> <p>Ger has carried out a large number of 'Appropriate Assessments' over the past 12 yrs. as required under the EU Habitats Directive for developments likely to have significant impacts on Natura 2000 European sites. He has also carried out Appropriate Assessments and produced Natura Impact Reports for a number of plans including Masterplans, Local Area Plans and Town Development Plans.</p> <p>He has monitored the Clare River at Claregalway, a key site for the all-Ireland Daubenton's Bat Survey for 12 yrs. and is part of a team that surveys the Lydacan Castle roost in the Coole-Garryland Complex SAC for the Brown long eared bat monitoring programme for Bat Conservation Ireland and the NPWS.</p> <p>He is a member of BirdWatch Ireland, the Irish Whale &amp; Dolphin Group and Bat Conservation Ireland and the Chairperson of the Galway Bat Group.</p> <p>Ger is a guest lecturer on the M.Sc. in Biodiversity and Land Use Planning Course in NUI Galway and the Applied Marine and Freshwater and Agricultural Science Courses at GMT.</p>
Chapter 13 (Water)	<p><b>Mesfin Desta PhD FIEL, Arup.</b></p> <p>Mesfin Desta is a Principal Hydrologist with Arup and has over 16 years of experience as a hydrologist. He holds a PhD in Civil Engineering (thesis in hydrology) from UCD and MSc in Engineering Hydrology from NUI Galway. He is a chartered member and Fellow of Engineers Ireland since 2006. He has been responsible for the preparation of Water/Hydrology Chapters of EIAR's for various projects including transport infrastructures, wind farms, Strategic Housing Developments, etc.</p> <p>Mesfin Desta prepared the Water chapter.</p>
Chapter 14 (Land, Soils, Geology & Hydrogeology)	<p><b>Marie Fleming BSc (Hons), MSc. Arup</b></p> <p>Marie is an Associate working in the Ground Engineering team in Arup and has a Bachelor of Science (Earth Sciences) honours degree from University College Cork and a Master's Degree in Engineering Geology from Imperial College London. Marie has over 18 years professional experience on large</p>

Topic	Main Author – Competency Details
	<p>infrastructure projects and is a Professional Geologist (PGeo) with the Institute of Geologists of Ireland (IGI), a Chartered European Geologist (EurGeol) with the European Federation of Geologists and a Fellow of the Geological Society of London (GSL).</p> <p>She has prepared numerous Land, Soils, Geology &amp; Hydrogeology Impact Assessments for infrastructural developments including DART Underground and the M7 Osberstown Interchange and R407 Sallins Bypass.</p>
Chapter 15 (Archaeological Cultural Heritage and Architectural Heritage)	<p><b>Faith Bailey BA, MA, MCIFA, IAC</b></p> <p>Faith is a Senior Archaeologist and Cultural Heritage Consultant with IAC Ltd. She holds an MA in Cultural Landscape Management and a BA in single honours archaeology from the University of Wales, Lampeter. She is a licence eligible archaeologist and has over 20 years’ experience working in commercial archaeology.</p> <p>Faith’s in-depth knowledge of the planning systems and heritage legislation within both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, twinned with the excellent working relationship she has developed between our clients and statutory authorities makes her one of the most experienced archaeological and cultural heritage consultants currently operating within the sector.</p> <p>Faith has significant experience in the preparation of Briefs of Evidence and taking the stand as the expert witness at Oral Hearings. Projects that have successfully been brought through Oral Hearing include large infrastructural schemes and SID projects.</p>
Chapter 16 (Landscape (Townscape) & Visual)	<p><b>David Bosonnet, BAgSc, Brady Shipman Martin</b></p> <p>David is a qualified and senior Landscape Architect at Brady Shipman Martin, landscape, planning, and visualisation professionals. He has over 26 years’ experience as a landscape architect, working on over 125 landscape and visual assessments for a wide range of projects including industrial, pharmaceutical, roads, residential, energy, waste, quarries, and on-shore wind farm proposals throughout Ireland. He also has extensive experience in the detail design and implementation of landscape projects, as well as landscape management and maintenance.</p> <p>He is a co-author of TII’s Standards Document ‘Landscape character assessment (LCA) and landscape and visual assessment (LVIA) for proposed national roads (TII, 2020)’ and TII’s technical document for LCA/LVIA for linear infrastructure in Ireland.</p>
Chapter 17 (Waste & Resources)	<p><b>Janet Lynch BEng, MCTWM, MIEI CEng, Arup</b></p> <p>Janet Lynch is a Senior Project Engineer with Arup with over 17 years’ experience in Industrial Emissions licensing, EIA and planning including, Resource and Waste Management: Construction and operational waste management plans, Energy from Waste, waste re-use, recycling and landfill, Innovative waste treatment technologies; Planning and EIA project management (energy, renewables, industrial, infrastructure); Industrial Emissions (IE) License applications &amp; review (waste, biomass, oil and gas, energy, cement, pharmaceutical); Circular Economy; Water: Tender Assessments for Irish Water and Dublin City Council; Assistant Project Manager for the expansion of Irelands largest water treatment plant at Ballymore Eustace, Co. Kildare in 2006.</p> <p>Janet holds an honours degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering from University College Cork, a FETAC Certificate in Waste Facility Management and a Certificate in Applied Project Management from the IEI and University Limerick. She is a Chartered member of the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (MCTWM) and a Chartered Member of Engineers Ireland.</p>

Topic	Main Author – Competency Details
	<p><b>Hannah Lesbirel MEnvSci, GradIEMA, Arup</b></p> <p>Hannah Lesbirel is a Consultant with ARUP. She holds an honours master’s degree in Environment Science from University of Southampton.</p> <p>Hannah has 4 years’ relevant experience and in particular, develops technical and operational solutions for waste management for strategic reporting.</p> <p>Hannah develops strategic solutions for waste management across a variety of types of projects, from small to large and city scale developments. Hannah has experience as waste and resource specialist for several environmental planning and permitting works, contributing to the generation of baseline reports and environmental statement chapters for waste and resource management, reviewing planning applications and discharge of conditions including London Legacy Development Corporation, confidential mixed used skyscraper, London and Thames Water Upgrade Works.</p>
Chapter 18 (Material Assets)	<p><b>Sinead Whyte</b></p> <p>See above</p>
Chapter 19 (Risk of Major Accidents and / or Disasters)	<p><b>Sinead Whyte</b></p> <p>See above</p>
Chapter 20 (Cumulative Impacts & Environmental Interactions)	<p><b>Sinead Whyte</b></p> <p>See above</p>
Chapter 21 (Summary of Mitigation & Monitoring Measures)	<p><b>Sinead Whyte</b></p> <p>See above</p>
Chapter 22 (Summary of Significant Residual Impacts)	<p><b>Sinead Whyte</b></p> <p>See above</p>

## 1.6 Consultation

### 1.6.1 Consultation Objectives

Public participation has been an integral part of the evolution of the Proposed Scheme from the outset to seek feedback and participation throughout its development. Galway City Council has undertaken a comprehensive consultation and engagement process with stakeholders, landowners and members of the public throughout the design progression of the Proposed Scheme. In fact, the consultation process for the concept of the Proposed Scheme commenced with its inclusion in the GTS and Galway City Development Plan, refer to Chapter 2 (Need for the Scheme) for further information.

The primary objective of the non-statutory public consultation process was and is to provide opportunities for members of the public and interested stakeholders to contribute to the Proposed Scheme planning and design and to inform the development process. Stakeholder participation in the planning and design of the Proposed Scheme was encouraged from an early stage through on-the-ground engagement, information campaigns and engagement with Elected Representatives.

The early involvement of the public and stakeholders ensured the views of various groups, individuals and stakeholders were taken into consideration throughout the development of the Proposed Scheme and in the preparation of this EIAR.

The non-statutory consultation process assisted in:

- The establishment of a sufficiently robust environmental baseline for the Proposed Scheme and its surroundings;
- The identification, early in the process, of specific concerns and issues relating to the Proposed Scheme so that they could be appropriately accounted for in the design and assessment scope; and
- Ensuring the appropriate involvement of the public and stakeholders in the assessment and design process.

### 1.6.2 Consultation Events and Stakeholder Engagement

Initial consultation with Stakeholders began in May 2017 with letters issued to 45 Stakeholders including Educational Institutions, Business Representatives, Statutory Undertakers, Public Transport Providers and Parking Providers amongst others. Follow-up face-to-face meetings with a number of these Stakeholders were held in June 2017.

Continuous consultation with the Elected Representatives of Galway City Council have taken place during the development of the scheme, including workshop events and presentations at Council Meetings. These began with a workshop in June 2018 and most recently a briefing to Councillors in July 2021.

Stakeholder workshops were held in relation to the Proposed Scheme, including a workshop organised by Galway City Council in relation to ongoing transportation projects within the city in October 2019. A Workshop Information event was also held with Cycling Stakeholders (representatives of numerous cyclist related groups) in November 2019.

A non-statutory public consultation on the emerging preferred scheme was also undertaken. Due to COVID-19 restrictions in place throughout 2020 and 2021, Galway City Council engaged in virtual and on-line non-statutory public consultation on the Cross-City Link project. In response to guidelines from the Irish Government and the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE), no information events were held in person. As a consequence, a virtual consultation was undertaken. The purpose of the non-statutory consultation was to encourage stakeholders to identify questions or issues they want Galway City Council and the design team to consider, as the project progresses through design and statutory processes. The consultation commenced on October 22nd, 2020 and the initial duration of the consultation period was 6 weeks.

Due to the reopening of the retail sector in December 2020, Galway City Council extended the non-statutory public consultation on the Cross-City Link project, to allow the business community in the city to engage at a point in time when their busiest season would be concluded, in January 2021.

In addition to the virtual information room, a series of engagement sessions with various stakeholders was held during the consultation period. Over 130 stakeholders were invited to 5 virtual 'sectoral' briefings, as part of the non-statutory public consultation. Invited stakeholders included public transport operators, community groups, emergency services, businesses, taxis operators, car park operators, educational institutions, transport consultancies, and cycling groups. A total of 36 stakeholders attended these meetings.

### 1.6.3 Summary of Main Issues Raised

The key issues raised during this consultation phase are summarised as follows:

- Public realm:
  - The provision of safer pedestrian and cyclist facilities in areas of public realm (refer to Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) for an assessment of pedestrian and cyclist facilities);
  - The greening of public areas including the provision of planters (refer to Chapter 16 (Landscape (Townscape) and Visual) for an assessment of landscaping proposals).
- Deliveries, access, parking:
  - The maintenance of access for deliveries (refer to Chapter 4 (Proposed Scheme Description) and Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) for a description of access arrangements);
  - Access by private car to the city centre (refer to Chapter 4 (Proposed Scheme Description) and Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) for a description of access arrangements);
  - The loss of parking (refer to Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) for an assessment of the loss of parking);

- Additional traffic:
  - The potential increases in journey times for private traffic (refer to Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) for an impact assessment of the Proposed Scheme on general traffic);
  - The impact of displaced traffic on alternative routes (refer to Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) for an impact assessment of the Proposed Scheme on affected alternative routes);
- Cyclist and pedestrian safety:
  - The design of the Proposed Scheme relative to cyclist safety (refer to Chapter 4 (Proposed Scheme Description) and Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) for a description of cycle facilities);
  - The provision of lighting and a design for vulnerable users (refer to Chapter 4 (Proposed Scheme Description) for a description of lighting proposals and how the Proposed Scheme accommodates all users);
- Land acquisition and devaluation of property:
  - The acquisition of land to develop the Proposed Scheme (refer to Chapter 10 (Population) for an assessment of land acquisition);
- Noise pollution:
  - Noise from buses and general traffic (refer to Chapter 9 (Noise & Vibration) for an assessment of noise impact at properties).

The issues raised by respondents were further considered during the ongoing design development of the Proposed Scheme.

#### 1.6.4 Consultation with Prescribed Bodies and Interested Parties

In addition to the extensive non-statutory public consultation on the Proposed Scheme, Galway City Council and the design team undertook consultation and produced a report titled “*Information on the Approach to Environmental Assessment*”. The report was issued to prescribed bodies and relevant non-statutory consultees (refer to Table 1.6) in October 2021.

Consultations were also conducted with organisations such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and these are considered in the development of the relevant impact assessments chapters in Volume 2 of this EIAR.

**Table 1.6: Prescribed Bodies and Interested Parties**

Prescribed Bodies and Interested Parties	
An Chomhairle Ealaíon (the Arts Council)	Galway Chamber
An Garda Síochána	Galway City Council
An Taisce	Galway County Council
Bus Éireann	Galway Fire Service
Corrib Navigation Trust	Galway Harbour Company
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Gas Networks Ireland
Department of Defence	Geological Survey of Ireland
Department of Education	Health Service Executive

Prescribed Bodies and Interested Parties	
Department of Environment, Climate and Communications	Health and Safety Authority
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	Heritage Council
Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, Built Heritage & Architectural Policy	Inland Fisheries Ireland
Development Applications Unit, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage	Irish Rail
The National Monuments Service, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage	Irish Water
The National Parks & Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage	National Ambulance Service Ireland
Department of Transport	National Transport Authority
Eirgrid	National University of Ireland (Galway)
Environmental Protection Agency	Northern & Western Regional Assembly
ESB Networks Ireland	Office of Public Works
Fáilte Ireland	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
	Waterways Ireland

The issues raised through the EIAR consultation can be summarised as follows:

**Development Applications Unit, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage** – noted that there are a significant number of designated archaeological sites along the Proposed Scheme.

In particular, the route will traverse the Zone of Archaeological Potential for Historic Galway (GA094-100----) and will cross the circuit of the medieval town defences (GA094-100001-) at multiple locations. The submission also noted the requirement for AA screening and recommends that all hydrological links between the project areas and the nearby designated sites be assessed. The content of this submission is dealt with in Chapter 12 Biodiversity, Chapter 13 Water, Chapter 14 Land, Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology, Chapter 15 Archaeological Cultural Heritage and Architectural Heritage, the Screening for Appropriate Assessment and the Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

**Geological Survey** – noted that a County Geological Site is located in the vicinity of the Proposed Scheme; St Augustine's Well. This is a freshwater spring emerging from underground karst limestone conduits, which flows a few metres into Lough Atalia from the cityside shore. The submission also notes that the proposed scheme is underlain by a 'Regionally Important Aquifer – Karstified (conduit)' and a 'Poor Aquifer – Bedrock which is Generally Unproductive except for Local Zones and the Groundwater Vulnerability map indicates both 'High' and 'Extreme' groundwater vulnerability. The content of this submission is dealt with in Chapter 14 Land and Soils.

**Health and Safety Authority** – noted that the proposed location of the temporary construction compounds and parts of the transport route are within the consultation distance (400m) for Circle K Energy Ireland terminal at New Docks. The content of this submission is dealt with in Chapter 19 Major Accidents and Disasters.



### 1.6.5 Landowners

During the preliminary design process, 23 no. land folios were identified as potentially requiring either full or partial acquisition in order to complete the Proposed Scheme. An investigation of the land registry database was undertaken to identify potentially impacted landowners.

In total 31 landowners were identified as potentially affected by the scheme including some lands in the ownership of the local authorities. Letters, outlining the scheme, were sent to identified landowners on 16 October 2020. Where landowners were not readily identifiable, letters were issued to the property. The letters issued contained a brief description of the scheme and a request for the landowner to make contact with the design team to discuss the impact of the scheme on their property.

Landowner meetings commenced in January 2021 and have occurred across all of 2021 and into 2022. Contact has been made with representatives of the majority of potentially impacted folios. There has been ongoing engagement with landowners whose properties are affected, as design development has progressed on the Proposed Scheme.

Over the course of the engagements, affected property owners have had the opportunity to discuss, among other things, the following aspects with Galway City Council and the Design Team:

- Overall scheme proposals and potential impacts;
- Timelines for the scheme design development and associated EIAR assessment;
- Procedural matters such as planning and CPO process;
- Specific details of impact of scheme on landowner property including approximate extent of encroachment; and
- General information around reinstatement and accommodation works.

## 1.7 References

DHPLG (2018). Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment.

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European Commission (2017). Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment”

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Galway City Development Plan (2017-2023).

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