



AVRIO



Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Market Street to Barrack Lane: Pedestrian &
Cycle Route, Granard, Co. Longford

Project Details

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Services Provided:	Preparation of an 'Article 6 (3) Appropriate Assessment Screening & Natura Impact Statement'

AVRIO Quality Information

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Where assessments of works or costs identified in this report are made, such assessments are based upon the information available at the time and, where appropriate, are subject to further investigations or information which may become available.

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Unless otherwise stated in this report, the assessments made assume that the sites and facilities will continue to be used for their current purpose without significant changes.

Where field investigations were carried out, these investigations have been restricted to a level of detail required to meet the stated objectives of the services. The results of any measurements taken may vary spatially or with time, and further confirmatory analyses should be made after any significant delay in issuing this report.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

AVRIO Environmental Management Limited, hereafter "AVRIO", has been appointed by CST Group to undertake an Appropriate Assessment Screening for a proposed development as part of a Pedestrian and Cycle Improvement scheme between Market Street and Barrack Lane, Granard, Co. Longford (Irish Grid Reference: N 33260 81124). The proposed development is part of a Pedestrian and Cycle Improvement scheme, which is part of Longford County Council's Active Travel programme. It involves the provision of a new, shared pathway in Granard town, County Longford. The proposed shared pathway route is expected to connect the Active Travel proposal from Ardscoil Phadraig Secondary School to Redmond Terrace. The provision of improved walking and cycling facilities will provide a safer alternative route of connectivity, while separation from routes of high vehicular concentration to and from the east of Granard Town. The proposed scheme makes provision for new footpath/pathway construction, artificial lighting, and drainage.

1.2 Requirement for an Appropriate Assessment

This Appropriate Assessment Screening was prepared for a proposed development between Market Street and Barrack Lane, Granard, Co. Longford. Having regard to the location of the proposed development site and its proximity to sites designated under the Natura 2000 network, an Appropriate Assessment of the proposed development was prepared in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. This report will allow the Competent Authority, in this case, Longford County Council, to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of the proposed development, as required under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive¹.

The purpose of the assessment is to determine the appropriateness of the proposed project in the context of the conservation status of a European protected site or sites. In Ireland, an Appropriate Assessment takes the form of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS), which is a statement of the likely impacts of the plan or project on a Natura 2000 site. The NIS comprises a comprehensive assessment of the plan or project, and it examines the direct and indirect impacts that the plan or project might have on its own or in combination with other plans or projects on one or more Natura 2000 sites in view of the site's conservation objectives.

1.3 The Aim of the Report

This Appropriate Assessment Screening has been prepared in accordance with the European Commission's Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018)² as well as the Department of the Environment's Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance

¹ EC (2000) Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission

² EC (2001) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;

for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010)³, and it provides an assessment of the potential effects of a proposed development between Market Street and Barrack Lane, Granard, Co. Longford. A NIS should provide the information required in order to establish whether or not a proposed development is likely to have a significant impact on certain Natura 2000 sites in the context of their conservation objectives and specifically on the habitats and species for which the Natura 2000 conservation sites have been designated.

Accordingly, a comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts of this application was carried out in November 2023 by AVRIO. This assessment allowed areas of potential ecological value and potential ecological constraints associated with this proposed development to be identified and it also enabled potential ecological impacts associated with the proposed development to be assessed and mitigated for.

1.4 Regulatory Context

1.4.1 Relevant Legislation

1.4.1.1 *The Birds Directive*

- The Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC) recognises that certain species of birds should be subject to special conservation measures concerning their habitats⁴. The Directive requires that Member States take measures to classify the most suitable areas as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for the conservation of bird species listed in Annex 1 of the Directive. SPAs are selected for bird species (listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive), that are regularly occurring populations of migratory bird species, and the SPA areas are of international importance for these migratory birds.

1.4.1.2 *The EU Habitats Directive*

- The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires that Member States designate and ensure that particular protection is given to sites (Special Areas of Conservation) which are made up of or support particular habitats and species listed in annexes to this Directive.⁵ Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of this Directive also call for the undertaking of an Appropriate Assessment for plans and projects not directly connected with or necessary to the management of, but which are likely to have a significant effect on any European designated sites (i.e. SACs and SPAs).

1.4.1.3 *The Water Framework Directive*

- The Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC), which came into force in December 2000, establishes a framework for community action in the field of water policy. The WFD was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 722 of 2003)⁶. The WFD rationalises and updates existing legislation and provides for water management on the basis of River Basin Districts (RBDs). RBDs are essentially administrative areas for coordinated water

³DoEHLG (2010). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities. Revision, February 2010. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government;

⁴ European Communities (Conservation of Wild Birds) Regulations, 1985, SI 291/1985 & amendments – <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie>;

⁵ European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, SI 94/1997, SI 233/1998 & SI 378/2005 – <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie>;

⁶ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy.

management and are comprised of multiple river basins (or catchments), with cross-border basins (i.e. those covering the territory of more than one Member State) assigned to an international RBD. The aim of the WFD is to ensure that waters achieve at least good status by 2021 and that status does not deteriorate in any waters.

1.4.2 Appropriate Assessment & Habitats Directive

Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora – the ‘Habitats Directive’ - provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of habitats and species of European Community interest at a favourable conservation status⁷. Articles 3 - 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. Natura 2000 sites are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)⁸.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive sets out the decision-making tests for plans or projects affecting Natura 2000 sites⁹. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”

Article 6(4) deals with the steps that should be taken when it is determined, as a result of appropriate assessment, that a plan/project will adversely affect a European site. Issues dealing with alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest and compensatory measures need to be addressed in this case¹⁰.

Article 6(4) states:

“If in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type

⁷ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

⁸ Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds

⁹ EC (2007a) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the ‘Habitats Directive’ 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission

¹⁰ EC (2007b) Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 27. European Commission, DG Environment;

and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.”

1.4.3 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Screening is the process of determining whether an Appropriate Assessment is required for a plan or project. Under Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, screening must be carried out by the Competent Authority. Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, states¹¹

‘A screening for appropriate assessment shall be carried out by the competent authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site’.

The Competent Authority’s determination as to whether an Appropriate Assessment is required must be made on the basis of objective information and should be recorded. The Competent Authority may request information to be supplied to enable it to carry out a screening.

Consultants or project proponents may provide for the competent Authority with the information necessary for them to determine whether an Appropriate Assessment is required and provide advice to assist them in the Article 6(3) Appropriate Assessment Screening decision.

Where it cannot be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt at the Screening stage, that a proposed plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of a European site, an Appropriate Assessment is required.

1.4.4 Natura Impact Statement

Where an Appropriate Assessment is required, the Competent Authority may require the applicant to prepare a Natura Impact Statement. The term Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is defined in legislation¹². A NIS, where required, should present the data, information, and analysis necessary to reach a definitive determination as to 1) the implications of the plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, for a European site in view of its conservation objectives, and 2) whether there will be adverse effects on the integrity of a European site. The NIS should be underpinned by the best scientific knowledge, objective information and by the precautionary principle. This Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement has been prepared in compliance with the provision of section 177U of the Planning & Development Act 2010 as amended.

¹¹ DoEHLG (2010). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities. Revision, February 2010. Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government;

¹² As defined in Section 177T of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended, an NIS means a statement, for the purposes of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, of the implications of a proposed development, on its own and in combination with other plans and projects, for a European site in view of its conservation objectives. It is required to include a report of a scientific examination of evidence and data, carried out by competent persons to identify, and classify any implications for the European site in view of its conservation objectives.

1.5 Statement of Authority

Callum Neill MSci (Hons): This report has been prepared by Callum Neill. Callum is an ecologist at AVRIO Environmental Management. Callum has a master's degree in marine biology from Queen's University Belfast. Callum has been undertaking environmental surveys in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland since 2020 including Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Preliminary Roost Assessments (PRA) and bat emergence/re-entry surveys on a variety of sites. Callum also has vast experience in leading intertidal and at-sea/marine surveys, working for various non-governmental organisations and academic institutions. Callum has experience contributing to habitat assessments including JNCC Phase I Habitat Surveys and Fossitt Habitat Surveys as well as producing a range of ecological reports including Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, Invasive Species Management Plans, Habitat Regulation Assessments (HRA/AASR/NIS).

Amy Gallagher BSc (Hons), MSc, QCIEEM: This report has been reviewed by Amy Gallagher. The site surveys were carried out by Amy. Amy is an Ecologist at AVRIO Environmental Management. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Ecological Management and an MSc in Ecological Management and Conservation Biology from Queens University Belfast. Amy is an ecologist with over 4 years of experience within the environmental industry Amy is a qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), an organisation requiring peer review and a high standard of professional conduct. Amy has experience contributing to Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA) including assessments for priority species such as Bats, Badger, Otter, Marsh Fritillary, Dragonfly and Damselfly, and habitats assessments including Phase I and Fossitt Habitat Surveys. Amy has experience in Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA/AASR/NIS), Invasive Species Surveys and Management and production of site-specific mitigation proposals for a range of developments throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Fergal Maguire NDA, BSc (Hons), PIEMA: This report has been approved by Fergal Maguire. Fergal is the General Manager and Principal Ecologist at AVRIO Environmental Management and Principal Environmental and Ecological Consultant. He holds an NDA and BSc (Hons) in Environmental Science from the Institute of Technology, Sligo. Fergal is a member of the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA), an organisation requiring peer review and a high standard of professional conduct. He has over 9 years of experience within the environmental industry. He has experience contributing to a number of Environmental Impact Assessments, environmental licence and surrender applications, including Industrial Emissions Licences (IEL), Integrated Pollution Control Licences (IPC) and Waste Licences for submission to the Irish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), United Kingdom Environment Agency (E.A.) and a number of Local Authorities throughout the U.K. and Ireland. Fergal has extensive experience in the sustainable development and management of a number of IED licenced facilities throughout Ireland, the U.K. and greater Europe, as well as general consultancy within the waste management, environmental compliance, and ecological sectors. Fergal has extensive experience in Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA), including priority species such as bats, badgers, otters, red squirrels, pine martens, and breeding birds, and habitats assessments, including Phase I and Fossitt Habitat Surveys. Fergal has extensive experience in Habitat Regulation Assessments (HRA/AASR/NIS), Ecological Clerk of

Works (ECoW), Invasive Species Surveys and Management and production of site-specific mitigation proposals for a range of developments throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

2. Methodology

2.1 Appropriate Assessment

In addition to the guidelines referenced above, the following relevant documents were also considered in the preparation of this report:

1. Council of the European Commission (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21st May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Official Journal of the European Communities. Series L 20, pp. 7-49.¹³
2. EC (2000) Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.¹⁴
3. European Commission (2001). Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.¹⁵
4. European Commission (2006). Nature and Biodiversity Cases: Ruling of the European Court of Justice.¹⁶
5. EC (2007) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the ‘Habitats Directive’ 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the concepts of alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, and overall coherence. Opinion of the commission.¹⁷
6. EC (2013) Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. European Commission.¹⁸
7. European Commission (2018). Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC.¹⁹
8. Department of Environment, Heritage, and Local Government (2009). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities.²⁰
9. National Parks and Wildlife Service (2019). Article 17: The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. ²¹
10. European Communities (Natural Habitats) (Amendment) Regulations 2005²²;

¹³ EC (2002) Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission;

¹⁴ EC (2002) Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission;

¹⁵ EC (2001) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;

¹⁶ EC (2006) Nature and Biodiversity Cases: Ruling of the European Court of Justice, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission;

¹⁷ EC (2007a) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the ‘Habitats Directive’ 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission;

¹⁸ EC (2013) Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission.

¹⁹ EC (2018). Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC. . Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission.

²⁰ DoEHLG (2010). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities. Revision, February 2010. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government

²¹ NPWS (2019). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 1: Summary Overview. Unpublished NPWS report.

²² EC (1997) 2006. The European Communities (Natural Habitats)(Amendment) Regulations 2005.

The EC Guidance sets out a number of principles as to how to approach decision-making during the process. The primary one is ‘the precautionary principle, which requires that the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 should prevail where there is uncertainty.’²³

When considering the precautionary principle, the emphasis for assessment should be on objectively demonstrating with supporting evidence that:

- There will be no significant effects on a Natura 2000 site;
- There will be no adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site;
- There is an absence of alternatives to the project or plan that is likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site; and
- There are compensation measures that maintain or enhance the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

This translates into a four-stage process to assess the impacts, on a designated site or species, of a policy or proposal.²⁴

The EC Guidance states that “each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required”. Consequently, the Council may not need to proceed through all four stages in undertaking the Appropriate Assessment.

The four-stage process is:

Stage 1: Screening – The process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether or not these impacts are likely to be significant;

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment – The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site’s structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts;

Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions – The process which examines alternative ways of achieving objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;

Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain – An assessment of the compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

²³ DEHLG (2009) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities. DEHLG, Dublin;

²⁴ DEHLG (2010). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities. Revision, February 2010. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government;

In complying with the obligations set out in Articles 6(3) and following the guidelines described above, this Natura Impact Statement has been structured as a stage-by-stage approach as follows:

- Description of the proposed project;
- Identification of the Natura 2000 sites close to the proposed development;
- Identification and description of any individual and cumulative impacts on the Natura 2000 sites likely to result from the project;
- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified above on-site integrity. Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects;
- Description of proven mitigation measures.

2.2 Desk Study

Information pertaining to the proposed site and the surrounding environment was studied and assessed prior to the completion of this assessment. The following data sources were accessed in order to complete a thorough examination of potential impacts:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) online map viewer²⁵;
- Mammals, Amphibians and Reptiles website²⁶;
- Ordnance Survey Ireland Map Viewer: Geohive²⁷;
- Environmental Protection Agency Geographic Information System (EPAGIS)²⁸;
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC)²⁹;
- NPWS Article 17 Metadata and GIS Database³⁰;
- Geological Survey Ireland, Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications Map Viewer³¹;
- CST Group³².

²⁵ National Parks and Wildlife Service: National Parks & Wildlife Service (npws.ie)

²⁶ Mammals, Amphibians and Reptiles: <http://www.habitas.org.uk/nimars/>

²⁷ Ordnance Survey Ireland Map Viewer - GeoHive: <https://webapps.geohive.ie/mapviewer/index.html>

²⁸ Environmental Protection Agency Geographic Information System: <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

²⁹ National Biodiversity Data Centre: www.biodiversityireland.ie

³⁰ NPWS Article 17 Metadata and GIS Database: <https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data/habitat-and-species-data/article-17>

³¹ Geological Survey Ireland Map Viewer: <https://dceir.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index>

³² Site Plans provided by CST Group

2.3 Site Location & Current Use

The proposed development site is located between Market Street and Barrack Lane-Main Street T-junction, Granard, Co. Longford (IGR: N33260 81124). The proposed site commences at the service road junction on Market Street (R194), running parallel to Main Street (N55) along rear garden backlands, and connecting to Barrack Lane, then follows Barrack Lane south and ends at Barrack Lane-Main Street T-junction.

The site is located approx. 20.8km northeast of Longford town centre, 25.4km southwest of Cavan town centre, and 43.4km southeast of Carrick-On-Shannon town centre. The surrounding area encompasses a variety of features, including roads, residential dwellings, and commercial and industrial complexes associated with Granard, agricultural grassland, treelines, hedgerows, and scrub. The Rathcronan River (IE_SH_26R630830) flows approx. 446m to the southeast of the development, which is a tributary to the Inny River which flows into the Shannon River.

There are no SACs within 2km of the application site; the closest is Ardagullion Bog SAC which is situated 5.37km southwest of the application site. There are no SPAs within 2km of the application site; the closest is Lough Kinale and Derragh SPA which is situated 4.64km southwest of the application site. There are no Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) or proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) within 2km of the application site; the closest is Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough NHA which is situated 4.64km southwest of the application site.

The site and immediate environs consist of Buildings & Artificial Surfaces (BL3), Stone Walls and Other Stonework (BL1), Recolonising Bare Ground (ED3), Scrub (WS1), Ornamental/Non-Native Shrub (WS3), and Dry Meadows and Grassy Verges (GS2). Pictures 1-12 below illustrate the proposed development area and the surrounding habitat.



Picture 1: Stone Walls and Other Stonework (BL1) on-site



Picture 2: Recolonising Bare Ground (ED3) on-site



Picture 3: Buildings & Artificial Surfaces (BL3) on-site



Picture 4: Scrub (WS1) identified in surrounding environs



Picture 5: Buildings & Artificial Surfaces (BL3) on-site



Picture 6: Buildings & Artificial Surfaces (BL3) on-site



Picture 7: Winter Heliotrope (WS3) identified in surrounding environs



Picture 8: Rockspray Cotoneaster (WS3) identified in surrounding environs



Picture 9: Snowberry (WS3) adjacent to site



Picture 10: Dry Meadows and Grassy Verges (GS2) on-site



Picture 11: Dry Meadows and Grassy Verges (GS2) on-site



Picture 12: Dry Meadows and Grassy Verges (GS2) on-site

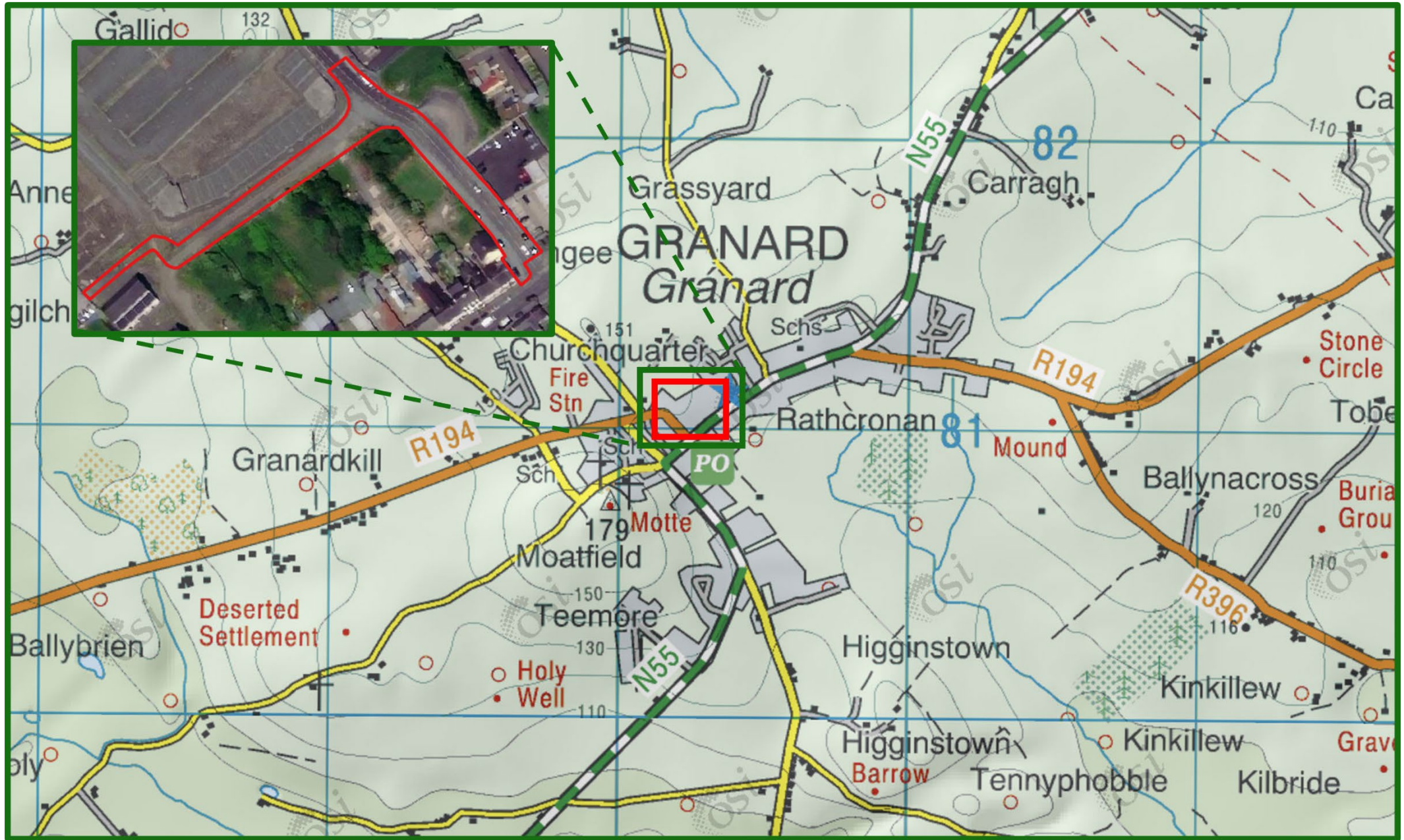


Figure 1: The location of the proposed development site, and surrounding environs, in Granard, Co. Longford

2.4 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

2.4.1 Description of the Project

The development is part of a Pedestrian and Cycle Improvement scheme, which is part of Longford County Council's Active Travel programme. It involves the provision of a new, shared pathway in Granard town, County Longford. The proposed shared pathway route is expected to connect the Active Travel proposal from Ardscoil Phadraig Secondary School to Redmond Terrace. The provision of improved walking and cycling facilities will provide a safer alternative route of connectivity, while separation from routes of high vehicular concentration to and from the east of Granard Town. The proposed scheme makes provision for new footpath/pathway construction, artificial lighting, and drainage.

The proposed development commences at the service road junction on Market Street (R194), running parallel to Main Street (N55) along rear garden backlands, and connecting to Barrack Lane, and returning to Main Street (N55); the east of Barrack Lane is also included. The proposal includes:

- Construction of a new concrete footpath proposed on the east of Barrack Lane;
- Construction of macadam footpath connecting to an existing concrete footpath from the service road junction on Market Street (R194), running parallel to Main Street (N55) along rear garden backlands, and connecting to the west of Barrack Lane, and returning to Main Street (N55);
- Proposed dropped kerb at 4-no. instances along the proposed macadam footpath, and 1-no. instance along the proposed concrete footpath;
- Construction of 2-no. vehicle parking spaces on the west of Barrack Lane;
- Removal of an existing fence on-site near the service road junction on Market Street (R194), and the erection of a proposed fence, running adjacent to the northside of an existing gravel road, running parallel to Main Street (N55);
- Erection of 9-no. 6m tall lighting columns with LED lanterns along the proposed macadam footpath;
- Proposed soft landscaping e.g., removal of vegetation at the intersection of the pre-existing gravel path and Barrack Lane, and the addition of vegetation along the proposed macadam footpath; and,
- All associated site works.

All works for the project will be carried out in accordance with relevant GPPs and PPGs as seen below:

- GPP 1: Understanding your environmental responsibilities – Good environmental practices;
- GPP 2: Above-ground oil storage tanks;
- GPP 3: Use and design of oil separators in surface water drainage systems;
- GPP 4: Treatment and disposal of wastewater where there is no connection to the public foul sewer;

- GPP 5: Works and maintenance in or near water;
- GPP 6: Working on construction and demolition sites;
- GPP 8: Safe storage and disposal of used oils;
- GPP 13 Vehicle washing and cleaning;
- GPP 20: Dewatering underground ducts and chambers;
- GPP 21: Pollution incident response planning;
- GPP 22: Dealing with spills;
- GPP 26 Safe storage - drums and intermediate bulk containers;
- NIEA Pollution Prevention Guidance Notes (PPG's)
 - PPG 7: Safe Storage – The safe operation of refuelling facilities;
 - PPG 18: Managing fire water and major spillages;
- CIRIA Report C532 Control of Water Pollution from construction sites;
- CIRIA Report C741 Environmental Good Practice on Site guide (4th Edition);
- BS6031:2009 Code of Practice for Earthworks;
- BS 5930 2015: Code of Practice for Site Investigations.

Storage of fuels and lubricants to include the following:

- All fuels to be stored in a bunded area at least 10m from any drainage ditch or stream;
- Refuelling to be undertaken in a designated area over hardstanding at minimum 10m from any field drain or stream;
- Fuels to be stored in plastic containers and stored in a locked contained within the site compound area;
- Spill kits should be stored and readily available, close to the designated refuelling area;
- All construction activities will be restricted to daytime hours. Works associated with the proposal will not be undertaken during dusk/dawn and periods of darkness;
- Any materials excavated from the site (i.e., during construction) must either be removed from the site to limit stockpiling or should be located at a distance of >10m from any ditch, stream or watercourse; and,
- Construction activities that require the excavation of materials should avoid periods of heavy and/or prolonged rainfall to ensure that silt and sediment is not washed into ditches, streams or watercourses.

All areas of retained vegetation will be protected according to B.S. 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition, and construction. This guidance outlines the steps involved in protecting retained trees to ensure that accidental damage or asphyxiation of the roots does not occur.

Non-Scheduled Invasive species were identified outwith the proposed site boundary. In the unlikely event that site plans are altered to include these locations within the proposed development area, these non-scheduled invasive species will be managed in line with best practice guidelines, outlined in Appendix A.

Appendix B attached details the current Site Layout Plan.

2.4.2 Description of the Baseline Ecological Environment

Assessing the impacts of any project and associated activities requires an understanding of the ecological baseline conditions prior to and at the time of the project proceeding. Ecological baseline conditions are those existing in the absence of proposed activities³³.

A walkover of the site was undertaken on the 15th of November 2023 by a qualified ecologist, and habitats present were identified in accordance with the Heritage Council's 'Guide to Habitats in Ireland'³⁴. Plant nomenclature for vascular plants follows 'New Flora of the British Isles, while mosses and liverworts nomenclature follow 'Mosses and Liverworts of Britain and Ireland - a field guide'.

The walkover survey was designed to detect the presence, or likely presence, of a range of protected species and habitats. The walkover survey comprehensively covered the entire study area of the subject development and surrounding habitats.

2.4.2.1 Habitats

Habitats located within the site boundary include:

- Stone Wall and Other Stonework (BL1)
- Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3)
- Recolonising Bare Ground (ED3)
- Dry Meadows and Grassy Verges (GS2)

2.4.2.3 Invasive Species (Flora) Survey

Throughout the habitat survey, the site was searched for invasive weed species, focusing on those species listed on the Third Schedule of Regulations 49 and 50 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011³⁵. Invasive species included in this list include Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum*

³³ CIEEM, 2018, Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland. Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine;

³⁴ Fossitt, J. A. (2000). A Guide to Habitats in Ireland. Dublin: The Heritage Council;

³⁵ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora [Habitats Directive] and Directive 2009/147/EC [codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended] [Birds Directive] transposed into Irish law as European Communities [Birds and Natural Habitats] Regulations 2011 [SI 477/2011].

mantegazzianum), Giant Knotweed (*Fallopia sachalinensis*), Giant Rhubarb (*Gunnera manicata*), Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Himalayan Knotweed (*Polygonum polystachyum*), Bohemian Knotweed (*Fallopia bohemica*) and Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*).

The invasive species survey carried out by AVRIO did not identify any invasive species listed under the Third Schedule on-site or within the survey area, however several non-scheduled invasive species were noted bounding the site. These were Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), Winter Heliotrope (*Petasites pyrenaicus*), and Rockspray Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*). Snowberry was located outwith the southern site boundary to the north of the site at IGR: N 33263 81115. This was the only instance of the species during the survey. Winter Heliotrope was identified in spoil heaps outwith the site boundary to the northwest of the application site. The species was located at IGR: N 33185 81094, N 33185 81092, N 33178 81088, and N 33178 81085. Rockspray Cotoneaster was identified outwith the site boundary to the north of the site at IGR: N 33214 81107. This was the only instance of the species during the survey.

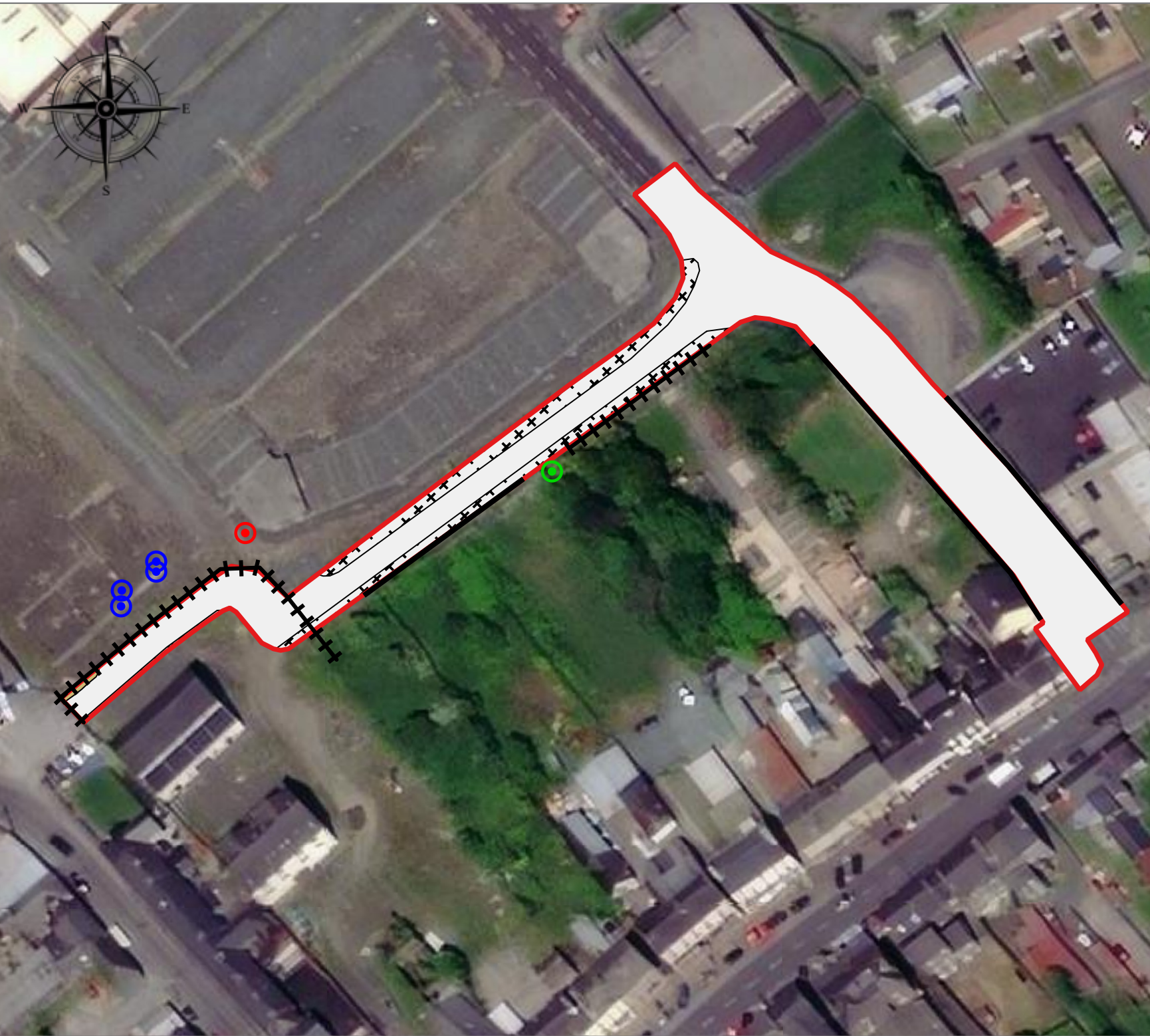
Rockspray Cotoneaster is listed as a Medium-Impact non-native Invasive Species³⁶ in the Republic of Ireland. Winter Heliotrope is included in the NRA Guidelines on the Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-Native Species on National Roads³⁷, as these species have been shown to have an adverse impact on landscape quality, native biodiversity, or infrastructure; and are likely to be encountered during road schemes. Snowberry is not included as either a medium/high impact invasive species, or in the NRA Guidelines, however, it is recognised as an invasive species in Northern Ireland under the Invasive Species Northern Ireland (ISNI) guidelines produced by NIEA³⁸.

As highlighted above, if future plans include works within to areas containing non-scheduled invasive species, then the invasive species will be managed in accordance with best practice guidelines outlined in Appendix A.

³⁶ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora [Habitats Directive] and Directive 2009/147/EC [codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended] [Birds Directive] transposed into Irish law as European Communities [Birds and Natural Habitats] Regulations 2011 [SI 477/2011].

³⁷ NRA Guidelines on the Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-native Species on National Roads 2010

³⁸ ISNI Snowberry Guide: <https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/NIEA-ID-Guide-ISNI-website-Symphoricarpos-albus-SnowberryV2.pdf>



- Legend:
- Site Boundary
 - GS2- Dry Meadows and Grassy Verges
 - BL3- Buildings and Artificial Surfaces
 - ED3- Recolonising Bare Ground
 - BL1- Stonewall and Other Stonework
 - Fence
 - Target Note- Snowberry
 - Target Note- Winter Heliotrope
 - Target Note- Rockspray Cotoneaster

Project Title: AEMP-2000301
 Market Street to Barrack Lane, Granard, Co. Longford

Drawing Title: Fossitt Habitat Classification

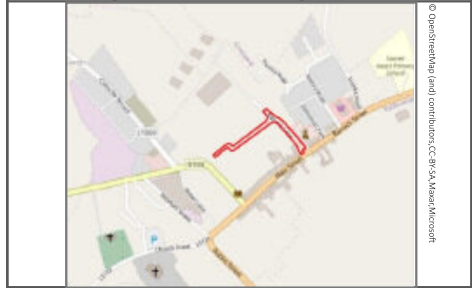
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Project No: 2000301	Drawing No: Figure 2
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Scale: 1/1000	Date: 20th November 2023
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2.4.2.4 Protected Species (Fauna) Survey

Bat Roost Assessment for Trees

All trees on site have been assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats due to insufficient roosting features.

Bat Roost Assessment for Walls

All walls on site have been assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats due to insufficient roosting features.

Bat Roost Assessment for Buildings

No buildings were present within the site boundary. Buildings were identified outwith the surveyed area; however, no buildings are to be removed or modified as part of the proposed development.

Badger (*Meles meles*) Activity Survey and Habitat Suitability Assessment

No badger setts, latrines or snuffle holes were identified within the site's boundary or within a 30m buffer of the site. The site and the surrounding environs are deemed as sub-optimal for the species as the site is in an urban location with limited greenspace.

Otter (*Lutra lutra*) Activity Survey and Habitat Suitability Assessment

No otter spraints, footprints, paths/slides, holts, or urination 'green spots' were identified within the immediate vicinity of the site. There were no watercourses identified on site and the site is in an urban location. The site was deemed as sub-optimal for otter.

Breeding Birds Habitat Suitability Survey

No nests or breeding birds were identified on-site. Treelines and areas of scrub are considered optimal locations for breeding birds. Any removal or facing of tree lines will need to be undertaken outside of the breeding season (March-August inclusive).

Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) Habitat Suitability Assessment

A survey of the site and the immediate environs was undertaken to assess the habitat suitability for smooth newt. There were no watercourses on site. Assessments conclude the habitat on-site and the immediate environs are sub-optimal for smooth newt.

Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) Habitat Suitability Assessment

A survey of the site and the immediate environs was undertaken to assess the habitat suitability for red squirrel. The site lacked suitable mature trees for red squirrels to utilise and possessed no habitat connectivity to wider suitable environs. Assessments conclude the habitat on-site and the immediate environs are of poor suitability for red squirrels.

[Pine Marten \(*Martes martes*\) Habitat Suitability Assessment](#)

A survey of the site and the immediate environs was undertaken to assess the habitat suitability for pine marten. The site lacked suitable mature trees for pine marten to utilise and possessed no habitat connectivity to wider suitable environs. Assessments conclude the habitat on-site and the immediate environs are of poor suitability for pine marten.

[Common Lizard \(*Zootoca vivipara*\) Habitat Suitability Assessment](#)

A survey of the site and the immediate environs was undertaken to assess the habitat suitability for common lizards. The habitat on-site and within the surrounding environment was deemed to be of poor suitability for common lizards.

2.4.3 Description of the Baseline Geological Environment

2.4.3.1 Bedrock Geology

There are three different bedrock types under the site; the majority of the site boundary is situated on is known as the 'Slieve Glah Formation' consisting of siltstone, mudstone, and thin turbidite. This member lies to the southern aspect of the site. The bedrock is predominantly grey to dark grey, made up of slaty siltstone, mudstone, and thin bedded, fine to coarse-grained or microconglomeratic greywacke. The bedrock contains a diamictite unit.

The remaining two bedrock formations that fall under the site are the 'Meath Formation' which consists of limestone and calcareous sandstone and lies to the northwest of the site boundary, and the 'Fearnaght Formation' which consists of pale conglomerate and red sandstone and lies to the north of the site boundary.

2.4.3.2 Aquifer Classification

There are two aquifer classifications at the site. The first aquifer is classified as a 'Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones'. This aquifer is located to the northern site boundary. A description of this aquifer is detailed below:

'Locally Important Aquifers: Locally important aquifers are capable of supplying locally important abstractions (e.g., smaller public water supplies, group schemes), or good yields (100-400 m³/d). In the bedrock aquifers, groundwater predominantly flows through fractures, fissures, joints, or conduits. Locally important sand/gravel aquifers are typically >1 km², and groundwater flows between the sand and gravel grains. This group is subdivided into the following types: Lm Locally Important Bedrock Aquifer, Generally Moderately Productive LI Locally Important Bedrock Aquifer, Moderately Productive only in Local Zones Lk Locally Important Karstified Bedrock Aquifer Lg Locally Important Sand/Gravel Aquifer.³⁹

³⁹ GSI Aquifer Classification: <https://www.gsi.ie/ga-ie/programmes-and-projects/groundwater/activities/understanding-ireland's-groundwater/aquifer-classification/Pages/Aquifer-classification-how-to.aspx>

The second aquifer is classified as a 'Poor Aquifer – Bedrock which is generally unproductive except for local zones'. This aquifer encompasses the majority of the site. A description of this aquifer is detailed below:

'This aquifer is similar to a Locally Important Bedrock Aquifer, Moderately Productive only in Local Zones (LI), but with fewer and more poorly-connected fractures, fissures, and joints, and with less permeable and/or more limited zones of higher permeability. Overall permeability, storage capacity, recharge acceptance, length of flow path and baseflow are likely to be less than in LI aquifers.'⁴⁰

2.4.3.3 Groundwater Vulnerability

Groundwater Vulnerability is a term used to represent the natural ground characteristics that determine the ease with which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities. More scientifically, groundwater vulnerability embodies the characteristics of the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological features at a site that determine the ease of contamination of groundwater. The vulnerability category assigned to a site, or an area is thus based on the relative ease with which infiltrating water and potential contaminants may reach groundwater in a vertical or sub-vertical direction. As all groundwater is hydrologically connected to the land surface, it is the effectiveness of this connection that determines the relative vulnerability to contamination. Groundwater that readily and quickly receives water (and contaminants) from the land surface is considered to be more vulnerable than groundwater that receives water (and contaminants) more slowly, and consequently in lower quantities. Additionally, the slower the movement and the longer the pathway, the greater is the potential for attenuation of many contaminants⁴¹.

The Geological Survey Ireland classifies the groundwater vulnerability across the majority of the development site to be in the vulnerability category of Extreme⁴². A small area to the north of the site is classified in vulnerability 'X' category, described as the rock at or near the surface or karst.

2.4.3.4 Groundwater Flow Direction

Exact directions of groundwater flow have not been established for the site in question, however, for the purposes of this assessment the precautionary principle is implemented, and a worst-case scenario is used.

The direction of groundwater flow follows a path through an aquifer from areas of high-water levels to areas where water levels are low. Water flows through aquifers to discharge points some distance down-gradient at a spring or offshore into the sea⁴³.

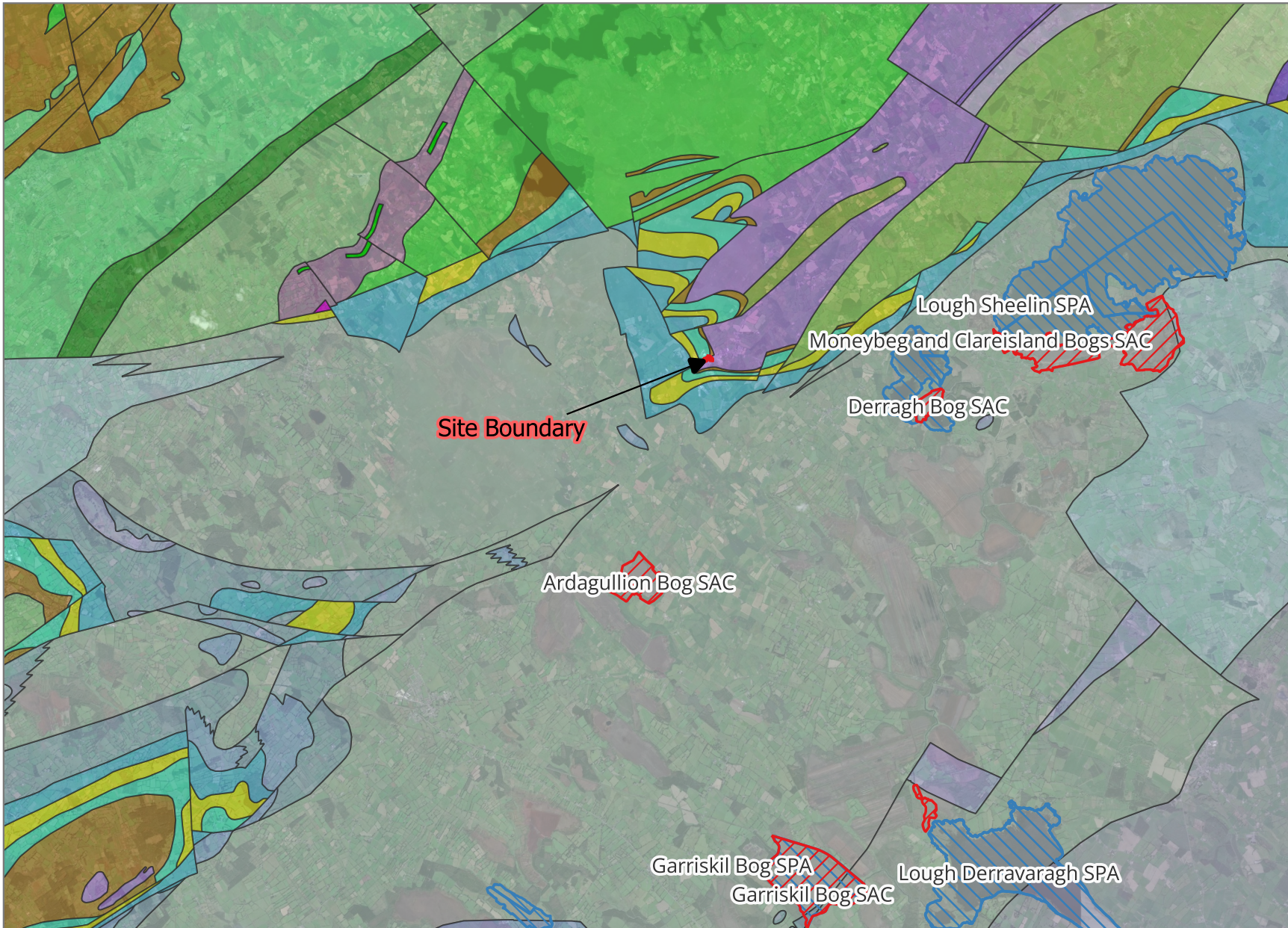
⁴⁰ Ibid 39

⁴¹ GSI Groundwater Resources Bedrock Aquifers - <https://data.gov.ie/dataset/gsi-groundwater-resources-bedrock-aquifers>

⁴² Geological Survey Ireland - Groundwater Vulnerability: <https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/programmes-and-projects/groundwater/activities/understanding-ireland-groundwater/groundwater-vulnerability/Pages/default.aspx>

⁴³ Geological Survey Ireland Map Viewer: <https://dceir.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index>

Bedrock Aquifer: Poor Aquifer		Bedrock Polygons 100k ITM 2018: Slieve Glah Formation					National Groundwater Vulnerability		
Aquifer Category	Category Description	New Code	Unit Name	Description	Formation	Lithological Description	Soil Permeability Code	Depth to Bedrock (m)	Vulnerability Category
Poor Bedrock Aquifer (PI)	Unproductive expect for Local Zones	SLSLGL	Slieve Glah Formation	Siltstone, Mudstone, & Thin Turbidite	Slieve Glah Formation	The bedrock is predominately grey to dark grey, made up of slaty siltstone, mudstone, and thin bedded, fine to coarse-grained or microconglomeratic greywacke. The bedrock contains a diamictite unit.	N/A	N/A	Extreme



Legend:

- Site Boundary
- SAC- Special Area of Conservation
- SPA- Special Protected Area

Project Title: AEMP-2000301
Market Street to Barrack Lane, Granard, Co. Longford

Drawing Title: Hydrogeology Map

Drawn By: CN	Checked By: AG
Project No: 2000301	Drawing No: Figure 3
Scale: 1/150000	Date: 20th November 2023

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3. Identification of Relevant European Sites

3.1 Identification of the European Sites within the Likely Zone of Impact

The following methodology was used to establish which European Sites are within the Likely Zone of Impact of the proposed development:

- The most up-to-date GIS spatial datasets for European designated sites and water catchments were downloaded from the NPWS website⁴⁴ and the EPA website⁴⁵ on 7th of November 2023. These datasets were utilised to identify European Sites that could feasibly be affected by the proposed development;
- All European Sites within a distance of 15km surrounding the development site were identified and are detailed in Figure 4 below. In addition, the potential for connectivity with European Sites at distances greater than 15km from the proposed development was also considered. In this case, the proposed project does not give rise to the potential for likely significant effects on European Sites located beyond the 15km zone;
- In relation to Special Protection Areas, in the absence of any specific European or Irish guidance in relation to such sites, the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Guidance, 'Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPA)' (2016) was consulted⁴⁶. This document provides guidance in relation to the identification of connectivity between proposed developments and Special Protection Areas. The guidance considers the distances species may travel beyond the boundary of their SPAs and provides information on dispersal and foraging ranges of bird species that are frequently encountered when considering plans and projects;
- Table 3-1 provides details of all relevant European Sites identified in the preceding steps and assesses which are within the likely Zone of Impact. The assessment considers any likely direct or indirect impacts of the proposed development, both alone and in combination with other plans and projects, on European Sites by virtue of the following criteria: size and scale, land-take, distance from the European Site or key features of the site, resource requirements, emissions, excavation requirements, transportation requirements and duration of construction, operation and decommissioning were considered in this screening assessment;
- The site synopses and conservation objectives, as per the appropriate datasets, were consulted and reviewed when preparing this report (7th November 2023). Figure 4 details the location of the proposed development in relation to all European sites within 15km in the Republic of Ireland;

Where potential pathways for Significant Effect are identified, the site is included within the Likely Zone of Impact, and further assessment is required.

⁴⁴NPWS Protected Site Synopses and maps available on <http://www.npws.ie/en/ProtectedSites/>;

⁴⁵ EPA maps available on [EPA Maps](#)

⁴⁶ Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (July 2013) Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPA);



Site Boundary

Lough Sheelin SPA

Moneybeg and Clareisland Bogs SAC





Derragh Bog SAC

Ardagullion Bog SAC

Garriskil Bog SPA
Garriskil Bog SAC

Lough Derravaragh SPA

Legend:

-  Site Boundary
-  15km Zone of Influence
-  SAC- Special Area of Conservation
-  SPA- Special Protected Area

Project Title: AEMP-2000301

Market Street to Barrack Lane, Granard,
Co. Longford

Drawing Title:
Natura 2000 Sites within 15km of the
Application Site

Drawn By: CN	Checked By: AG
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Project No: 2000301	Drawing No: Figure 4
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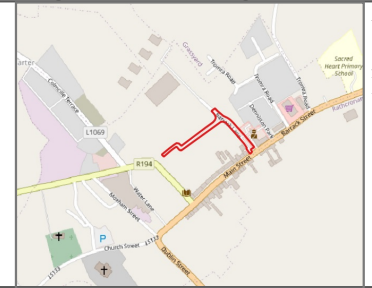
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Table 3-1: Identification of designated sites within 15km Buffer of the application site

European Sites and distance from subject development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 07/11/2023)	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
Ardagullion Bog SAC [002341] Distance: 5.44km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [7110] Active raised bogs ➤ [7120] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration ➤ [7150] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, November 2015) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie	This development is located 5.44km to the northeast of this SAC. There is no spatial overlap or no direct land take from this SAC. No direct impacts are anticipated. No hydrological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SAC. No hydrogeological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SAC. This site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact, and further assessment is required.
Derragh Bog SAC [002201] Distance 5.47km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [7110] Active raised bogs ➤ [7120] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, July 2023) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie	This development site is located 5.47km to the northwest of this SAC. There is no spatial overlap or no direct land take from this SAC. No direct impacts are anticipated. No hydrological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SAC. No hydrogeological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SAC. This site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact, and further assessment is required.
Moneybeg and Clareisland Bogs SAC [002340] Distance: 7.56km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [7110] Active raised bogs ➤ [7120] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration ➤ [7150] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, February 2016) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie	This development is located 7.56km to the west of this SAC. There is no spatial overlap or no direct land take from this SAC. No direct impacts are anticipated. No hydrological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SAC. No hydrogeological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SAC. This site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact, and further assessment is required.

<p>Garriskil Bog SAC [000679] Distance: 12.72km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [7110] Active raised bogs ➤ [7120] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration ➤ [7150] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, November 2015) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>This development is located 12.72km to the north of this SAC. There is no spatial overlap or no direct land take from this SAC. No direct impacts are anticipated.</p> <p>No hydrological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SAC.</p> <p>No hydrogeological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SAC.</p> <p>This site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact, and further assessment is required.</p>
Special Protected Areas (SPA)			
<p>Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA [004061] Distance: 4.64km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [A059] Poachard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>) ➤ [A061] Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) ➤ [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, October 2022) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>This development site is located 4.64km to the west of this SPA. There is no spatial overlap or no direct land take from this SPA. No direct impacts are anticipated.</p> <p>No hydrological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SPA.</p> <p>No hydrogeological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SPA.</p> <p>This site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact, and further assessment is required.</p>
<p>Lough Sheelin SPA [004065] Distance: 7.57km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [A005] Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) ➤ [A059] Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>) ➤ [A061] Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) ➤ [A067] Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) ➤ [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, October 2022) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>This development site is located 7.57km to the southwest of this SPA. There is no spatial overlap or no direct land take from this SPA. No direct impacts are anticipated.</p> <p>No hydrological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SPA.</p> <p>No hydrogeological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SPA.</p> <p>This site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact, and further assessment is required.</p>
<p>Garriskil Bog SPA [004102] Distance: 12.72km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [A395] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, October 2022) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at</p>	<p>This development site is located 12.72km to the north of this SPA. There is no spatial overlap or no direct land take from this SPA. No direct impacts are anticipated.</p> <p>No hydrological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SPA.</p> <p>No hydrogeological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SPA.</p>

		https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk	This site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact, and further assessment is required.
Lough Derravarragh SPA [004043] Distance: 13.61km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [A038] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) ➤ [A059] Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>) ➤ [A061] Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) ➤ [A125] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) ➤ [A999] Wetlands and Waterbirds 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, October 2022) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie	<p>This development site is located 13.61km to the northwest of this SPA. There is no spatial overlap or no direct land take from this SPA. No direct impacts are anticipated.</p> <p>No hydrological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SPA.</p> <p>No hydrogeological connection exists between the site of the proposed development and the SPA.</p> <p>This site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact, and further assessment is required.</p>

3.2 Natura 2000 Impact Assessment

The potential impacts of the proposed development on the Natura 2000 sites identified above are described in Table 3-2 below.

Table 3-2: Natura 2000 Impact Assessment

Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on nearby Natura 2000 site:
<p>The proposed works will have no impact upon the integrity of the site structure of the designated sites identified, i.e., Ardagullion Bog SAC, Derragh Bog SAC, Moneybeg and Clareisland Bogs SAC, Garriskil Bog SAC, Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA, Lough Sheelin SPA, Garriskil Bog SPA, and Lough Derravarragh SPA.</p> <p>There are no individual elements of the proposed project that are likely to give rise to negative impacts on these sites if designed in mitigation in section 2.4 above is implemented.</p> <p>The application site is, at its closest to Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA, a distance of 4.64km; however, there is no direct source – pathway – receptor linkage between the works site and the designated sites identified, therefore, no impacts will occur.</p>
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the nearby Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:
<p>Size & Scale: Given the size and scale of the works and no direct source – pathway–receptor linkage between the works site and any designated site, no impacts will occur.</p> <p>Land-take: There will be no land-take from any designated site. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any designated site.</p> <p>Distance from Natura 2000 Site (or key features of the site): At its closest point, the proposed works site is situated at a distance of 4.64km from Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA which is the closest designated site. This distance is adequate to predict that there will be no impacts upon these designated sites, as no pollution pathway exists between the development site and the designated sites.</p> <p>Resource Requirements (water abstraction etc.): No resources will be taken from any Natura 2000 site, and there are no resource requirements that will impact any designated site.</p>

Emissions: Neither the construction nor the operation of the proposed works will result in any emissions to the identified SACs or SPAs. There will be no run-off (untreated or other) from the works site directly to any SAC, SPA, pSPA or RAMSAR site. There are no direct source-pathway-receptor linkages between designated sites and the development site.

Excavation Requirements: Excavated material from the construction will be used on-site. Any remaining material will be disposed of in a responsible manner at a licensed facility away from any designated sites or areas of conservation value.

Transportation requirements: There will be no additional transportation requirements resulting from the proposed development and associated works that will have any impact on the Natura 2000 sites identified.

In-Combination / Cumulative Impacts: The proposed application was considered in combination with other developments or proposed developments in the area, and potential cumulative impacts were considered. A number of planning applications associated with the development of Granard, have been granted planning permission or are under review in the preceding five years, and where necessary, these applications were accompanied by Appropriate Assessment reports (Stage I / Stage II). Any future individual application that has the potential to impact upon a Natura 2000 site will be subject to Appropriate Assessment (AA) as required under Articles 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. The proposed development will not lead to any cumulative impacts upon any designated site when considered in combination with other developments that have been adequately screened for AA or where mitigation measures have been included as part of a Stage 2 AA for these developments.

Duration of Construction, Operation & Decommissioning: Once construction begins, the development should be complete within 18 months.

Describe any likely changes to the nearby Natura 2000 sites arising as a result of:

Reduction of habitat area: The proposed development lies outside the boundaries of any Natura 2000 site identified above. There will be no reduction of designated habitat area within any SAC, SPA, pSPA or RAMSAR site. There will be no impacts upon the habitat qualifying interests of the designated sites within 15km of the development. All of the site features are outside of the zone of influence of the development. No direct source-pathway-receptor linkages between designated sites and the development site exist. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any SAC, SPA, pSPA or RAMSAR site.

Disturbance to Key Species: All designated sites identified lay outside of the zone of influence of the development; therefore, there will be no disturbance to key species associated with any designated site.

Habitat or species fragmentation: There will be no habitat or species fragmentation within any SAC, SPA, pSPA or RAMSAR site. No ecological corridors between the proposed site and any designated site exist, which could cause habitat, or species fragmentation, therefore, no habitat or species fragmentation will occur.

Reduction in species density: There will be no reduction in species density within any SAC, SPA, pSPA or RAMSAR site.

Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.): There will be no negative impacts on surface or groundwater quality within any SAC, SPA, pSPA or RAMSAR site. No direct source-pathway-receptor linkages between designated sites and the development site exist. There will be no negative impacts on the water quality in any designated site.

Describe any likely impacts on the nearby Natura 2000 sites as a whole in terms of:

Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of the site: It is not considered likely that there will be any impacts on the key relationships that define the structure or function of any Natura 2000 sites identified.

Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:

Loss - Estimated percentage of lost area of habitat: None
Fragmentation: None
Disruption & disturbance: None
Change to key elements of the site (e.g., water quality etc.): None

4. Article 6(3) Appropriate Assessment Screening Statement & Conclusions

The findings of this Screening Assessment are presented following the European Commission's Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018) as well as the Department of the Environment's Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010).

In order to assess the impact on the Natura 2000 sites, a standard source-pathway-receptor model is utilised. Therefore, in order for an impact to be established, all three of these elements must be present.

Eight Natura 2000 sites are present within 15km of the site, including:

- Ardnagullion SAC
- Derragh Bog SAC
- Moneybeg and Claireisland Bogs SAC
- Garraskil Bog SAC
- Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA
- Lough Sheelin SPA
- Garraskil Bog SPA
- Lough Derravaragh SPA

The test of likely significance (TOLS) has concluded that the source-pathway-receptor mechanism, cannot be established for these sites. No pathway from the development site to these designated sites is present, so no impact to designated sites is anticipated. Due to the benign nature of the development and the lack of pollution pathways from the site, all of these designations highlighted above can be screened out.

No designated sites have been identified as within the likely zone of impact, and as such, no further appropriate assessment is required.

5. Appropriate Assessment Conclusions

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, the relevant case law established best practices and the precautionary principle, this NIS Stage 1 Screening Report has examined the details of the project in relation to the relevant Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the application site.

In view of the best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information, it can be concluded that this application, whether individual or in combination with other plans and projects, will have no impact upon any Natura 2000 sites. The integrity of these sites will be maintained, and the habitats and species associated with these sites will not be adversely affected. It is of the opinion of this author that this application does not need to proceed to Stage II of the Appropriate Assessment process.

Appendices

Appendix A – Invasive Species Management Strategy

3-no. non-scheduled, non-native invasive species were identified outwith the proposed site boundary. In the unlikely event that site plans are altered to include these locations within the proposed development area, these non-scheduled invasive species will be managed in line with best practice guidelines outlined below.

Winter Heliotrope (*Petasites pyrenaicus*)

Winter Heliotrope is not included in the Third Schedule. Therefore, its presence at the site does not have the potential to lead to an offence under the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011). Winter Heliotrope is included in the National Roads Authority (NRA) Guidelines on the Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-native Species on National Roads⁴⁷ as Winter Heliotrope has been shown to have an adverse impact on landscape quality, native biodiversity, or infrastructure; and is likely to be encountered during road schemes.

This species is very invasive as it can regenerate itself from a very small part of its fleshy rhizome and seeds itself by means of a small pappus. Winter Heliotrope spreads by rhizomes (underground stems) producing large carpets of leaves crowding out other native species. Recommended treatment options are provided below.

1. Physical Control

Due to the extensive rhizome network, physical removal of Winter Heliotrope is only practical on a limited scale. Where mechanical means can be employed, it should be possible to deal with larger infestations but due to the potential for regeneration from fragments of roots, it may be best to manage its control using a combination of excavation with follow-up treatment by herbicides. As with other plants with the potential to spread from small root fragments, disposal of material should be undertaken with due caution to prevent accidental spread of the plant. Other means of disposal include burial of material at a depth of at least 2m, incineration or disposal to licensed landfill. There is no evidence that the material would withstand composting though this approach would probably only be suitable for limited infestations.

2. Chemical Control

An application of a glyphosate-based herbicide after flowering in February to March is recommended by Cornwall Nature Reserves (2008), though the Royal Horticultural Society (2008b) recommends spraying in midsummer or later but before the foliage begins to die back.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Transport Infrastructure Ireland: NRA (2010). Guidelines on The Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-Native Invasive Plant Species on National Roads. Dublin: National Roads Authority.

⁴⁸ NRA Guidelines on the Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-native Species on National Roads 2010 P52 & P53

Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*)

Snowberry is not included in the Third Schedule. Therefore, its presence at the site does not have the potential to lead to an offence under the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011). Snowberry is not included as either a medium/high impact invasive species, or in the NRA Guidelines, however, it is recognised as an invasive species in Northern Ireland under the Invasive Species Northern Ireland (ISNI) guidelines produced by NIEA⁴⁹.

Snowberry spreads through new shoots from its root system; in the right conditions the root system (rhizome) can grow rapidly and out-compete native plants. Once established, the species can form dense thickets and suppress the growth of native plants. Recommended treatment options are provided below.

1. Physical Control

Physical removal is only applicable where there are only minor infestations at the initial stage of invasion. Young plants may be hand-picked, but care should be taken to avoid soil disturbance which could lead to further spread via new seedlings or re-rooting from cuttings. Plants should not be removed when in seed as there is a risk of spreading the seeds further. If removal of mature plants is not immediately feasible, then the flower heads should be removed in June before they go to seed. It is essential to plant the ground with native species immediately following removal to prevent new seedlings taking hold. Excavated material can be incinerated or disposed of to a licensed landfill.

2. Chemical Control

The best herbicide to use for Snowberry is glyphosate. It may be eradicated by spraying with a strong glyphosate-based herbicide, which must be applied when the plant is in full leaf. Several applications may be required. Alternative methods of application such as weed wiping or stem-injection may be more appropriate in terms of the location of the snowberry plant.

Rockspray Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*)

Rockspray Cotoneaster is not included in the Third Schedule. Therefore, its presence at the site does not have the potential to lead to an offence under the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011). Rockspray Cotoneaster is listed as a Medium-Impact non-native Invasive Species in the Republic of Ireland.

The stiff, semi-hardwood branches of Rock Cotoneaster fan out over each other. This provides a visual effect of filling in the gaps between the branches. This also allows the plant to dominate areas outcompeting native flora creating dense thickets once it becomes established. Seeds are spread over large areas by birds as they feed on the berries, seed longevity may be several years contributing to its widespread distribution. Rock Cotoneaster also forms an extensive root system which is difficult to remove. Recommended treatment options are provided below.

⁴⁹ ISNI Snowberry Guide: <https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/NIEA-ID-Guide-ISNI-website-Symphoricarpos-albus-SnowberryV2.pdf>

1. Physical Control

Physical control includes grubbing cotoneasters at any time of the year, taking care to remove seedlings and small bushes using a mattock or spade. Care should be taken that fruits do not fall on the ground. Removing stumps and roots is vital as the species can resprout. Plants should be removed when the soil is moist and disturbed soil should be immediately replanted with desirable native species to prevent reinfestation.

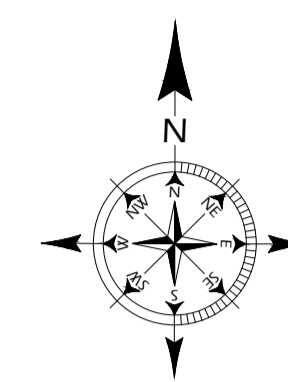
2. Chemical Control

To kill small shrubs and control regrowth, the herbicides glyphosate or triclopyr can be applied as a wiper or by handheld sprayer when plants are actively growing between spring and autumn. Alternatively, these herbicides can be applied to cut stumps or to abraded bark.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Invasive Species Compendium, Cotoneaster horizontalis: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/16870#toSummaryOfInvasiveness>

Appendix B – Current Site Plan

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KEY:

- PROPOSED MACADAM FOOTPATH
- PROPOSED CONCRETE FOOTPATH
- PROPOSED LANDSCAPE
- PROPOSED FENCE
- PROPOSED DROPPED KERB
- PROPOSED LIGHTING COLUMN

**DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION
 PURPOSES ONLY**

REV.	AMENDMENT	BY	DATE

DRAWN: KL	TECH. CHECK: KF	ENG. CHECK: FF	APPROVED: SS
SCALE @ A1: 1:500	DATE: 03.07.2023	STAGE: Preliminary	
JOB TITLE: Granard Pedestrian & Cycle Scheme Market St to Barrack Lane			
DRAWING TITLE: Proposed Site Layout			
CLIENT: Longford County Council			
DRAWING No: 122263-3001	REV: P0		

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