

Vale Road, Arklow

EIA Screening Report

2025s0296

April 2025

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Wicklow County Council

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This report describes work commissioned by Sean Keane, on behalf of Wicklow County Council, by an instruction dated 25/02/2025. The Client's representative for the contract was Sean Keane of Wicklow County Council. Alison Freeley of JBA Consulting carried out this work.

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Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NMS	National Monuments Service
OPR	Office of the Planning Regulator
pNHA	Proposed Natural Heritage Area
QI	Qualifying Interests
RPS	Record of Protected Structures
WFD	Water Framework Directive

1 Introduction

JBA Consulting Engineers and Scientists Ltd. (hereafter JBA) has been commissioned by Wicklow County Council to prepare an EIA Screening Report for the proposed housing development at Vale Road, Arklow (the 'proposed development'). The proposed development, which will be submitted under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Act (2000) as amended, will consist of 1 no. three-bed and 1 no. two-bed dwellings, and all associated works.

1.1 Purpose of this Report

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

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

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

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

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

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report and a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) have been prepared by JBA Consulting, which identified any potential impacts to Natura 2000 sites, as well as the potential impact of flood risk as a result of the proposed development.

2 Description of Proposed Works

2.1 Site Location

The proposed site is located on Vale Road in Arklow, Co. Wicklow. The eastern section of the site consists of greenfield land and the western section is comprised of a hard-surfaced area, currently used for residential purposes. The site is accessed by Vale Road along the southwestern boundary, which passes under the M11 to the south and connects the site with Arklow Town to the southeast. The railway line runs parallel to the northeast boundary of the proposed development, with the train station in Arklow providing links to Rosslare and Dublin City. The Avoca River is located approx. 220m northeast of the proposed development, which flows parallel to the proposed development before continuing towards Arklow Town. The Avoca River flows into the Arklow Estuary and then the Irish Sea, approx. 1km and 3.1km, respectively, downstream of the proposed development. The site is located on the outskirts of Arklow Town, with the immediate surrounding area consisting of primarily industrial, residential and recreational uses.



Figure 2-1: Site Location

2.2 Proposed Development

The project consists of 1 no. three-bed and 1 no. two-bed dwellings, which will be connected to a septic tank and soakaway. There will be a space for a caravan within the

proposed development along the southeast boundary. Construction activities are expected to last for 12 months.

3 Purpose of Screening

3.1 Legislative Context for EIAR in Ireland

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

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

The principal piece of legislation under which an EIAR may be undertaken for various developments is The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Further regulations are explained in The Planning and Development (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2001-2018.

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

3.2 The Planning and Development Act 2000 - Mandatory EIAR

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

An environmental impact assessment shall be carried out by the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, in respect of an application for consent for proposed development where either:

- a. the proposed development would be of a class specified in
 - i. Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, and either -
 - I. such development would exceed any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, or
 - II. no quantity, area or other limit is specified in that Part in respect of the development concerned, or
 - ii. Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 and either -

- I. such development would exceed any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, or
- II. no quantity, area or other limit is specified in that Part in respect of the development concerned, or

b.

- i. the proposed development would be a class specified in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 but does not exceed the relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, and
- ii. the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, determines that the proposed development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

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

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

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

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

10. Infrastructure projects

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

(iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.

(In this paragraph, "business district" means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)

The proposed development comprises 2 no. dwellings and the proposed site area is approx. 0.146 hectares. The site therefore does not exceed any of the categories above. The proposed development does not fall under any of the categories of development in Part 2 of Schedule 5 either. Therefore, an EIAR has not been automatically triggered for this proposed development.

However, it is necessary to consider if this development could result in significant environmental effects under the category of sub-threshold developments.

3.3 Sub-threshold EIAR

In accordance with the requirement to submit an EIAR with sub-threshold planning application (Article 103 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018), where a planning application for sub-threshold development is not accompanied by an EIAR, and

the Planning Authority considers that the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment it shall, by notice in writing, require the applicant to submit an EIAR. This process therefore occurs after submission of an application, if that application is not accompanied by an EIAR.

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

1. A description of the proposed development, including in particular -
 - a. A description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works, and
 - b. A description of the location of the proposed development, with regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.
2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.
3. A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the proposed development on the environment resulting from -
 - a. The expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant, and
 - b. The use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.
 - c. The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018 (DHPLG, 2018).

In order to assist planning and other consenting authorities in deciding if significant effects on the environment are likely to arise in the case of development below the national mandatory EIAR thresholds, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published a Guidance document in August 2003, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development and the Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (DHPLG, 2018b).

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

- i. Characteristics of Proposed Development
- ii. Location of Proposed Development
- iii. Characteristics of Potential Impacts

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

4 Overview of Environmental Impacts

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

4.1 Population and Human Health

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

Residences in the vicinity of the proposed development will experience some negative impacts during the construction phase of the development. These will be temporary and will be mitigated against by the operational plans devised by the contractor and adherence to standard best practice regarding control of noise and vibration, dust, and limitations on working hours. The size and nature of the proposed development also mean that the construction phase impacts will not be significant.

Once operational, the development will provide a positive impact to population and human health in the local area by providing new housing units.

4.2 Biodiversity

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

4.2.1 Proximity to Protected Sites

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been completed by JBA Consulting for this project to determine whether there is a potential for impacts on nearby Natura 2000 sites.

Using a Source-Pathway-Receptor model recommended by the OPR, directly connected sites to the proposed development are shown in Table 4-1.

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

Table 4-1: Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development

Natura 2000 Site	Site Code	Approximate direct distance from site	Approximate hydrological distance from site
Buckroney-Brittias Dunes and Fen SAC	00729	5.5km	8.5km indirect connection via surface and groundwater

Natura 2000 Site	Site Code	Approximate direct distance from site	Approximate hydrological distance from site
			pathways
Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC	001742	8km	9.7km indirect connection via surface and groundwater pathways

4.2.2 Other Ecological Receptors

The site was visited in March 2025 by JBA Ecologists to collect ecological information. The ecological walkover survey recorded any habitats and species present. No protected flora and no sensitive habitats were recorded during the site visit. During the site visit, three invasive species were recorded, Butterfly-bush, Cherry Laurel, and Winter Heliotrope. None of these species are listed on the First Schedule. Butterfly-bush and Winter Heliotrope are medium impact invasive species, while Cherry Laurel is a high impact invasive species.

Significant impacts to ecological receptors are not expected during construction or operation, due to the nature of the proposed development and the conditions at the site.

4.3 Soils and Geology

The underlying bedrock of the site is composed of dark grey slate and minor pale sandstone.

The subsoil underlying the site is sandstone and shale till (Cambrian/Precambrian) with a matrix of Irish Sea Basin origin.

Deep excavations are not expected, with most of the development above ground. Limited shallow excavations to a depth of 1m will be required for laying of services and foundations. Excavated material will be reused as fill where appropriate. Material not required for fill will be exported from the site and disposed of at appropriate licensed facilities. The expected amount of material to be excavated is not significant, and no significant effects are expected on soils and geology.

4.4 Hydrology and Hydrogeology

4.4.1 Surface Water

The proposed site lies within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Avoca-Vartry catchment, Avoca_SC_020 sub-catchment and AVOCA_030 river sub-basin.

The nearest surface waterbody to the site is the Avoca River, located approx. 220m northeast of the proposed development. The Avoca River has a 'Moderate' WFD status under the last WFD reporting period (2016-2021) and is 'Not At Risk' of failing to meet 2027 WFD objectives.

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

The Avoca River flows into the Avoca Estuary, approx. 1km downstream of the proposed development. This transitional waterbody has a 'Moderate' status and is 'At Risk'.

The proposed development is not expected to have significant impacts on surface waterbodies during construction. This is due to the nature of the proposed works and the distance to any surface waterbodies. In addition, the contractor will put in place mitigation measures for the protection of water quality and silt and pollution control, further ensuring that any risks of watercourse pollution and sedimentation are minimised. These will include measures for spill prevention and silt control on site.

A septic tank soakaway is included in the proposed development, which safely discharges treated wastewater. If untreated wastewater is released, this has the potential to impact nearby surface waterbodies by allowing untreated wastewater to filter through the soil. This wastewater could then drain in the direction of the Avoca River, potentially leading to a reduction in water quality. The septic tank should be inspected prior to construction by a qualified engineer to ensure it is operating as planned. New drainage into the septic tank and soakaway should be installed properly under the supervision of an engineer and inspected following construction. Once operational, regular maintenance of the septic tank and soakaway system and monitoring of water quality to detect any changes downstream are recommended.

4.4.2 Groundwater

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

Groundwater vulnerability, a measure of the likelihood of groundwater contamination occurring, is moderate across the site. The site is therefore at moderate risk of groundwater contamination. The underlying aquifer is classified as a locally important aquifer, which is moderately productive in local zones.

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

The proposed development does not require deep excavations, reducing the risk of groundwater contamination. However, the presence of the septic tank soakaway mean that if untreated wastewater is released, it has the potential to impact groundwater by seeping through the soil. It is recommended that mitigation measures outlined in Section 4.4.1 are followed.

4.4.3 Flood Risk

A Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out for the proposed development by JBA Consulting and determined that the site is within Flood Zone C for fluvial and coastal flood risk. The risk of pluvial flooding is also generally low. No significant impacts are likely to occur due to flooding.

4.5 Cultural Heritage

There are no sites of cultural heritage importance within or directly bordering the proposed development. The closest architectural feature is Kilbride Mausoleum (RPS No. 40-7), dated from 1785. It is located approx. 1.1km northeast of the proposed development and is listed on Wicklow's Record of Protected Structures.

The closest archaeological features are a moated site (WI01809) and a 16th/17th century house (WI01810), located approx. 580m southwest of the proposed development and protected under the National Monuments Service (NMS). These will not be affected by the proposed development.

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

No significant impacts on cultural heritage are expected.

4.6 Air and Climate

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

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

4.7 Noise and Vibration

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

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

4.8 Landscape and Visual

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

A section of Vale Road extending from Woodenbridge and travelling alongside Avoca River is designated as a scenic route. This route ends approx. 880m northwest of the proposed development and significant impacts are not expected, due to the distance and nature of the existing site.

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

4.9 Material Assets including Traffic, Utilities, and Waste

4.9.1 Traffic

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

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

4.9.2 Utilities

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

4.9.3 Waste

Waste generated from site clearance will be inert and/or organic material and is expected to be redistributed or re-used within the site extents. Significant amounts of construction waste are not anticipated.

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

4.10 Cumulative Impacts

4.10.1 Plans

4.10.1.1 Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028

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

- Objective CPO 6.9 - To provide and facilitate social housing in rural areas.
- Objective CPO 6.1 - New housing development shall be required to locate on suitably zoned or designated land in settlements and will only be considered in the open countryside when it is for the provision of a rural dwelling for those with a demonstrable housing social or economic need to live in the open countryside.

4.10.2 Projects

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

Table 4-2: Other projects within approximately 2km which may have a cumulative impact on the development project

Planning Reference	Summary of Development	Address	Application Status	Decision Date
2372	<p>the proposed development occupies part of the site of (and will supersede) a previously permitted data centre development under Reg. Ref. 20/1285. The proposed development, for which a ten-year permission is sought, consists of the following: Demolition of the existing structures on site (industrial structures and outbuildings) and site clearance works; construction of 3 no. three storey information and communication technology (ICT) facility buildings, each with a gross floor area (GFA) of c. 16,206 sq.m (c. 48,618sq.m GFA in total), and with a parapet height of c. 19.5 metres; each of the 3 no. ICT buildings will accommodate ICT equipment rooms, mechanical equipment rooms, staff welfare facilities, ancillary office space, security rooms, storage, and loading bays; a customer compound, a power trunk building, a transformer compound and a water tank compound area are provided to the north of the ICT facility buildings; the development includes the extension of the existing road and serving the existing industrial park to access the subject site, with gated access points to the proposed ICT facility development to be provided off this roadway; construction of internal road network and circulation areas, footpaths, provision of 124 no. car parking spaces and motorcycle and cycle parking spaces; landscaping and planting, boundary treatments, lighting, security fencing, and all associated site works including underground foul and</p>	<p>Site located at Avoca River Park, Arklow, Co. Wicklow</p>	<p>Permission Granted</p>	<p>14/06/2023</p>

Planning Reference	Summary of Development	Address	Application Status	Decision Date
	<p>storm water drainage network, attenuation and percolation areas, and utility cable (including connections to the substation permitted under ABP Ref. 310090-21, resulting in the partial culverting of an existing drainage ditch), on an application site area measuring c. 9.69 hectares.</p>			
23834	<p>The proposed development includes an amendment to the development permitted under Reg. Ref. 21/1080, The proposed development will consist of the following to facilitate the above. Demolition of the existing structures on the western part of the site that comprises 4 no. industrial commercial buildings, an associated hut / outbuilding, a gas enclosure, and a tank with bund wall. The removal of the remains of a previously demolished building, areas of hard standing, and existing surface treatments. The relocation of the Energy Centre 1 to the western part of the site, which will supersede the previously permitted 110kV GIS substation compound at that location under ABP Ref: VA27.309252. The proposed development will provide for a revised energy centre design, to include the provision of 8 no. gas turbines (with associated flues of 25.15m in height), 4 no. black start emergency generators and associated transformers, 2 no. single storey fuel oil pump rooms with a gross floor area (GFA) of 90.17sq.m, a single storey air compressor building with a GFA of 88.9sq.m, 4 no. fuel tanks, 2 no. MCC control rooms with a GFA of 44.17sq.m, 3 no. fire water tanks, a</p>	<p>Site at Avoca River Park , Arklow , Co. Wicklow</p>	<p>Permission Granted</p>	<p>04/04/2024</p>

Planning Reference	Summary of Development	Address	Application Status	Decision Date
	<p>single storey welfare, storage, and pump room building with a combined GFA of 160.97 sq.m, a two storey MV /LV building with a GFA of 655.54sq.m, 8 no. 11kV/ 33kV step-up transformers in the north of the site, water treatment equipment, and a security hut, all within a fenced compound. The proposed development includes landscaping and planting, boundary treatments, lighting, security fencing, car parking, and all site works including underground foul and storm water drainage network (including on-site wastewater treatment system), and utility cables, along with all associated and ancillary works. An EPA- Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) licence will be applied for to facilitate the operation of the proposed development</p>			
22433	<p>the installation of underground electrical infrastructure between the existing Arklow Gas-insulated Switchgear (GIS) 220kV Substation and the permitted Pollahoney GIS Substation. This will include the installation of approximately two underground electricity cable circuits, each at 3.12km in length and associated underground ducting, horizontal directional drilling, joint bays, communication cabling infrastructure between the existing Arklow GIS 220kV Substation and the permitted Pollahoney GIS substation, (WCC reg ref 20/1285). All associate and ancillary site development, remedial and construction works will be concentrated along the public road network, i.e. R772, L2180,</p>	townlands of Killiniskyduff , Tiknock , Kilbride	Permission Granted	19/02/2022

Planning Reference	Summary of Development	Address	Application Status	Decision Date
	L6179-0 and L-61791-0 to facilitate the underground cabling infrastructure within the townlands of Killinskyduff, Tiknock, Kilbride and Shelton Abbey.			
2360437	<p>the installation of circa. 3,492sq.m array of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on ground mounted frames on an agricultural plot within the existing Shelton Abbey Open Prison, together with ducting, underground electrical cabling, and all associated site works</p> <p>The proposed development is considered to be within the curtilage of a protected structure (RPS No. 40-05) listed under the current Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028. The proposed solar array installation will have no impact on the protected structure, located over 330.00 meters away from the proposed site.</p>	Shelton Abbey Open Prison , Arklow , Co. Wicklow	Permission Granted	25/01/2024
2360032 ABP Ref. 318443	Demolition of the existing two-storey school building and single-storey extensions (c. 2570 sq.m) and removal of temporary classrooms on site (c. 120 sq.m); construction of a three-storey school building (c. 7535 sq.m) including general and specialist classrooms, a special education needs (SEN) unit, offices, general purpose hall, PE hall, fitness suite, staff room, library, social spaces, sanitary facilities and ancillary spaces with solar photovoltaic panels at roof level; upgrading of the existing vehicular entrance to the sports pitch and the creation of a new vehicular entrance on Coolgreaney Road to provide dedicated vehicular entrance and exit points as part	Arklow CBS , Coolgreaney Road , Arklow	Permission Granted	23/10/2023

Planning Reference	Summary of Development	Address	Application Status	Decision Date
	<p>of a new one-way traffic system through the site; removal of the existing main vehicular entrance and provision of a new pedestrian/cyclist entrance on Coolgreaney Road; provision of a car set-down area within the school grounds and construction of a 56m bus set-down area along Coolgreaney Road; provision of a new pedestrian/cyclist access from John Paul Avenue; removal of 32 no. existing car parking spaces and provision of 70 no. car parking spaces including 1 no electric vehicle parking space and 4 no. accessible parking spaces; provision of 100 no. sheltered bicycle parking spaces; provision of external play and amenity areas including a SEN play area and 3 no. multi-use game areas; provision of landscaping, boundary treatment, site lighting, provision of a covered work area, bin stores and storage shelters; provision of associated drainage, attenuation and other site services including an ESB substation and switch room (c. 25 sq.m); and all related site development works.</p>			
2484	<p>Demolition of existing derelict buildings (1292 sqm); construction of 99 residential units comprising 59 no. apartments with four blocks, ranging in height from 4 to 7 storeys (7 no. 1 bed units, 42 no. 2 bed units); construction of a 350 sqm mixed use building of four storeys containing 350 sqm of retail space at ground floor and residential units above; refurbishment, extension and change of use from a derelict two storey house to a 146.3 sqm creche;</p>	Upper Main Street , Arklow , Co. Wicklow	Permission Granted	30/10/2024

Planning Reference	Summary of Development	Address	Application Status	Decision Date
	<p>refurbishment of the former Ormonde Cinema (Record of Protected Structure Ref. A39) for commercial use comprising 322.5 sqm office at first floor and 32 sqm office, 181 sqm lounge/café and 59 sqm café uses at ground floor; relocation of a Victorian letterbox (Record of Protected Structure Ref. A40) within the scheme; provision of public open space including a new amphitheatre, a new plaza, communal and private open space; provision of internal access roads with vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist access and new vehicular access onto Upper Main Street; 169 no. car parking spaces and 196 no. bicycle parking spaces provided at basement and surface level; realignment of Coomie Lane to create a new pedestrian links between Vale Road, Upper Main Street and the River Avoca walkway; all associated and ancillary site development works above and below ground, including signage, 2 no. ESB substations, alteration to existing landscape features, play area, sculpture, retaining walls, clearance works, landscaping, excavation, bin stores, boundary treatments and services provision</p>			
<p>23756 ABP Ref. 319604</p>	<p>86 no. residential units with a mix of detached, semi-detached, terraced houses and duplex apartments ranging in height from 2 to 3 storeys; comprising of 8 no. 1-bed and 8 no. 2-bed duplex apartments, 10 no. 2-bed houses and 60 no. 3-bed houses; all residential units will have associated private open spaces facing north/south/east/west; alterations to</p>	<p>Lands at Kilbride , Arklow , Co.Wicklow</p>	<p>Permission Granted</p>	<p>08/04/2024</p>

Planning Reference	Summary of Development	Address	Application Status	Decision Date
	<p>Kilbride Road (L6179) to provide a section of the new road into the wider Kilbride Masterplan lands with vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access provided; a new dedicated pedestrian and cyclist access will also be provided to the south-east of the development connecting via the Marshland's sports club lands, and through Avondale Crescent to the Dublin Road; landscaping, public open spaces and all associated site development works to enable the development including boundary treatments, attenuation storage area and other service provision</p>			

5 Screening Assessment

5.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

To determine whether the characteristics of the proposed development are likely to have significant impacts on the environment, the following questions are answered in Table 5-1, following guidelines set out in the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) Practice Note PN02, Environmental Impact Assessment Screening (OPR, June 2021).

Table 5-1: Characteristics of the proposed development

Characteristics of the Proposed Development - Screening Questions	Comment
Could the scale (size or design) of the proposed development be considered significant (including any demolition works)?	No. The proposed development is small and will consist of 2 no. dwellings. The site is approx. 0.146 Ha in size. The proposed development will provide additional housing units for the local area.
Considered cumulatively with other adjacent existing or permitted projects, could the effects of the proposed development be considered significant?	When considered cumulatively with other permitted projects, significant effects are not likely. In the event that disruptions do occur, they will be temporary and limited in effect. Due to the size of the proposed and permitted developments, significant impacts are not likely. Once the proposed development and all permitted projects are operational, residual effects will not be significant, with a positive impact expected through the provision of additional housing units.
Will the proposed development utilise a significant quantity of natural resources such as land, soil, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or are in short supply?	The proposed site is small, covering 0.146 Ha, and is located in a site used for residential purposes. Excavated material will be used as fill where appropriate, and the overall amount to be excavated is minimal. No water is required for the development, and no vegetation will be removed. There will not be a significant quantity of natural resources used.
Will the proposed development produce a significant quantity of waste?	No. Significant excavations are not required. Debris or rubbish generated during construction will be collected by a suitably licenced contractor and disposed of at appropriately licenced agents. Once operational, the proposed development will generate a small amount of domestic waste.

Characteristics of the Proposed Development - Screening Questions	Comment
Will the proposed development create a significant amount or type of pollution?	No. Temporary air and noise pollution may occur during the construction phase, but the amount will not be significant and will be mitigated against by the operational plans devised by the contractor.
Will the proposed development create a significant amount of nuisance?	No. During construction, some noise and vibration will be created, however this will be temporary and short-term. Construction works will be limited to certain times of day. Once operational, the proposed development will not create a significant amount of nuisance.
Will there be a risk of major accidents having regard to substances or technologies used?	The risks of this development will be those typically associated with normal construction practices. Construction machinery will be used during the construction phase and will be operated by licensed contractors and following best practice guidance. Traffic to and from the site should exercise heightened caution to ensure the safety of other road users, particularly due to the residential nature of the surrounding area.
Will there be a risk of natural disasters which are relevant to the project, including those caused by climate change?	No. The subject site is located within Flood Zone C and is at low risk of flooding.
Will there be a risk to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)?	No. Any potential risk to human health will be as a result of the construction phase of this project. All contractors will be subject to best practice methodologies and risk assessments in order to minimise any risk to human health.
Would any combination of the above factors be considered likely to have significant effects on the environment?	No. The development is relatively small scale. The environmental impacts are predictable and easily mitigated through the use of best practice guidelines during the construction phase. As such, significant impacts on the environment are not expected as a result of the proposed development.

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

Reasoning: The proposed development consists of the provision of 2 no. dwellings in an existing residential area. The proposed development is small in extent and will provide additional housing units. Any environmental or noise impacts will be during the construction phase and not during operation of the development. Construction will not require significant use of natural resources, nor will it generate significant amounts of waste.

5.2 Location of the Proposed Development

The following questions are answered below in Table 5-2 to determine whether the geographical location of the proposed development can be considered ecologically or environmentally sensitive, following guidelines set out in the OPR Practice Note PN02, Environmental Impact Assessment Screening (OPR, June 2021).

Table 5-2: Location of the proposed development

Location of the Proposed Development - Screening Questions	Comments
<p>Is the proposed development located within, close to, or has it the potential to impact on any site specified in Article 103(3)(a)(v) of the Regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Site (SAC or SPA) • NHA/pNHA • Designated Nature Reserve • Designated refuge for flora or fauna • Place, site or feature of ecological interest, the preservation, conservation, protection of which is an objective of a development plan or local area plan 	<p>No. The AA Screening found that no impacts to Natura 2000 sites are likely as a result of the proposed development. Impacts on other protected sites are also not likely to occur.</p>
<p>Are there any other areas on or around the location that are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g., wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies (including riparian areas and river mouths), the coastal zone and the marine environment, mountains, forests or woodlands, that could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>No. The proposed development is located in an existing area of hardstanding. No other sensitive areas are likely to be impacted, either during construction or operation.</p>
<p>Is the proposal likely to be highly visible to many people? Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location, or are there any routes or facilities that are used by the public for recreation or other facilities which could be affected by the proposal?</p>	<p>The proposed development will be visible from Vale Road which runs adjacent to the site. The proposed development will be consistent with the neighbouring existing buildings. The Vale of Avoca scenic route is located approx. 880m northwest of the proposed development, but significant visual impacts are not expected due to the low-rise nature of the proposed development.</p>

Location of the Proposed Development - Screening Questions	Comments
Has the proposed development the potential to significantly impact any locations which contain important, high quality, or scarce resources, e.g., groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, or minerals?	No. The proposed development will not impact the relative abundance, availability, or regenerative capacity of natural resources.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any features of historic or cultural importance, including protected structures or Recorded Monuments and Places of Archaeological Interest?	No. There are no recorded archaeological or architectural features on site or in the near vicinity of the proposed development which will be affected.
Is the site located in an area susceptible to subsidence, landslides, erosion, or flooding which could cause the proposal to present environmental problems?	No. The proposed development is located in Flood Zone C and is not in an area susceptible to subsidence, landslides or erosion.
Are there any areas within or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage, and where there has already been a failure in environmental standards that could be affected by the proposal e.g., the status of water bodies under the Water Framework Directive?	The AVOCA_020 surface waterbody has a 'Moderate' WFD status and is 'Not At Risk'. Best practice methodology and mitigation measures will be followed to ensure the status is not degraded further.
Are there areas within or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, or occupied by sensitive land uses e.g., hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities that could be affected by the proposal?	The proposed development is in an existing residential space surrounded by a mix of residential, recreational and industrial areas. The proposed development will be in keeping with this residential land use and will not result in significant impacts on the surrounding area.
Are there any additional considerations that are specific to this location?	No.

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

Reasoning: The proposed development is located in Arklow on Vale Road and will be in keeping with the existing residential land use. There are no Natura 2000 sites which will be impacted by the proposed development. The Vale of Avoca scenic route is located approx. 880m northwest of the proposed development, but significant visual impacts are not expected due to the low-rise nature of the proposed development. There is a low risk of flooding within or close to the proposed development.

5.3 Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The following questions were answered in Table 5-3, following guidelines set out in the OPR Practice Note PN02, Environmental Impact Assessment Screening (OPR, June 2021), to determine whether the environmental impacts of the development can be considered significant.

Table 5-3: Characteristics of potential impacts

Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts - Screening Questions	
If relevant, briefly describe the characteristics and magnitude of the potential impacts under the headings below.	Is this likely to result in significant effects on the environment, with mitigation measures in place if applicable?
Population and Human Health:	
<p>During construction, impacts to public access are not expected on Vale Road. In case of disruption, impacts would be slight and temporary, and not significant.</p> <p>Once operational, the proposed development will provide additional housing units, representing a positive impact.</p>	No. Construction stage impacts to population and human health are typical of such developments and are easily mitigated against by operational plans put in place by the appointed contractor.
Biodiversity:	
<p>During construction, temporary impacts to biological receptors on the site include disturbance from machinery and vegetation clearance.</p> <p>The AA Screening for the proposed development found there were no habitats or flora of conservation interest (i.e., QI) related to nearby Natura 2000 sites, found on site, nor any pathways to Natura 2000 sites.</p>	No. During construction impacts will be slight due to the already disturbed nature of the site and the nature of the proposed development. No impacts to biodiversity are expected once operational.
Land and Soil:	
<p>The area of land used for the proposed development is not significant. Construction will be at or near the surface, with only shallow excavation needed.</p>	No. Where possible, excavated material will be used as fill elsewhere in the project. Material not required on site will be exported as a waste to an appropriate facility. The amount is not expected to be significant.

Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts - Screening Questions	
Water:	
<p>There are no waterbodies on site or in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development.</p> <p>Due to the shallow excavations, interactions with groundwater are not expected to be significant.</p>	<p>No. Impacts to waterbodies are not expected due to the location of the site in relation to nearby watercourses, and the nature of the proposed development.</p>
Air and Climate:	
<p>There will be slight temporary impacts to air and climate during construction due to the operation of machinery and transport of materials. Mitigation measures and best practice methodologies will minimise emissions.</p>	<p>No. Impacts to air and climate during construction and operation will not be significant. No impacts are expected once operational.</p>
Material Assets:	
<p>During construction, temporary disruptions on Vale Road may occur. Significant impacts are not expected due to the scale of the proposed development. Appropriate signage and traffic management will be in place to ensure the safety of other road users.</p> <p>Impacts on utilities and waste are not expected. The proposed development will be connected to a septic tank and soakaway and therefore will not require an additional connection to existing services.</p>	<p>During construction, the contractors will need to be aware of any services crossing the site. This will require consultation with the relevant service providers in the area. No significant negative impacts on services are likely. The proposed development will not impact on the capacity of the Arklow Wastewater Treatment Plant due to the connection to the septic tank and soakaway. Once operational, no significant impacts are expected on material assets.</p>
Cultural Heritage:	
<p>There is no archaeological feature whose Zone of Notification is within the site boundary, nor any designated architectural sites.</p>	<p>No. Impacts to cultural heritage are not expected due to the nature and location of the works.</p>
Landscape and Visual Amenity:	

Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts - Screening Questions	
<p>Typical construction stage impacts to visual amenity will occur but will be temporary.</p> <p>No protected landscapes or protected views are near the development. The site is located within an existing residential area and will not create any significant landscape or visual impacts.</p>	<p>No. Impacts to landscape and visual amenity during construction will be temporary and partially mitigated by the contractor's operating plans and will not be significant.</p> <p>Once operational, no impacts to landscape or visual amenity are expected.</p>
Cumulative Effects:	
<p>The Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 contains objectives to provide housing in appropriate areas, which is the case here.</p> <p>Nearby proposed and in-progress developments are not large, and considered cumulatively they will not have a significant impact with the proposed development.</p>	<p>No. The proposed development contributes to the objectives of the Wicklow County Development Plan.</p>
Transboundary Effects:	
<p>Transboundary effects are not expected.</p>	<p>No.</p>

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

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

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

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

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

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

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

A Flood Risk Assessment completed by JBA for the proposed development determined that the level of flood risk to the proposed development is low, and the proposed development location is suitable.

Once operational, the proposed development is expected to be low in environmental impact. The proposed development will provide an enhanced recreational facility for the local area.

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

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

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