

Proposed civic amenity centre,
Kinincha, Gort, Co Galway

EIA (screening)

Report for Galway County Council

December 2020

1. FOREWORD

The purpose of this report is to determine if the proposed civic amenity at Gort is a development that requires a formal Environmental Impact Assessment under the various EU directives and enabling National legislation.

It is written for Mike Melody, Galway County Council and follows a screening for Appropriate Assessment completed in September 2020.

2. INTRODUCTION

EIA requirements are derived from EU Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directive 97/11/EC and codified by 2011/92/EU) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. The more recent Directive (2014/52/EU) has been transposed into Irish law and planning consent by the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018).

The main objective of the EIA process is to ensure that projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment are subject to an assessment of these impacts. Two types of development are recognised, those that always require an EIA (Annex 1) and those that may require it depending on size or other criteria (Annex 2). In Article 4 (1) of the 2011 Directive, 24 Annex 1 projects are identified that require EIA. They include oil refineries and chemical works, motorways, large airports, installations for the disposal of hazardous waste and wastewater treatment plants for more than 150,000 p.e.). Article 4 (2) then outlines Annex 2 projects that require consideration for EIA depending on a case by case examination or by means of thresholds and criteria established by Member States.

The procedure is similar under Irish law; projects requiring mandatory EIA are listed in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended by the Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations of 2012. For Annex 2 projects planning authorities are required under Article 103 of the 2001 Regulations, as amended by the same 2012 Regulations, to request an EIA report (EIAR) where it considers the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. In these cases the significant effects of the project are assessed relative to the criteria contained in Schedule 7a of the regulations, principally:

- The project's characteristics
- Sensitivity of the project location
- Characterisation of potential impacts.

The transposition of EIA Directive 2011/92/EU into Irish Legislation lists additional project types for Annex 2 analysis, grouped into

- Agriculture, silviculture and Aquaculture
- Extractive industry
- Energy industry
- Production & processing of metals
- Mineral industry
- Chemical industry
- Food industry
- Textile, leather, wood & paper industries
- Rubber industry
- Infrastructure projects
- Other projects
- Tourism projects
- Works of demolition

A civic amenity centre would be included in 'other projects' as an installation for the recovery and disposal of waste materials.



Location of project on outskirts of Gort

3. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

A civic centre is planned at Kinincha that will accept many materials for re-cycling. It is estimated that it will deal with less than 700 tonnes annually.

The materials will include:

Aerosols	Mixed packaging (polystyrene)
Paints, hazardous and non-hazardous	CD's & DVD's
Oils – engine and food, oil filters	Tetra Paks
Household medicines	Waste electronics
Herbicides and pesticides	Batteries
Books, mixed paper, newspapers	Clothing, footwear
Cardboard	Drink cans, glass jars, bottles
Timber – treated and un-treated	Fluorescent tubes and lamps,
Glass	White goods
Metals	Green waste
Metallic packaging (Paint tins)	

Hazardous materials and liquids will be in banded enclosures and the whole site will be paved and drained to an attenuation tank (with prior silt trap and oil separation) and gravity fed into the adjacent wastewater treatment plant.

An outline plan of the project is given here, showing 6 internal skip bays and 3 enclosed containers.



The location for the development was formerly the site of the old municipal waste water treatment plant which was removed from service and demolished in the 1980's. The site was subsequently used as a nursery for trees to be planted in the town and environs.

4. SCREENING

To determine whether the proposal would be likely to have significant effects on the environment (and in this case would require full EIA) requires screening. The table below is filled in the light of the criteria listed in Schedule 7a of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 which have remained the same in the later EU directive (2011/92/EU).

A useful summary is given in the EIA guidance notes from the Department: Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development. The overall concept is the 'source-pathway-target' model.

CRITERION**CHARACTERISTICS OF PROJECT**

Size	0.168 hectares
Cumulative impact	<p>No other projects in the vicinity have significant impacts. The Gort River is of satisfactory quality (Q4 – EPA data) while the smaller channel beside the proposed site appears eutrophic but not unduly so.</p> <p>Any deleterious spillage onto the paved area in the civic amenity will be gathered into a piped collection network, with oil separator and attenuation tank, and gravity fed to the adjoining wastewater treatment works so that any contaminated run-off will be collected and treated before discharge. There is no likelihood of overloading the treatment works. Paint & Oil will be kept separately in a dedicated bunded container.</p>
Use of natural resources – land, water, materials, energy	<p>Minor levelling required in construction, also shallow foundations for skip bays and roadways. No continuing use of energy or materials except for transport . Electricity supply is already nearby for the current WWTP.</p>
Production of waste	Very small, only as a by-product of recycling.
Pollution & nuisance	<p>None during use as all materials will be bunded. Potential for diesel pollution during construction before oil interceptor is installed. No karstic limestone outcrop on site. Odours unlikely.</p>
Risk of accidents	None, trained personnel used in operation; site fenced.
Cumulative impacts	None of these factors in combination would give rise to increased risks.
Location of project	
Existing land use	Unused, scrub and grassland, a little fly tipping in the vicinity.
Natural resources in area	Surrounded by agricultural fields.

Absorption capacity of environment	<p>In area of significant ecological interest with ten Natura 2000 sites within 5km. These are</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Coole-Garryland complex</td> <td>0252</td> <td>0.6km</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Coole-Garryland SPA</td> <td>4107</td> <td>0.6km</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Newhall-Ballylee Turlough SAC</td> <td>2293</td> <td>3.1km</td> </tr> <tr> <td>East Burren complex</td> <td>1926</td> <td>3.4km</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Caherglassaun Turlough SAC</td> <td>0238</td> <td>3.8km</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ballinduff Turlough SAC</td> <td>2295</td> <td>4.0km</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Slieve Aughty SPA</td> <td>4168</td> <td>4.2km</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lough Cutra SAC</td> <td>0299</td> <td>4.4km</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lough Cutra SPA</td> <td>4056</td> <td>4.4km</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cahermore Turlough SAC</td> <td>2294</td> <td>5.0km</td> </tr> </table> <p>The Coole-Garryland sites have a hydrological link with this site through the small stream 18m from eastern boundary. However all run-off will be contained on site (and treated) so it is most unlikely that these sites could be affected by outflow.</p> <p>No human population in vicinity; road used for walking</p> <p>No cultural or scenic landscape significance</p>	Coole-Garryland complex	0252	0.6km	Coole-Garryland SPA	4107	0.6km	Newhall-Ballylee Turlough SAC	2293	3.1km	East Burren complex	1926	3.4km	Caherglassaun Turlough SAC	0238	3.8km	Ballinduff Turlough SAC	2295	4.0km	Slieve Aughty SPA	4168	4.2km	Lough Cutra SAC	0299	4.4km	Lough Cutra SPA	4056	4.4km	Cahermore Turlough SAC	2294	5.0km
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Characteristics of impact																															
Extent	Small site (0.168 ha) in roadside location close to town																														
Trans-frontier impact	None																														
Magnitude & complexity of impact																															
Population & human health	None																														
Biodiversity	<p>Removal of remaining nursery trees and scrub habitat but scarcely significant in an area with many rocky outcrops and better developed habitat.</p> <p>No change in European sites.</p>																														
Land	No current land use. Could be grazed by sheep or goats																														
Soils & geology	Drift soil over limestone																														
Water	Adjacent Gort River of satisfactory quality (Q4). No run-off from site as it is contained and directed to wastewater treatment plant.																														

Air & climate	No change
Noise & vibration	Temporary during construction
Landscape	Will fit into the surrounding area, adjoining wastewater treatment plant and within sight of meat factory/warehouses.
Archaeology, cultural heritage	No impact , formerly site of old waste water treatment plant.
Probability of impact	Very low
Duration	Life span of 50+ years
Reversibility	Site can be decommissioned physically and lands returned to original state

4. CONCLUSION

The design of this facility has been chosen to prevent the outflow of any material that might be deleterious to the local environment and especially to the Gort River and Natura 2000 sites downstream.

In the absence of any likely negative effects on surrounding land-uses, ecology or landscape it is considered that it does not require the further analysis of an EIA report under the terms of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, 2012 and the (Planning and Development - Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018. It would also be a simple development to reverse if untoward impacts are discovered or standards become more stringent.

There is little doubt that the project will have beneficial effects on the local environment by discouraging fly tipping and promoting the recycling of useful materials.

References

Dept. of Housing, Planning & Local Government. *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment*. August 2018

Dept. of the Environment, Heritage a& Local Government (2003) *Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development*.