



**Proposed Footpath Development at Jamestown, Co. Leitrim**

**Environmental Impact Assessment Screening**

**Prepared by**

**AQUAFAC International Services Ltd**

**On behalf of**

**Leitrim County Council**

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**Report Approval Sheet**

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

This *Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report* (EIA Screening) has been prepared by AQUAFAC International Services Limited (AQUAFAC) on behalf of Leitrim County Council. The Project comprises the building of a footpath and a pedestrian crossing near Jamestown, Co. Leitrim. An overview of the proposed development is presented in **Section 2** below.

### 1.2 Statement of Authority

This report has been prepared by Dr. James Forde (B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D., MCIEEM) and Caoimhe Tweedy (B.Sc., M.Sc.) and reviewed by Dr. Brendan O'Connor (B.Sc., Ph.D., MCIEEM).

Dr. James Forde has a Ph.D. in Marine Ecology and is a full member of the CIEEM. James has over fifteen years' experience in marine research and environmental consultancy. James specialises in marine ecology and has a full appreciation of the objectives and mechanisms of national and international environmental legislation and policy.

James' academic research has focused on benthic habitats and communities, and techniques used to assess ecological impacts under European environmental legislation including the Habitats Directive and the Water Framework Directive.

As part of James' consultancy work, he has delivered assessment reports to meet the provisions of the Habitats Directive and EIA Directive to accompany planning applications for a wide range of developments including pier enhancement projects, coastal defence projects, and aquaculture.

James was a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) expert working group for marine red-list habitats for the North Atlantic and has collaborated with international experts on the designation of sensitive marine habitats including *Ostrea edulis* beds, *Mytilus edulis* beds, seagrass meadows and offshore biogenic and geogenic reef habitats. James has collaborated with national experts on the assessment of deep-water reef habitats in Irish waters to support Ireland's national assessment of reef as required under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive. Recently James has also worked with national experts on the classification of lagoon habitats, a Habitats Directive Annex I priority habitat.

Dr. Brendan O'Connor is the ecology lead for the Jamestown project and has responsibility for all ecological surveys and reporting. He is expert in ecological matters and the full spectrum of environmental assessment techniques, methodologies, and statutes. Professionally, he is a member of relevant Institutes requiring the highest standards of professional competence and integrity. He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

Brendan has 40 years of experience in the field of marine science and has published *circa* 75 scientific papers and numerous reports specialising in the biology and ecology of sea-floor communities. Brendan is an internationally recognised polychaete taxonomist and has led numerous international workshops in polychaete taxonomy including workshops as part of the UK BEQUALM/NMBAQC. He has 33 publications on marine invertebrate taxa including descriptions of new species, revisions of families and additions to the European and Irish fauna.

As Managing Director of AQUAFAC, Brendan has been responsible for all aspects of management including the design, execution and reporting of numerous desk studies, surveys, assessments, and environmental outputs including AA screenings, Natura Impact Statements and EIARs.

Caoimhe is an Ecologist at AQUAFAC (part of the APEM group) with over two years' experience in environmental consultancy. Caoimhe attended the National University of Ireland, Galway completing an honours degree in Marine Biology in 2016 and went on to complete an honours M.Sc. degree in Marine Biology at University College, Cork in 2019.

Caoimhe has worked numerous projects that assessed environmental impacts at Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) around the Irish coast. During her consultancy work Caoimhe has been involved in the preparation of environmental reports including NIS, AA screening and EIARs and Scoping Documents.

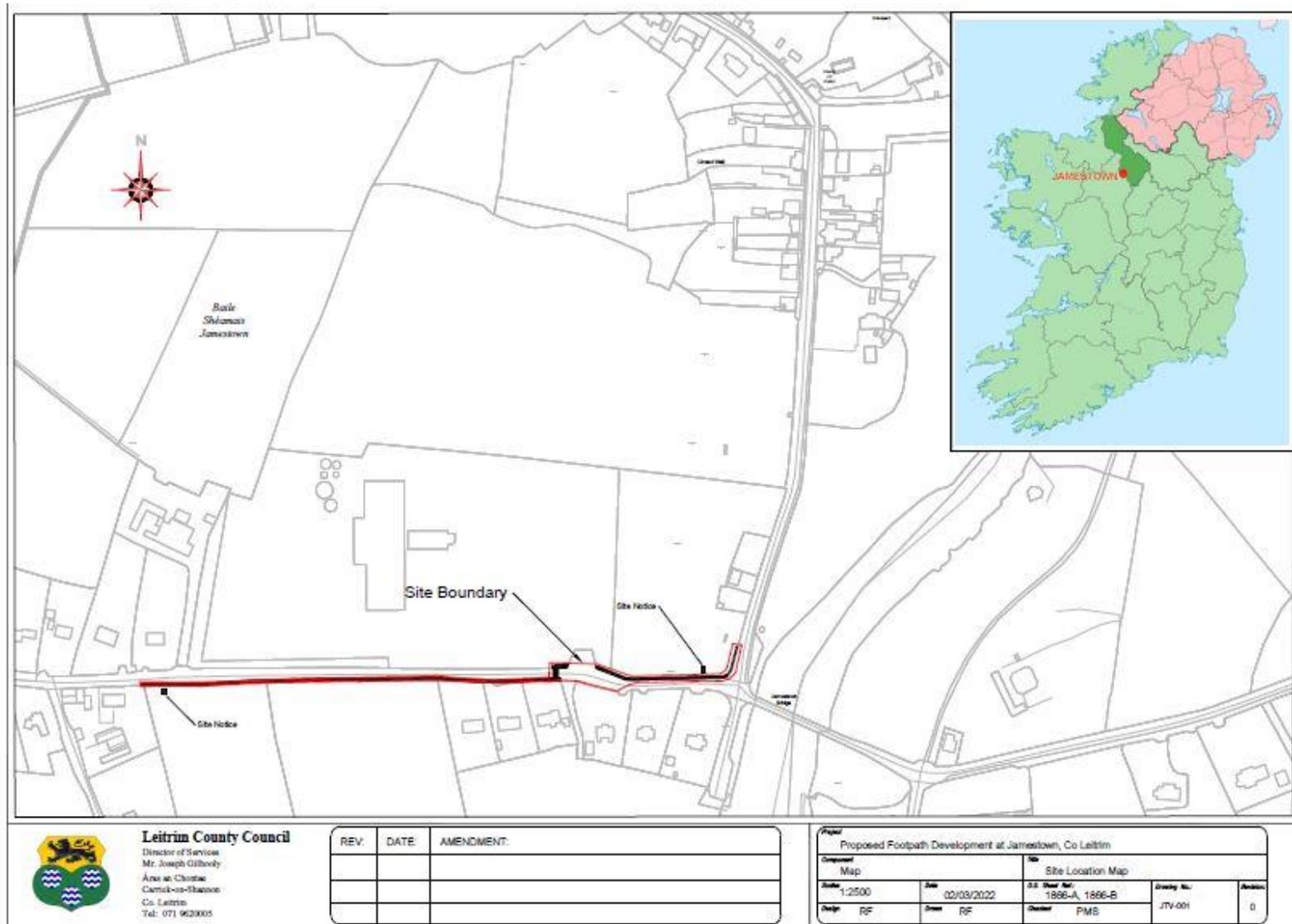


Figure 1-1: Project layout.

## 2. Overview of the Proposed Development

**Section 2.1** below provides an overview of the proposed development while **Section 2.2** describes the potential associated impacts. **Section 2.3** summarises the suite of best practice environmental control and measures that have been incorporated into the design of the proposed development to be implemented during the construction phase. The control and measures are summarised in the preliminary Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) prepared for the proposed development.

### 2.1 The Proposed Development

The objective of the Project is to provide access by foot to increase the accessibility of a local area of Jamestown, Co. Leitrim, by constructing a 460m footpath and pedestrian crossing (

**Figure 1-1**).

The Project comprises of the development of a footpath from the junction of L3656 and L3657 near Jamestown Village, westbound for 460m with associated public lighting and ramped uncontrolled crossing and all necessary ancillary works.

Construction equipment to be used will include a small truck, roller, mini excavator, compact surface dressing combination unit. Fuels, oils, greases and hydraulic fluids will be stored at a site compound in bunded containers or bunded trailers/ bowsers. Bunds for the storage of chemicals, where applicable, will be lined or constructed of materials resistant to damage by the materials stored therein. Additionally, the capacity of such bunds will be a minimum of 110% of the volume of the largest container stored therein. Bunds will be designed in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency guidance in relation to the storage of potentially polluting liquids ("IPC Guidance Note on Storage and Transfer of Materials for Scheduled Activities", 2004).

All equipment will be re-fuelled at a site compound area or prior to arrival at site. Drip trays will be used where hydrocarbons are being used for vehicle maintenance/ refuelling. Potential impacts caused by spillages *etc.* during the construction phase will be reduced by keeping spill kits and other appropriate equipment on-site. All construction works will be confined to daylight hours and there will be no artificial lighting used within the construction area. Good construction site hygiene will be employed to prevent the introduction and spread of Third Schedule Invasive species (*e.g.* Rhododendron, Japanese Knotweed, Giant Rhubarb *etc.*) by thoroughly washing vehicles prior to entering and leaving any site. All construction infill material will be screened for invasive species.

#### 2.1.1. Construction

The works proposed includes:

- Removal of some trees in the line of the proposed footpath
- Rebuilding of a short section of a dry stone field boundary wall
- Piping of open drains along the public road
- Installation of unbound stone for the proposed footpath base and kerb line
- Installation of Macadam surface to footpath
- Construction of a controlled pedestrian crossing
- Installation of public lighting along the footpath

### 2.1.2. Operation

Activities associated with the operational phase of the Project are limited to the occasional inspection and minor maintenance of footpath and crossing surface and possibly the immediately adjacent access point (e.g. pathways and roadways). Other minor activities include the periodic maintenance of landscaped areas.

### 2.1.3. Decommissioning

Decommissioning is not expected to happen.

## 2.2 Potential Impacts

Aspect of the development that have the potential to impact on are considered in this screening. The source of impact associated with the proposed development are detailed below.

1. **Construction noise disturbance associated with construction activities.** There is a risk of birds colliding with machinery working on-site. This may cause a local disturbance to birds if they fly through the site.
2. **Discharges released during construction periods; release of dust, sediment, chemicals and/or waste material.** Equipment also have fuel tanks and hydraulic systems which could release fuel and lubricating oils, cleaning fluids and chemicals. Spillages may also include run-off of sediment laden surface water from the site to the River Shannon.

## 2.3 Best Practice and Environmental Control Measures

A suite of best practice environmental control and measures have been incorporated into the design of the proposed development to be implemented during the construction phase and are fully described in the preliminary CEMP.

Measures for the protection of the environment and water quality have been incorporated into the initial setup phase, including the installation and management of site compounds, fuel storage areas and material storage areas. Such measures will ensure that there is no potential for water quality deterioration or effects on ecological receptors.

The capacity of such bunds will be a minimum of 110% of the volume of the largest container stored therein. Bunds will be designed in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency guidance in relation to the storage of potentially polluting liquids ("IPC Guidance Note on Storage and Transfer of Materials for Scheduled Activities", 2004).

All equipment will be re-fuelled at a site compound area or prior to arrival at site. Drip trays will be used where hydrocarbons are being used for vehicle maintenance/ refuelling. Potential impacts caused by spillages etc. during the construction phase will be reduced by keeping spill kits and other appropriate equipment on-site. All construction works will be confined to daylight hours and there will be no artificial lighting used within the construction area. Good construction site hygiene will be employed to prevent the introduction and spread of Third Schedule Invasive species (e.g. Rhododendron, Japanese Knotweed, Giant Rhubarb etc.) by thoroughly washing vehicles prior to entering and leaving any site. All construction infill material will be screened for invasive species.

### 3. Legislative Basis For EIA

EIA requirements derive from EU Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. The Directive has been transposed into various Irish legislation of which the following are the most relevant to this development.

- The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2020 (Part X), as amended by, *inter alia*, the:
  - Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (S.I. 600/2001)
  - European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018) (S.I. 296/2018)

Part 1 of Schedule 5 of these regulations lists projects included in Annex I of the Directive which automatically require EIA.

For projects included in Annex II of the Directive, Part 2 of Schedule 5 provides thresholds, above which EIA is required.

The Roads Act 1993, as amended, also contains EIA requirements. Section 50 of the Act specifies the types of roads projects that automatically require EIA and sets out criteria for determining whether or not other roads projects should be subject to EIA. These types of road projects are generally large-scale projects such as new or realigned roads of four lanes or more, new bridges or tunnels that are likely to have significant effects on the environment. The only road works included in the subject proposal are resurfacing of an existing roadway, minor improvements to footpaths and pedestrian crossing facilities and provision of two bus parking bays. Due to the absence of any significant road works, the subject proposal is not considered to be a road improvement project that would be subject to the EIA screening criteria set out in the Roads Act.

### 4. Screening Considerations

#### 4.1. *Project Type*

In the first instance it is necessary to determine whether the project is of a type that requires EIA.

Potentially relevant project types prescribed for EIA purposes in the Roads and Planning and Development legislation are listed in **Table 4.1**, with commentaries of their applicability to the proposed development. Criteria for changes or extensions are included.

**Table 4.1: Project types prescribed for EIA purposes in the Roads and Planning and Development legislation with commentaries of their applicability to the proposed development.**

Project type / criteria	Comment	Is EIA required on this basis?
<b>Roads legislation</b> SI 279/2019 (s.5, amending section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993)		
(1) (b) to (d) of S.I. 279/2019 require that any road development or road improvement project which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, including projects located on ecologically protected sites, shall be subject to EIA	The measures included in the scheme are largely restricted to existing road surfaces and footpaths. It is considered unlikely to have significant effects on the environment, within the meaning of the EIA Directive.	No
<b>Planning and Development legislation</b> S.I. 600/2001, Schedule 5, Pt 2		
Project type 10. <i>Infrastructure projects</i>		
(b) (iv) <i>Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.</i> (In this paragraph, "business district" means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)	European Commission guidance lists a range of projects, stating that these or other projects with similar characteristics can be considered to be 'urban development'. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shopping centres</li> <li>• Bus garages</li> <li>• Train depots</li> <li>• Hospitals</li> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Sports stadiums</li> <li>• Cinemas</li> <li>• Theatres</li> <li>• Concert halls</li> <li>• Other cultural centres</li> <li>• Sewerage or water supply networks</li> </ul> The proposed project does not correspond to or have similar characteristics to any of the above listed project types. It may be considered as not comprising 'urban development' within the meaning of the Directive.	No
Project type 13. <i>Changes, extensions, development and testing</i>		
(a) <i>Any change or extension of development which would:-</i> (i) <i>result in the development being of a class listed in Part 1 or paragraphs 1 to 12 of Part 2 of this Schedule,</i> <i>and</i> (ii) <i>result in an increase in size greater than-</i>	The changes covered by proposal will not result in the affected area being of a listed class. The proposed development meets neither of the Project Type 13(a) criteria.	No

<p>- 25 per cent, or  - an amount equal to 50 per cent of the appropriate threshold, whichever is the greater</p>		
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#### 4.2. **Sub-threshold Development**

Article 92 of the Regulations of 2001, as amended define: ‘sub-threshold development’ as:

*development of a type set out in Part 2 of Schedule 5 which does not equal or exceed, as the case may be, a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development.*

Annex III of the EIA Directive (2011/92/EU, as amended) as transposed into Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, sets out criteria for review of sub-threshold projects to determine if they should be subject to EIA. These criteria include characteristics, location and potential impacts.

**As the project does not correspond to any project type in the Roads or Planning and Development legislation, as listed above, it is not considered to be ‘sub-threshold development’.** On this basis, it can be seen that it is not required to review the proposal against the Schedule 7 criteria and it does not need to be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment.

Notwithstanding, given the ‘wide scope and broad purpose’ of the EIA Directive, and for the avoidance of any doubt, the next section of this report provides a review of the proposed development against prescribed criteria for determining whether or not a sub-threshold development is required to be subject to EIA.

#### 4.3. **Review Against Schedule 7 Criteria**

Schedule 7 sets out the: - *Criteria for determining whether Development listed in Part 2 of Schedule 5 should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment.* While it has been established above that the proposal is not listed in Part 2 of Schedule 5, out of an abundance of caution, this section of the report does nonetheless consider the Schedule 7 criteria.

These criteria cover:

1. Characteristics of the proposed development
2. Location of the proposed development
3. Types and characteristics of potential impacts

The criteria are listed in **Table 4.2** below. The comments provided in relation to the category 1 and 2 criteria are factual and do not comment on the types or characteristics of impacts. In keeping with the intent of Schedule 7, commentary on impacts is provided in response to the items covered by category 3 (in the third part of **Table 4.2** below). All comments, particularly regarding ‘significance’, are made in the context of the Directive and guidance. Cross references are included where useful. The review against the Schedule 7 criteria refers to and takes account of the prescribed environmental factors, as relevant.

Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations sets out ‘Information to be provided by the Applicant or Developer for the Purposes of Screening Sub-threshold Development for Environmental Impact Assessment’. This information includes:

1. A description of the proposed development
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
4. The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7.

This screening report includes the relevant Schedule 7A information. This is contained in the commentary provided in **Table 4.2**.

**Table 4.2: Schedule 7A information**

Schedule 7 Criteria	Comment
<p><b>1. Characteristics of Proposed Development</b></p> <p>The characteristics of proposed development, in particular:</p>	
(a) the size and design of the whole of the proposed development	The project area is approx. 460m in length.
(b) cumulation with other existing development and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment	<p>The proposed project will be part of and will interact with the wider tourism and transportation network.</p> <p>Due to its nature and scale, it has no characteristics that would have potential to cause environmental impacts that could be significant when combined with impacts from other existing or permitted developments</p>
(c) the nature of any associated demolition works	No demolition works are required.
(d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity	No significant natural resources will be used.
e) the production of waste	No significant waste streams will be generated.
(f) pollution and nuisances	No significant pollution or nuisances will be caused.
(g) the risk of major accidents, and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge	There is no significant potential for the proposed development to give rise to significant adverse effects on the environment due to accidents and/or disasters. This applies to accidents/disasters arising from external factors as well as accidents arising from the development.

Schedule 7 Criteria	Comment
<p><b>2. Location of proposed development</b></p> <p>The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, with particular regard to—</p>	
(a) the existing and approved land use	There are numerous existing and permitted developments adjacent and close to the area of the proposed development. These include extensions and renovations to existing houses, and retention of existing developments
(b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground	There are no significant natural resources at the development site.
(c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:	
(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths	The proposed development area is adjacent to the River Shannon.
(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment	-
(iii) mountain and forest areas	-
(iv) nature reserves and parks	<p>There are two SACs within 15km of the project: Annaghmore Lough (Roscommon) SAC (Site code: 001626) (14.6km southwest of Project area) and Clooneen Bog SAC (Site Code: 002348) (14.9km southeast of Project area). Lough Forbes Complex SAC is a hydrological distance of 17.74 km downstream.</p> <p>The closest SPAs are Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (Site code: 004101) (17.2km southeast of Project area), Bellanagare Bog SPA (Site code: 004105) (25.3 km southwest of the Project area), Lough Arrow SPA (Site code: 00450) (21km northwest of the Project area), and Lough Gara SPA (Site code: 004048) (24.4km west of the Project area).</p>
(v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive	As above.
(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure.	None relevant to the characteristics of the scheme.
(vii) densely populated areas	-

Schedule 7 Criteria	Comment
(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance	<p>The Jamestown bridge was built during the 19th century as part of improvements to the Shannon navigation. The main Dublin - Sligo road ran across the bridge until a bypass was completed in the late 1990s.</p> <p>The Dún (Doon) of Drumsna, an Iron Age fortification built as a crossing point into Connacht, lies opposite the quay and runs across the Shannon peninsula between Jamestown and Drumsna. It was one of many linear earthworks built across the country around that time.</p>
<p><b>3. Types and characteristics of potential impacts</b></p> <p>The likely significant effects on the environment of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in paragraph (b)(i)(I) to (V) of the definition of 'environmental impact assessment report' in section 171A of the Act, taking into account—</p>	
(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The project will directly affect an area of approx. 460m of existing roadway and footpaths.
(b) the nature of the impact	<p>The works will be undertaken in a built urban landscape, mostly on existing built surfaces. All works are identified as small scale and are expected to be negligible and/or temporary in source emissions due to the characteristics of the scheme.</p> <p>The level of potential noise, dust and surface water effects during construction of the development can be reasonably anticipated to be within the normal range of effects that would be expected during routine maintenance works for roads and traffic management.</p> <p>Any impacts on landscape and amenity can be expected to be largely positive, due to the design which is to improve the public realm of the area.</p> <p>Impacts are not likely to be significant, within the meaning of the EIA Directive.</p>
(c) the transboundary nature of the impact	-
(d) the intensity and complexity of the impact	Construction impacts will be temporary and of low intensity and complexity.
(e) the probability of the impact	Temporary environmental impacts will occur. These are not likely to be significant, within the meaning of the Directive
(f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact	Any impacts during construction will be temporary to and will be permanent thereafter. These are not likely to be significant, within the meaning of the Directive.

Schedule 7 Criteria	Comment
(g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment	As noted at 2(a) above, there are a number of other existing and permitted projects in the locality however none of these have potential to contribute to significant effects when considered in-combination with the effects of the proposed scheme and within the meaning of the Directive.
(h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact	As there is no potential for the proposed development to cause significant impacts, within the meaning of the Directive, the possibility of effectively reducing the impact is not relevant. It can be assumed that normal best practice measures will be employed to ensure that any minor (insignificant) and temporary construction stage impacts will be appropriately controlled.

Based on review against the Schedule 7 criteria, the environmental impacts of the proposed project can be anticipated to be temporary and not likely to be significant within the meaning of the Directive.

## 5. Conclusions.

The proposed Jamestown Town and Village Scheme Footpath does not correspond to any project type in the relevant legislation. It can be considered not to comprise 'sub-threshold development' and it can be 'screened out' for Environmental Impact Assessment purposes on this basis.

For the avoidance of doubt, the project has nonetheless been reviewed against prescribed criteria for determining whether or not a sub-threshold development is required to be subject to EIA. A global consideration of the criteria finds that the environmental effects of the project are not likely to be significant within the meaning of the Directive. It is therefore concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the development

An EIA Screening exercise was however carried out to determine the potential for the proposed development to have significant environmental effects or not. This exercise has been informed by AQUAFAC knowledge of the site and the AA Screening Report that was prepared for the proposed development.

The **nature or characteristics of the proposed development** are not considered likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The **characteristics of the potential impacts** are not considered significant, as standard best practice will be adopted.

The overall conclusion of this screening exercise is that there is no specific requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed works.