

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT
SCREENING REPORT AND
CONCLUSION STATEMENT**

(A) Project Details

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| Project Name | Skatepark with Royal Canal Greenway connection at |
| Applicant name | Longford County Council |
| Development Location | The Old Greyhound Track, Townparks, Longford Town, County Longford. |
| Site size | 0.448 ha / 1.11ac |
| Application accompanied by an EIAR (Yes/No) | No |
| Distance from nearest Natura 2000 site(s) in km | The nearest Natura 2000 sites are Brown Bog SAC (Site Code: 000442) 4.2km east of the proposed and Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (Site Code: 004101) 5.86km east of the proposed. |

Description of the project/proposed development

A designated skatepark area with associated open shelter, bike shelter, and outdoor table tennis area, set within a wider landscaped area incorporating shared bicycle / pedestrian connections to the Royal Canal Greenway and all ancillary site works.

(B) Identification of Natura 2000 sites which may be impacted by the proposed development (15km External Catchment)

| | | | Yes/No |
|----------|---|--|--|
| | | | If answer is yes, identify list name of Natura 2000 site likely to be impacted. |
| 1 | Impacts on sites designated for freshwater habitats or species. <u>Sites to consider (but not limited to):</u> Lough Ree SAC; Lough Forbes Complex SAC; | <i>Is the development within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include freshwater habitats and/or species, or in the catchment (upstream or downstream) of same?</i> | No |
| 2 | Impacts on sites designated for wetland habitats - bogs, fens, marshes and heath. | <i>Is the development within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include wetland</i> | No |

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| | <u>Sites to consider (but not limited to):</u> Lough Forbes Complex SAC; Clooneen Bog SAC (Co. RS) Brown Bog SAC Mount Jessop Bog SAC Lough Ree SAC | <i>habitats (bog, marsh, fen or heath), or within 1 km of same?</i> | |
| 3 | Impacts on designated terrestrial habitats. <u>Sites to consider (but not limited to):</u> Lough Forbes Complex SAC; Clooneen Bog SAC (Co. RS) Mount Jessop Bog SAC Lough Ree SAC | <i>Is the development within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include woodlands, dunes or grasslands, or within 100m of same?</i> | No |
| 4 | Impacts on birds in SPAs <u>Sites to consider (but not limited to):</u> Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (5.86km). | <i>Is the development within a Special Protection Area, or within 5 km of same?</i> | No |

Conclusion:

If the answer to all of the above is **No**, significant impacts on habitats within Natura 2000 sites can be ruled out. No further assessment is required in relation to habitats.

If the answer is **Yes**, you will require further information, which should be provided in the form of a Natura Impact Statement which should address the particular issues of concern as identified through the above.

| (G) SCREENING CONCLUSION STATEMENT | | |
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| <i>Selected relevant category for project assessed by ticking box.</i> | | |
| 1 | AA is not required because the project is directly connected with/necessary to the conservation management of the site | |
| 2 | No potential significant affects/AA is not required | X |
| 3 | Significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain. Seek a Natura Impact Statement Reject proposal. (Reject if potentially damaging/inappropriate) | |
| Justify why it falls into relevant category above (based on information in above tables) | | |
| Having regard to the proximity of the nearest Natura 2000 site and the nature of the proposed development, it is not considered there would be potential for significant effects on the Natura 2000 network. | | |
| Name: | Richard Smith | |
| Position: | A/ Senior Executive Architect | |
| Date: | 12/09/2022 | |

Site Name: Brown Bog SAC**Site Code: 002346**

Brown Bog NHA is located 5 km north-west of Longford town, mainly in the townlands of Tully, Lissanurlan and Cartronlebagh. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The bog margins are mainly surrounded by scrub/woodland. The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes): [7110] Raised Bog (Active)* [7120] Degraded Raised Bog [7150] Rhynchosporion

Vegetation Active raised bog comprises areas of high bog that are wet and actively peatforming, where the percentage cover of bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) is high, and where some or all of the following features occur: hummocks, pools, wet flats, *Sphagnum* lawns, flushes and soaks. Degraded raised bog corresponds to those areas of high bog whose hydrology has been adversely affected by peat cutting, drainage and other land use activities, but which are capable of regeneration. The Rhynchosporion habitat occurs in wet depressions, pool edges and erosion channels where the vegetation includes White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) and/or Brown Beak-sedge (*R. fusca*), and at least some of the following associated species, Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), sundews (*Drosera* spp.), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) and Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*). This site is situated in a drumlin-filled valley and consists of a small raised bog characterised by a central wet depression with quaking mats of bog mosses and tear pools colonised by algae. Water flows through the pools and it is possible that there is a spring located in the bog centre. A flush area occurs in the north. Abandoned cutover is found around the northern, western and north-eastern bog margins. Remnant old deciduous woodland occurs to the north-west. The site supports typical Midland Raised Bog communities, which include Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Carnation Sedge, Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) and occasional Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*). The high bog supports extensive quaking carpets of bog mosses including *Sphagnum magellanicum*, *S. papillosum* and *S. capillifolium*. Pools occur frequently and support *Sphagnum auriculatum*, Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*). Bare pools and algal pools are also found. Hummocks of *Sphagnum imbricatum* and *S. fuscum* occur. The high bog is drier around the margins, where Heather and lichens (*Cladonia* spp.) dominate. Scattered Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) occurs in association with the northern flush, along with Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*). Quaking flats of Bog Asphodel and bog moss lawns dominate the inter-pool areas of the flush. One pool with obvious water flow supports Bog Pondweed (*Potamogeton polygonifolius*). Old cutover is mainly colonised by Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Downy Birch, Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*). In the north-west, old deciduous woodland with Downy Birch, Scots Pine, Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and occasional the Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) is found. There are few land uses associated with this site. There are no high bog drains and only two sets of marginal drains are present in the cutover to the north-west. At present there is no active peat-cutting on the site. A large area of cutover to the east of the site has been recently afforested with Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*). The majority of the bog has not been burnt for some time, although recent localised burning has taken place along the southern margin. Overall there has been little damage to this bog, with only small areas of cutover present. Most of the extent of the original peat basin appears to be remaining. However, peat-cutting and burning are the two main threats to the site. Brown Bog is a site of considerable conservation significance as it comprises a relatively little-damaged raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. Although the site is small it supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats including hummock/hollow complexes, pools and a flush

system with surrounding tear pool complex, along with cutover which adds to the diversity and scientific value of the site. Active raised bog is listed as a priority habitat on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Priority status is given to habitats and species that are threatened throughout the E.U. Ireland has a high proportion of the E.U. resource of this habitat type (over 60%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

SITE NAME: BALLYKENNY-FISHERSTOWN BOG SPA
SITE CODE: 004101

Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA is located on the border between Counties Longford and Roscommon in the north-central midlands and is underlain by Carboniferous limestone. It is centered around Lough Forbes, a naturally eutrophic lake on the River Shannon system which is fed also from the north by the River Rinn. The lake has well-developed swamp vegetation and displays natural transitions to seasonally flooded grassland, marsh and raised bog. The raised bogs, known as the Ballykenny-Fishertown complex, are separated by the Camlin River, which has further areas of callow grassland. The central core areas of the bogs are quite wet with a good complement of bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) and well-developed hummocks. Ballykenny Bog is unusual in that some of its margins are intact, a rare feature in the Irish midlands. Between the Camlin River and this bog, a complete transition from raised bog to callow grasslands can be seen, while the interface between the bog and lake is colonised by a narrow band of deciduous woodland. At the time this site was designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) it was being used by part of the Loughs Kilglass and Forbes Greenland White-fronted Goose population. The geese appear to have since abandoned the peatland sites in favour of grassland sites elsewhere. The site was regularly utilised during the 1980s and Greenland White-fronted Goose is regarded as a special conservation interest for this SPA. The last record of Greenland White-fronted Goose at this site was in 1990/91 (111 individuals). Merlin and Red Grouse have also been recorded within the site. The lake and callow grasslands provide good habitat for a range of wintering waterfowl species though most occur in relatively low numbers: Cormorant (51), Whooper Swan (40), Wigeon (419), Teal (444), Tufted Duck (49) and Goldeneye (11) – are counts are two year mean peaks for the period 1998/99 to 1999/2000.