Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

for proposed

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residential development

at

Lamagh, Newtownforbes

in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive

by

CAAS Ltd

for

Longford County Council

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

CAAS has been appointed by Longford County Council to prepare this Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) for a proposed residential development at Lamagh, Newtownforbes ('the subject development'). Appropriate Assessment (AA) is a procedure carried out in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the "Habitats Directive"). This has been prepared to assist the competent authority in assessing whether or not the development needs to have a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) prepared for it, in order to support a *Stage Two* AA process.

1.2. Report structure

This report sets out the legislative context for the assessment process with reference to relevant guidelines and highlight the experience and qualifications of the author (See Appendix IX for author qualifications). It then details the subject development and the works associated with this which are then interrogated to identify any possible effects which may be ecologically relevant for European sites. Following this, the metrics for the assessment of 'significance' of these effects are explained and applied to each of the European sites with ecological connectivity to the subject development area. This assessment is undertaken in view of the Conservation Objectives and known sensitivities of the Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests for each European site. Other plans and projects are then considered to identify any likely in-combination effects which may result in the likelihood of significant effects on European sites.

1.3. Legislative context

The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the "favourable conservation status" of habitats and species of European Community Interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives (Habitats Directive as above and Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds) with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated to afford their protection. Qualifying Interests (QIs) are the habitats and species for which SACs are designated and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) are the species for which SPAs are designated. SACs and SPAs are known and referred to as European sites.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect such sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA. These requirements are implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive States:

> *'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'.

For the purposes of this assessment, the above definition relates to a project. The AA process relates to the protection of species listed in Annex I and Annex II of the Habitats Directive which form the Natura 2000 network (Article 3(1)). Species breeding and resting places of species listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive are nationally protected in Ireland as per Articles 15 and 16 of the Habitats Directive. The actual species listed in Annex IV do not form part of the Natura 2000 network as they are not mentioned in Article 3(1) of the Directive which defines the Natura 2000 network.

Article 3(1) of the Habitats Directive States:

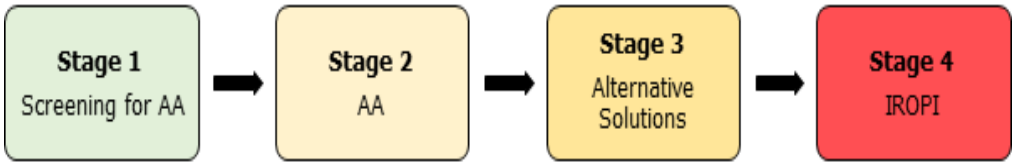
'A coherent European ecological network of special areas of conservation shall be set up under the title Natura 2000. This network, composed of sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, shall enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'.

AA is an assessment of the likely potential significant effects arising from a project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, to assess if the project will have potential for significant effect on any European site concerned, and implications in view of the European site's Conservation Objectives (COs). These sites consist of SACs and SPAs and provide for the protection and long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. Where a formal consent process applies, the AA process is concluded by the relevant competent authority making a determination in accordance with article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

1.4. Overview of the Habitats Directive and Appropriate Assessment process

The Habitats Directive itself promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. This approach aims to avoid any effects on European sites by identifying possible effects early in the project making process and avoiding such effects. Second, the approach involves the application of mitigation measures, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If potential significant effects on European sites remain, and no further practicable mitigation is possible, the approach requires the consideration of alternative solutions. If no alternative solutions are identified and the project is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effects.

There are four main stages in the AA process:



Stage one: Appropriate Assessment Screening
The process that identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant. An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) can be compiled to inform the competent authority on conduction Screening for AA.

Stage two: Appropriate Assessment (AA)
The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European 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 effects mitigation measures are required to avoid or minimise potential effects. The details of these mitigation measures are then assessed in the context of the ecological integrity of the plan/project characteristics to ensure no significant adverse effects on European sites. If this assessment process shows there are no residual significant effects, then the process may end at this stage, stage two, of the AA process which are formalised in Natura Impact Statements (NIS) reports which support the overall AA process. However, if the likelihood of significant impacts remains, then the process must proceed to Stage Three.

Stage three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions
The process that examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoids adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site.

Stage four: Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)
An assessment of compensatory measures, where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain, but in the light of an assessment of IROPI, it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

1.5. Approach

This AASR is prepared in line with the relevant legislation (ref s1.3), is based on best scientific knowledge, and has utilised ecological expertise, with consideration of the relevant guidance, including the following:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009;*
- *Commission Notice: Managing Natura 2000 sites - The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC", European Commission 2018;*
- *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, European Commission Notice, Journal of the European Union, 2021;*
- *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021*

1.5.1. Source-pathway-receptor model

Ecological impact assessment of potential effects on European sites is conducted following a standard source-pathway-receptor model, where, in order for an effect to be established, all three

elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect is not of any relevance or significance.

- Source(s) – e.g., pollutant run-off from subject development;
- Pathway(s) – e.g., groundwater connecting to nearby qualifying wetland habitats; and,
- Receptor(s) – e.g., qualifying habitats and species of European sites.

In the context of this report, a receptor is a QI or SCI, or an ecological feature that is known to be utilised by the QIs or SCIs of a European site. A source is any identifiable element of the subject development that is known to interact with the QI, SCI, or any ecological processes underpinning a QI or SCI. A pathway is any connection or link between the source and the receptor[1], for example a river.This report provides information on whether direct, indirect and cumulative potential significant effects could arise from the subject development.

1.5.2. Zone of Influence

The Zone of Influence (ZoI) is defined in the relevant guidance[2,3] as the geographical area, relative to the subject development, over which it could have effects on the ecological receiving environment in any way that could result in potential significant effects on the Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests of a given European site.

The ZoI is established and informed by the nature of the subject development, connectivity to European sites, and the receptors involved, i.e., the QIs and SCIs of European sites, their supporting habitats, and their sensitivities and pressures.

1.5.3. Ecological desktop study

This AASR is supported by desktop research from national databases including: the National Biodiversity Data Centre[4]; the NPWS[5]; the EPA[6] databases; data collected for the most recent Article 12 and 17 conservation status reporting cycle, 2019; and, *The Status of Protected EU Habitats and Species in Ireland* report (NPWS, 2019).

Based on the above resources, the ecological desktop study comprised the following elements:

- Identification of European sites within one or several zones of Influence (s 1.5.2) established using the source -pathway-receptor model (s 1.5.1);
- Review of the NPWS site synopses and Conservation Objectives for European sites within the zone(s) of influence for which potential pathways from the subject development area have been identified; and
- Examination of available data on protected species' and habitats' distribution, trends and abundances – where relevant.

[1] Qualifying interest or special conservation interests of the European site in question and the known sensitivities of these key ecological receptors

[2] *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021.*

[3] CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

[4] Available at: https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/

[5] Available at: https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites and https://dahg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8f7060450de3485fa1c1085536d477ba

[6] Available at: https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/

2. Description of subject development

2.1. Receiving environment overview

The proposed development site itself is composed of a mosaic of bare ground, overgrown herbaceous plants, rank grassland, and artificial surfaces and is surrounded by buildings and artificial surfaces, with small areas of amenity grassland (Figure 2.1).

The proposed development is located in Lamagh, Newtownforbes, adjacent to the N4 motorway and south east of the centre of Newtownforbes town (Figure 2.1). An ecological site visit was conducted on the 14th of February 2024, and the proposed site is composed of a mix of rank grassland, scrub overgrowth, and artificial surfaces comprising of a disused residential building and two associated outbuildings (see photos in Appendix VI).

In the wider context, the proposed development site is situated within a suburban area of Newtownforbes town (Figure 2.1). There are a number of residential areas and developments immediately surrounding the proposed development area with agricultural areas to the east and south west. There is also a forested area located approximately 1 km to the north west of the proposed development area.

In examining satellite imagery and the EPA databases on water courses[7], there are no surface water courses directly connected with or adjacent to the proposed development site; and at its closest point the nearest water course, Lisnabo watercourse, is approximately 1.58 km to the south of the proposed development (Figure 2.2 Location of EPA surface watercourses in the vicinity of the proposed development site
)[7].

2.2. Development description

The proposed development involves the construction of 6 residential units for the local area, and all associated site works, the main proposed construction works elements include the following:

- Demolition of existing structures
- 2 No. 2 bedroom single storey houses total floor areas of 69 m² each
- 4 No. 2 bedroom two storey houses with total floor area of 78 m² each.
- Boundary Walls and fences
- New footpaths
- Carparking at houses
- Landscaping
- Connections to existing services

The proposed redline development area is approximately 1,450 sqm (0.145 ha).

[7] Accessed at: https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/ 14th February 2024

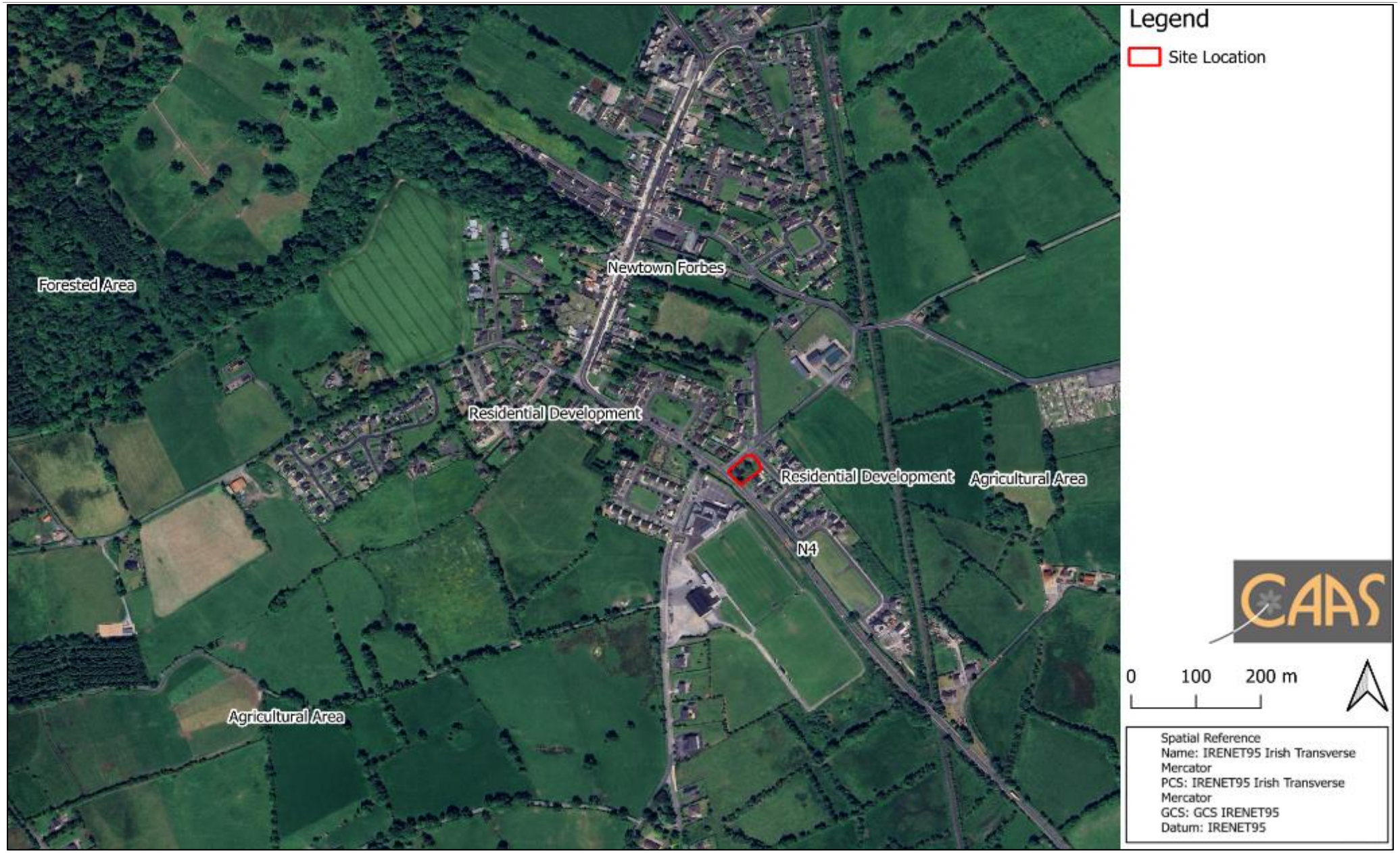


Figure 2.1 Site location

Figure 2.2 Location of EPA surface watercourses in the vicinity of the proposed development site

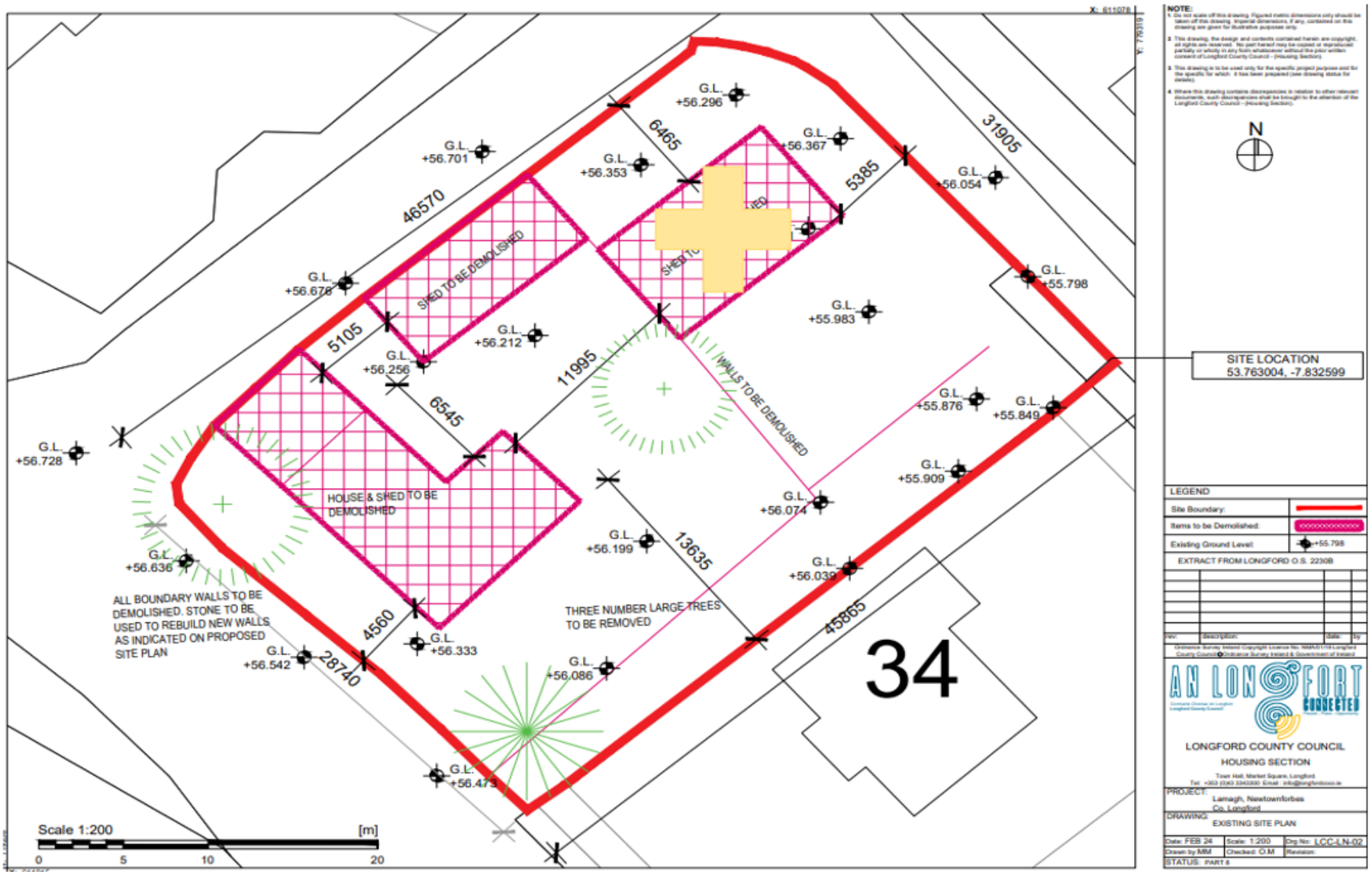


Figure 2.3 Demolition plan for the proposed site[8]

[8] Note: building marked with yellow X was demolished previous to this report being compiled (see also Photo 4, Appendix VI of Feb 24 ecological site visit, which shows no existing building in this part of the site)

Figure 2.4 Plan of proposed development

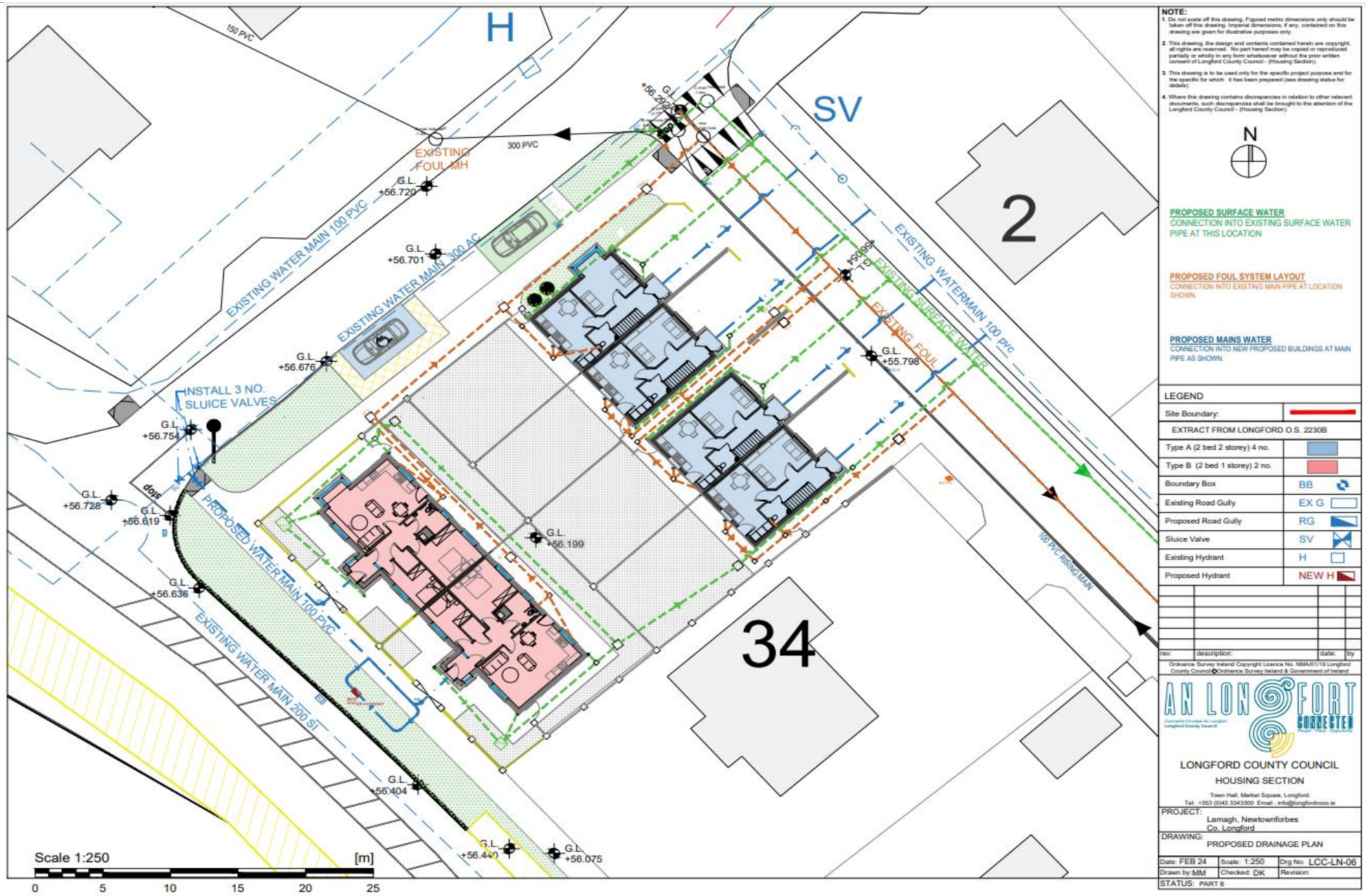


Figure 2.5 Surface and foul water drainage plan for the proposed development

3. Screening for Appropriate Assessment

3.1. Introduction

This stage of the process identifies any likely significant effects on European sites arising from the project, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. A series of questions are asked in order to determine:

- Whether the project can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site.
- Whether the project will have a potentially significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, in view of the site's conservation objectives or if residual uncertainty exists regarding potential impacts.

An important element of the AA process is the identification of the "'Conservation Objectives", "Qualifying Interests" (QIs) and/or "Special Conservation Interests" (SCIs) of European sites requiring assessment. Qis are the habitat features and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive for which each Special Area of Conservation (SAC) has been designated and afforded protection under the Habitats Directive. SCIs are bird species listed within Annexes I and II of the Birds Directive for which each Special Protection Area (SPA) has been designated and afforded protection under the Habitats Directive. Under the requirements of the Habitats Directive, the threats and pressures on the ecological / environmental conditions that are required to support QIs and SCIs, with specific regard to the COs of each site, are considered as part of the assessment.

Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) have been designed to define favourable conservation status for a particular habitat or species at that site. According to the European Commission interpretation document 'Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC', paragraph 4.6(3):
"The integrity of a site involves its ecological functions. The decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on and be limited to the site's conservation objectives."

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing;
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future; and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future; and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

3.2. Identification of relevant European sites

The subject development (ref s 2) involves hydrological, hydrogeological and disturbance interactions with the surrounding landscape. As such, considerations were given to hydrological and hydrogeological pathways (i.e., surface and/or groundwater) connecting the development site to European sites. As described in s2.2, there are hydrological and hydrogeological pathways leading from the subject development to the River Nore, which is designated as part of both the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and the River Nore SPA. The River Nore lies approximately 1 km directly west of the subject site (Figure 2.2) and runs into the Celtic Sea at the border of Counties Waterford and Wexford.

European sites that are designated for SCI species that are known to utilise isolated / ex-situ resources across the landscape (i.e., for foraging and or roosting outside of the designated SPA boundary), and thus could interact with the subject development are considered in this context during the assessment report. Noise disturbance can also be a factor for many developments and this is considered within this assessment report.

These factors are considered in the context of the subject development and a Zone of Influence is established for each source, pathway and receptor as necessary in the context of the relevant European sites.

3.2.1. Zone of Influence

Considering the receiving environment of the proposed development site (as described in s2.1), the small scale nature of the proposed development (as described in s2.2), the characteristics of the surrounding area (Figure 2.1) of a suburban landscape, and connectivity with the surrounding landscape (Figure 2.2) i.e., lack of direct hydrologically connectivity to any European sites or sensitive supporting features for European habitats or species; a ZoI for potential effects is estimated to be contained within 1 km of the proposed development for construction related noise and dust.

European sites that that have been identified to have such ecological connectivity pathways (e.g., hydrological, hydrogeological or disturbance related) with the subject development are listed and analysed in Table 3.1.

3.3. Assessment criteria

3.3.1. Is the development necessary to the management of European sites?

Under the Habitats Directive, projects that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site do not require AA. For this exception to apply, management is required to be interpreted narrowly as nature conservation management in the sense of Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive. This refers to specific measures to address the ecological requirements of annexed habitats and species (and their habitats) present on a site(s). The relationship should be shown to be direct and not a by-product of the project, even if this might result in positive or beneficial effects for a site(s).

The primary purpose of the subject development is not the nature conservation management of the site, but to extract sand, gravel and rock. Therefore, in the context of the Habitats Directive, the development would not be considered by the Habitats Directive to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of European designated sites.

3.4. Characterising potential significant effects

In order to determine the potential effects of the development, information on the qualifying features, known vulnerabilities and threats pertaining to any potentially affected European sites has been reviewed. Background information on threats to individual sites and vulnerability of habitats and species that was used during this assessment included the following:

- Ireland's Article 17 Report to the European Commission *"Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland"* (NPWS, 2019);
- Ireland's Article 12 Report to the European Commission *"Bird species' status and trends reporting format for the period 2008-2012-"* (NPWS, 2012)
- Site Synopses[9]; and
- NATURA 2000 Standard Data Forms[13].

The terminology used for characterisation of potential effects[10] in this AASR is as follows: -

- **Direct and Indirect Impacts** - An impact can be caused either as a direct or as an indirect consequence of a Plan/Project.
- **Magnitude** - Magnitude measures the size of an impact, which is described as high, medium, low, very low or negligible.
- **Extent** - The area over that the impact occurs – this should be predicted in a quantified manner.
- **Duration** - The time that the effect is expected to last prior to recovery or replacement of the resource or feature.
  - Temporary: Up to 1 Year;

[9] NPWS (2019); NPWS Database of protected site data and associated documents for each European site; available at https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites: last accessed 17th April 2024

[10] Parameters used have been adapted from the following guidance documents on the conduction Appropriate Assessments and Ecological Impact Assessments:

- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities
- CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester; and,

- Short Term: The effects would take 1-7 years to be mitigated;
- Medium Term: The effects would take 7-15 years to be mitigated;
- Long Term: The effects would take 15-60 years to be mitigated; and
- Permanent: The effects would take 60 or more years to be mitigated.

- **Likelihood** – The probability of the effect occurring taking into account all available information.
  - Certain/Near Certain: >95% chance of occurring as predicted;
  - Probable: 50-95% chance as occurring as predicted;
  - Unlikely: 5-50% chance as occurring as predicted; and
  - Extremely Unlikely: <5% chance as occurring as predicted.

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines for ecological impact assessment (2016) define: an ecologically significant impact as an impact (negative or positive) on the integrity of a defined site or ecosystem and/or the conservation status of habitats or species within a given geographic area; and the integrity of a site as the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified.

The Habitats Directive requires the focus of the assessment at this screening stage to be on the integrity of the site as indicated by its Conservation Objectives. It is an aim of NPWS to draw up conservation management plans for all areas designated for nature conservation. These plans will, among other things, set clear objectives for the conservation of the features of interest within a site.

Detailed SSCOs have been prepared for a number of European sites. These detailed SSCOs aim to define favourable conservation condition for the qualifying habitats and species at that site by setting targets for appropriate attributes which define the character habitat. The maintenance of the favourable condition for these habitats and species at the site level will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

> **Favourable conservation status** of a **species** can be described as being achieved when: '*population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced or likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.*'
>
> **Favourable conservation status** of a **habitat** can be described as being achieved when: '*its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing, and the ecological factors that are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable*'.

Where detailed SSCOs have not been prepared for any European site, the below **First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives** apply:

European site type	First Order Site-specific Conservation Objective[11]
SAC	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected
SPA	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for the SPA

3.5. Identification of potential significant effects of the subject development

This part of the screening assessment process identifies whether the changes brought about by the subject development may have sources with pathways for introducing direct, indirect or secondary potential effects (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European sites considered in this report, in the absence of any controls, conditions, or mitigation measures (as required for an AASR).

The overall aim of the AASR is to examine the potential effects that can be reasonably foreseen to have a likelihood of causing potential significant effects on European sites as a result of the subject development, in the context of their SSCOs and the threaths and pressures on their QIs and SCIs.

The construction and operational phase elements of the proposed development with potential to introduce sources for effects on ecological processes are identified below. These will be discussed and considered for a likelihood of significant effects in view of the Special Conservation Interests, and Qualifying Interests of the European sites, and their sensitivities, and Qualifying Interests. Subsequently the potential effects with sources and pathways identified to have a likelihood for potential significant effects on European sites (if any) will be summarised.

The analysis in Table 3.1 below considers potential for effects on the SSCOs of each of the sites within the identified zones of influence (as identified in s 3.2.1). As the SSCOs focus on maintaining the favourable conservation condition of the QIs/SCIs of each site, the screening process concentrates on assessing the potential effects of the subject development against the QIs/SCIs of each site and their SSCOs.

3.5.1. Demolition phase potential effects

The demolition phase will involve the removal of 1No. disused residential building, and two outbuildings: 1No. shed attached to the disused residential building, and a separate stone outbuilding. The disused residential building and stone outbuilding could present potential habitat for Lesser Horseshoe (LHS) bats (see Photo 2 and Photo 4 in Appendix VI). However, consultations carried out with the NPWS and Bat Conservation Ireland (Appendix V) showed no likelihood of LHS bats utilising these buildings for roosting purposes due to the significant distances between the proposed site and the closest LHS roost. Therefore, sources for potential effects from the construction phase of the proposed development have been identified as:

[11] NPWS Conservation Management Planning website, accessed May 2024

- Disturbance effects through noise;
- Dust.

Disturbance effects through noise

SCI species of SPAs are sensitive to disturbance effects; in general distances beyond 2 km are seen to be sufficient to preclude such effects[12,13]. These distances can vary due to factors such as species and/or time of year[14,15]. While the closest SPA, Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA, is approximately 1.09 km away from the proposed development, there is likely to be an already existing degree of habituation from the SCI species of the SPA, considering the current noise levels of the surrounding area of the proposed development. Therefore, considering this and the nature and scale of the proposed development, there will be no sources for potential significant effects on the SCI of this SPA. Regarding ex-situ foraging, although there is no potential foraging habitat with in the proposed site itself, there is potential foraging habitat in the agricultural grasslands in the surrounding area of the proposed development. However, considering that the noise disturbance during the construction phase will be temporary (i.e., less than one year), the existing disturbed nature of the site within a suburban area, and the small scale of the proposed development, the demolition phase of the proposed development does not have potential for effects for disturbance through noise to ex-situ foraging SCI species. Therefore, it is deemed there are no sources that have pathways for likely significant effects via noise disturbance during the demolition phase of the proposed development.

Dust

There will be an increase in dust emissions during the demolition phase of the proposed development. However, given the distances between the proposed development site and the closest European sites of 1.09 km; the small scale of the proposed development; the operational phase in keeping with the highly developed suburban local environment character and use; and, the temporary nature of the construction phase, it is deemed that there are no sources with pathways for likely significant effects via demolition related dust as a result of the proposed development.

3.5.2. Construction phase potential effects

The construction phase will be localized, small-scale, and temporary. There will be an increase in hard surface area during the construction phase, as a result of the proposed development. New wastewater and surface water drainage infrastructure will be installed on site as part of the proposed development and will connect to existing drainage infrastructure (Figure 2.4) and associated works for construction of the proposed new residential buildings. Sources for potential effects from the construction phase of the proposed development have been identified as:

[12] Rudock, M. and Whitfield, D.P., 2007. A review of disturbance distances in selected bird species. A report from Natural Research (Projects) Ltd to Scottish Natural Heritage, 181.

[13] Bright, J.A., Langston, R. and Anthony, S., 2009. Mapped and written guidance in relation to birds and onshore wind energy development in England. Sandy: RSPB.

[14] Bötsch, Y., Tablado, Z. and Jenni, L., 2017. Experimental evidence of human recreational disturbance effects on bird-territory establishment. Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, 284(1858), p.20170846.

[15] Goss-Custard, J.D., Hoppe, C.H., Hood, M.J. and Stillman, R.A., 2020. Disturbance does not have a significant impact on waders in an estuary close to conurbations: importance of overlap between birds and people in time and space. Ibis, 162(3), pp.845-862.

- Disturbance effects through noise;
- Surface run-off; and,
- Dust.

Disturbance effects through noise

SCI species of SPAs are sensitive to disturbance effects; in general distances beyond 2 km are seen to be sufficient to preclude such effects[16,17]. These distances can vary due to factors such as species and/or time of year[18,19]. While the closest SPA, Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA, is approximately 1.09 km away from the proposed development, there is likely to be an already existing degree of habituation from the SCI species of the SPA, considering the current noise levels of the surrounding area of the proposed development. Therefore, considering this and the nature and scale of the proposed development, there will be no sources for potential significant effects on the SCI of this SPA. Regarding ex-situ foraging, although there is no potential foraging habitat with in the proposed site itself, there is potential foraging habitat in the agricultural grasslands in the surrounding area of the proposed development. However, considering that the noise disturbance during the construction phase will be temporary (i.e., less than one year), the existing disturbed nature of the site within a suburban area, and the small scale of the proposed development, the construction phase of the proposed development does not have potential for effects for disturbance through noise to ex-situ foraging SCI species. Therefore, it is deemed there are no sources that have pathways for likely significant effects via noise disturbance during the construction phase of the proposed development.

Surface run-off

The proposed development involves the construction of 6 residential units, which will include hard surface area (1,034 sqm) and permeable surface area (569 sqm). This could present a source for potential effects on water quality via surface run off during the construction phase via underground suburban drainage.

However, considering the small scale (1,450 sqm) and short duration of the proposed development's construction phase; the lack of any direct hydrological connectivity; and, the distance to European sites via underground suburban drainage, surface run-off via surface drainage does not present a source for likely significant effects on European sites

Dust

There will be an increase in dust emissions during the construction phase of the proposed development. However, given the distances between the proposed development site and the closest European sites of 1.09 km; the small scale of the proposed development; the operational phase in keeping with the highly developed suburban local environment character and use; and, the temporary nature of the construction phase, it is deemed that there are no sources with pathways for likely significant effects via construction related dust as a result of the proposed development.

[16] Rudock, M. and Whitfield, D.P., 2007. A review of disturbance distances in selected bird species. A report from Natural Research (Projects) Ltd to Scottish Natural Heritage, 181.

[17] Bright, J.A., Langston, R. and Anthony, S., 2009. Mapped and written guidance in relation to birds and onshore wind energy development in England. Sandy: RSPB.

[18] Bötsch, Y., Tablado, Z. and Jenni, L., 2017. Experimental evidence of human recreational disturbance effects on bird-territory establishment. Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, 284(1858), p.20170846.

[19] Goss-Custard, J.D., Hoppe, C.H., Hood, M.J. and Stillman, R.A., 2020. Disturbance does not have a significant impact on waders in an estuary close to conurbations: importance of overlap between birds and people in time and space. Ibis, 162(3), pp.845-862.

3.5.3. Operational phase potential effects

The operational phase effects will be localised, small-scale and permanent. The proposed site is 1.09 km from the closest European site, and has no direct hydrological connection to any European site. The site is composed of habitat the is unsuitable for ex-situ foraging species (i.e., a combination of hard artificial surfaces and residential amenity grassland). Thus, there will be no loss of habitat that neither supports, nor is ecologically connected to, any European sites in the operational phase as a result of the proposed development.

There will be an overall increase of hard surface area, to 1,034 sqm from 524 sqm, as a result of the proposed development, which is not anticipated to result in a significant increase of surface water run-off. In addition, surface water drainage during the operational phase will be connected to existing infrastructure via new surface water drainage infrastructure installed within the proposed development area (Figure 2.5). There will also be the installation of a proposed oil separators as part of the surface run-off management in the operational phase, which are best practice measures installed regardless of European sites and thus not intended to address potential effects[20]. In addition, the proposed development does not have any direct hydrological connection to any European site, and is over 1 km from any groundwater sensitive European site, which is a sufficient distance to ensure that there are no sources for potential significant effects in the context of the nature and scale of the proposed development. Thus, considering the above, the proposed development does not present any sources for likely significant effects due to surface water run-off / drainage in the operational phase.

New wastewater and surface water drainage infrastructure will be installed on site as part of the proposed development and will connect to existing drainage infrastructure (Figure 2.4). The existing wastewater drainage connects to the Newtownforbes WWTP and confirmation on capacity of the local WWTP to accommodate the estimated usage of 22 individuals in the operational phase has been applied for from Uisce Éireann. Therefore, considering the above, the proposed development does not present any sources for likely significant effects via surface or wastewater drainage in the operational phase[21].

3.5.4. Summary of likely significant effects

Therefore, in summary, for the purposes of this assessment report of the proposed development, and considering the precautionary principle[22], the proposed development is identified as having no sources with pathways for likely significant effects arising from the demolition, construction or operational phases of the proposed development.

The identified potential effects above are also considered and discussed in section 3.6 and Table 3.1 below, in the context of each of the European sites identified by this assessment report, in view of each of their site sensitivities, Qualifying Interests, Special Conservation Interests, and Conservation Objectives.

[20] Case law: Eco Advocacy v An Bord Pleanála (Case C-721/21)

[21] This statement is contingent on the confirmation from Uisce Eireann being provided.

[22] Case law: (C127/02 Waddenzee).

3.5.5. Other types of potential effects

EC guidance[23] outlines the types of effects that may affect European sites. These include effects from the following activities:

- Land take
- Resource requirements (drinking water abstraction etc.)
- Emissions (disposal to land, water or air)
- Excavation requirements (removal of soil and vegetation)
- Transportation requirements
- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning

The 2001 European Commission AA guidance outlines the following potential changes that may occur at a designated site, which may result in effects on the Conservation Objectives of that site:

- Reduction of habitat area
- Disturbance to key species
- Habitat or species fragmentation
- Reduction in species density
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.)
- Climate change

These activities and changes are considered in Table 3.1 below for relevant European sites.

Loss/reduction of habitat area

There are no European sites present within the proposed development boundary (the closest European site to the proposed development site is, Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101) at 1.09 km from the proposed development site). No Annex I habitats or supporting habitat for Annex II species were identified within the proposed development boundary[24]. There are also no sources for potential significant effects on European sites via direct hydrological connectivity via surface water courses as a result of the proposed development due to lack of hydrological connectivity (S2.1 and Figure 2.2 Location of EPA surface watercourses in the vicinity of the proposed development site). Therefore, there are no sources with a likelihood for potential significant effects posed to European sites in this regard.

Habitat or species fragmentation

The proposed development site itself is composed of artificial surfaces and amenity grassland and is surrounded by buildings and artificial surfaces, with large areas of agricultural grassland in the surrounding area (Figure 2.1). Overall, the proposed development site has little to no ecological value for foraging SCI species due to high disturbance levels and the proposed site's location in a suburban setting. The proposed site also has no direct hydrological connectivity to any European sites. Therefore, there are no sources with a likelihood for potential significant effects posed to European sites in this regard.

Disturbance to key species

[23] 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, European Commission Environment DG, 2001

[24] Consulting current data sets for the proposed development location supplied by the NPWS (https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data) and the NBDC (https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/)

There will be a minor, short-term increase in noise and dust levels during the construction phase, but these will be negligible in terms of potential significant effects on European sites due to the small-scale and temporary duration of the construction phase, and the distance to European sites (the closest being the Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101) at 1.09 km in distance). SCI species are sensitive to disturbance effects; in general distances beyond 2 km are seen to be sufficient to preclude such effects[25,26]. Considering that there is already a likely existing degree of habituation from the SCI species of this SPA to existing noise levels from the surrounding area of the proposed development and given the nature and scale of the proposed development, there is no likelihood of significant disturbance effects through noise in the construction phase. The operational phase of the proposed development will not result in any significant increase in noise levels for the location and surrounding area due to the small-scale and nature of the proposed development, and the disturbed nature of the surrounding suburban environment of the proposed development site.

There are no sources for indirect disturbance to SCI species from surrounding SPAs in terms of ex-situ foraging, due to the disturbed suburban nature of the surrounding area of the proposed development. In addition, noise disturbance during the construction phase of the proposed development will be temporary (i.e., less than one year), small in scale, and localised, and will occur within an area that has consistent levels of disturbance common to suburban environments. The proposed development also has no direct surface hydrological connective to European sites (Figure 2.2 Location of EPA surface watercourses in the vicinity of the proposed development site) and also lacks any sources for potential effect via surface water drainage via underground suburban drainage due to the size and nature of the proposed development, and the distances to European sites. Therefore, there are no sources with a likelihood for potential significant effects posed to European sites in this regard also.

Reduction in species density

The construction phase effects will also be small scale and temporary, and the operational phase effects will be in keeping with the current nature of the surrounding area. There will be no permanent loss of connecting or contributing habitat for European sites as a result of the proposed development as no Annex I habitats or supporting habitat for Annex II species were identified within the proposed development boundary[27]. There will also be no direct loss of SAC or SPA habitat as a result of the proposed development as the closest European site to the proposed development site is the Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101) at 1.09 km from the proposed development site. In addition, there is no direct surface hydrological connection between the proposed development site and any European site. The receiving environment of the proposed development site also has little to no ecological value for ex-situ foraging SCI species due to the disturbance levels of the surrounding area.

Regarding hydrological connectivity, the closest water course[28] is located approximately 1.58 km to the south of the proposed development, and has no direct surface connectivity to the proposed

[25] Rudock, M. and Whitfield, D.P., 2007. A review of disturbance distances in selected bird species. A report from Natural Research (Projects) Ltd to Scottish Natural Heritage, 181.

[26] Bright, J.A., Langston, R. and Anthony, S., 2009. Mapped and written guidance in relation to birds and onshore wind energy development in England. Sandy: RSPB.

[27] Consulting current data sets for the proposed development location supplied by the NPWS (https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data) and the NBDC (https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/)

[28] Accessed at: https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/ 14th February 2024

development site. Therefore, there is no direct surface hydrological connection between the proposed development and this, or any, surface water course. There will be an increase of hard surfaced area to 1,034 sqm from 524 sqm. However, any change to surface water run-off introduced via this increase of hard surface are will be negligible considering that approximately 569 sqm of permeable and soft surface area that will remain and be installed, as best practice measures as part of the operational phase[29], and considering the distance to the nearest watercourse. Therefore, there will be no significant increase of surface water run-off as a result of the proposed development. New wastewater and surface water drainage infrastructure will be installed as part of the proposed development which will allow for wastewater and surface water to be connected to existing drainage infrastructure (Figure 2.4). The existing wastewater drainage connects to the Newtownforbes WWTP. Therefore, there are no sources with a likelihood for significant effects posed to European sites with regard to reduction in species density.

Changes of indicators of conservation value

Water quality is an important indicator for the Conservation Objectives of many European sites. There is no direct surface hydrological connection between the proposed development and any surface water courses. There is indirect connectivity to the surrounding landscape via surface water drainage; however, any change introduced to surface water run-off as a result of the proposed development will be negligible due to the distance to European sites and the closest surface hydrological connection is 1.58 km from the proposed site. The construction phase effects will also be small in scale and temporary in duration. In addition, a portion (569 sqm) of the proposed development in the operational phase will be covered by grass areas or permeable surfaces. New wastewater and surface water drainage infrastructure will be installed as part of the proposed development which will allow for wastewater and surface water to be connected to existing drainage infrastructure (Figure 2.4). The existing wastewater drainage connects to the Newtownforbes WWTP and confirmation on capacity of the local WWTP to accommodate the estimated usage of 22 individuals in the operational phase has been applied for from Uisce Éireann. Therefore, there are no sources with pathways for likely significant effects that may affect conservation indicators of European sites, such as water quality.

Climate change

The proposed development will result in a slight increase in greenhouse gas emissions during the construction phase, which will be localised and temporary. There will be a minor increase in emissions from the operational phase resulting from increase in heating and vehicular use for such developments. However, considering the small nature of the proposed development, and the existing use and environment of the proposed site within the built environment of a small town, these increases are deemed to be negligible.

Given the small scale and temporary timeline of the proposed development's construction phase, and the small scale of the operational phase, the emissions from the implementation of the proposed development are determined to be of such a minor scale that they will not affect changes projected to arise from climate change to the degree that it would affect the QIs or SCIs of the European sites considered.

[29] Case law: Eco Advocacy v An Bord Pleanála (Case C-721/21)

3.6. Screening of European sites

This section of the report concerns the final stage of the screening process. Information has been collected and is presented on the sensitivity of each relevant European site (ref 3.2), and potential effects on each European site resulting from the subject development have been identified (in s3.5 which assumed the absence of any controls, conditions, or mitigation measures, as required in AA screening). In determining the likelihood for significant effects on European sites as a result of the subject development, a number of factors have been taken into account. First the sensitivity and reported threats to European sites and second, the individual elements of the subject development and the potential significant effects they may cause on the sites, were considered. These factors are analysed per European site considered, in view of each of their sensitivities (i.e., threats and pressures), and their Conservation Objectives, and presented in Table 3.1.

Sites are screened out based on one or a combination of the following criteria:

- where it can be shown that there are no significant pathways such as hydrological links between activities of the subject development and a site;
- where a site is located at such a distance from subject development area that effects are not foreseen; and
- where known threats or vulnerabilities of a site cannot be linked to potential impacts that may arise from the subject development.

Table 3.1 Screening assessment of the likelihood for significant effects arising from the subject development

Site code	Site name	Distance (km)	Qualifying feature[30]	Analysis for potential effects	Likelihood of significant effects	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
004101	Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA	1.09	Greenland White-fronted Goose *(Anser albifrons flavirostris)* [A395]	Considering the Special Conservation Interest and known sensitivities of this European site (detailed in Appendix I of this AASR) in the context of the potential effects identified in S3.5, this SPA is sensitive to hydrological interactions, direct land use management activities and disturbance effects. The site is 1.09km from the proposed development. There are no sources for effect for direct land use management to the SPA as this site is outside of the proposed development boundary. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development, the absence of any direct surface hydrological pathways, and the lack of any sources for potential effects via indirect hydrological pathways (i.e., suburban drainage), there are no sources for effects via direct or indirect surface hydrological interactions. SCI species are sensitive to noise disturbance effects; in general distances beyond 2km are seen to be sufficient to preclude such effects[31,32]. These distances can vary due to factors such as species and/or time of year[33,34]. As there is already a likely degree of habituation exhibited by the SCI species of the SPA due to existing noise levels of the surrounding area and considering the nature and small scale of the proposed development, there are no pathways for disturbance effects identified in this regard. Considering the SCIs of this SPA, and given the nature of the proposed development and the distances involved; there are no sources with a likelihood for potential significant effects, and no further assessment is required.	No	No
001818	Lough Forbes Complex	1.11	Active raised bogs [7110], Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or	Considering the Qualifying Interests and known sensitivities of this European site (detailed in Appendix I of this AASR) in the context of the potential effects identified in S3.5, this SAC is sensitive to direct land use management activities and hydrological and	No	No

[30] Qualifying feature is used here to encompass both Special Conservation Interests of SPAs and Qualifying Interests of SACs

[31] Ruddock, M. and Whitfield, D.P., 2007. A review of disturbance distances in selected bird species. A report from Natural Research (Projects) Ltd to Scottish Natural Heritage, 181.

[32] Bright, J.A., Langston, R. and Anthony, S., 2009. Mapped and written guidance in relation to birds and onshore wind energy development in England. Sandy: RSPB.

[33] Bötsch, Y., Tablado, Z. and Jenni, L., 2017. Experimental evidence of human recreational disturbance effects on bird-territory establishment. Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, 284(1858), p.20170846.

[34] Goss-Custard, J.D., Hoppe, C.H., Hood, M.J. and Stillman, R.A., 2020. Disturbance does not have a significant impact on waders in an estuary close to conurbations: importance of overlap between birds and people in time and space. Ibis, 162(3), pp.845

Site code	Site name	Distance (km)	Qualifying feature[30]	Analysis for potential effects	Likelihood of significant effects	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
	SAC		Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150], Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150], Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior *(Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)* [91E0], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	groundwater interactions. The site is 1.11km from the proposed development. There are no sources for effect for direct land use management to the SAC as this site is outside of the proposed development boundary. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development, the absence of any direct surface hydrological pathways, and the lack of any sources for potential effects via indirect hydrological pathways (i.e., suburban drainage), there are no sources for effects via direct or indirect surface hydrological interactions. In addition, due to the nature and size of the proposed development, there are no sources with pathways identified for likely significant effect via groundwater interactions with this European site. Considering the QIs of this SAC, and given the nature of the proposed development and the distances involved; there are no sources with a likelihood for potential significant effects, and no further assessment is required.		
002346	Brown Bog SAC	3.22	Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150], Active raised bogs [7110], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	Considering the Qualifying Interests and known sensitivities of this European site (detailed in Appendix I of this AASR) in the context of the potential effects identified in S3.5, this SAC is sensitive to direct land use management activities and hydrological and groundwater interactions. The site is 3.22km from the proposed development. There are no sources for effect for direct land use management to the SAC as this site is outside of the proposed development boundary. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development, the absence of any direct surface hydrological pathways, and the lack of any sources for potential effects via indirect hydrological pathways (i.e., suburban drainage), there are no sources for effects via direct or indirect surface hydrological interactions. In addition, due to the nature and size of the proposed development, there are no sources with pathways identified for likely significant effect via groundwater interactions with this European site. Considering the QIs of this SAC, and given the nature of the proposed development and the distances involved; there are no sources with a likelihood for potential significant effects, and no further assessment is required.	No	No

Site code	Site name	Distance (km)	Qualifying feature[30]	Analysis for potential effects	Likelihood of significant effects	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
002348	Clooneen Bog SAC	4.99	Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150], Active raised bogs [7110], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Bog woodland [91D0]	Considering the Qualifying Interests and known sensitivities of this European site (detailed in Appendix I of this AASR) in the context of the potential effects identified in S3.5, this SAC is sensitive to direct land use management activities and hydrological and groundwater interactions. The site is 4.99km from the proposed development. There are no sources for effect for direct land use management to the SAC as this site is outside of the proposed development boundary. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development, the absence of any direct surface hydrological pathways, and the lack of any sources for potential effects via indirect hydrological pathways (i.e., suburban drainage), there are no sources for effects via direct or indirect surface hydrological interactions. In addition, due to the nature and size of the proposed development, there are no sources with pathways identified for likely significant effect via groundwater interactions with this European site. Considering the QIs of this SAC, and given the nature of the proposed development and the distances involved; there are no sources with a likelihood for potential significant effects, and no further assessment is required.	No	No
002202	Mount Jessop Bog SAC	8.95	Bog woodland [91D0], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	Considering the Qualifying Interests and known sensitivities of this European site (detailed in Appendix I of this AASR) in the context of the potential effects identified in S3.5, this SAC is sensitive to direct land use management activities and hydrological and groundwater interactions. The site is 8.95km from the proposed development. There are no sources for effect for direct land use management to the SAC as this site is outside of the proposed development boundary. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development, the absence of any direct surface hydrological pathways, and the lack of any sources for potential effects via indirect hydrological pathways (i.e., suburban drainage), there are no sources for effects via direct or indirect surface hydrological interactions. In addition, due to the nature and size of the proposed development, there are no sources with pathways identified for likely significant effect via groundwater interactions with this European site. Considering the QIs of this SAC, and given the nature of the proposed development and	No	No

Site code	Site name	Distance (km)	Qualifying feature[30]	Analysis for potential effects	Likelihood of significant effects	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
				the distances involved; there are no sources with a likelihood for potential significant effects, and no further assessment is required.		
000440	Lough Ree SAC	14.45	Limestone pavements [8240], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Otter *(Lutra lutra)* [1355], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *(Festuco-Brometalia)* * important orchid sites [6210], Active raised bogs [7110], Alkaline fens [7230], Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior *(Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)* [91E0], Bog woodland [91D0], Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150]	Considering the Qualifying Interests and known sensitivities of this European site (detailed in Appendix I of this AASR) in the context of the potential effects identified in S3.5, this SAC is sensitive to direct land use management activities and hydrological and groundwater interactions. The site is 14.45km from the proposed development. There are no sources for effect for direct land use management to the SAC as this site is outside of the proposed development boundary. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development, the absence of any direct surface hydrological pathways, and the lack of any sources for potential effects via indirect hydrological pathways (i.e., suburban drainage), there are no sources for effects via direct or indirect surface hydrological interactions. In addition, due to the nature and size of the proposed development, there are no sources with pathways identified for likely significant effect via groundwater interactions with this European site. Considering the QIs of this SAC, and given the nature of the proposed development and the distances involved; there are no sources with a likelihood for potential significant effects, and no further assessment is required.	No	No
004064	Lough Ree SPA	14.45	Tufted Duck *(Aythya fuligula)* [A061], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Common Scoter *(Melanitta nigra)* [A065], Common tern *(Sterna hirundo)* [A193], Coot *(Fulica atra)* [A125], Golden Plover *(Pluvialis apricaria)* [A140], Goldeneye *(Bucephala*	Considering the Special Conservation Interests and known sensitivities of this European site (detailed in Appendix I of this AASR) in the context of the potential effects identified in S3.5, this SPA is sensitive to hydrological interactions, direct land use management activities and disturbance effects. The site is 14.45km from the proposed development. There are no sources for effect for direct land use management to the SPA as this site is outside of the proposed development boundary. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development, the absence of any direct	No	No

Site code	Site name	Distance (km)	Qualifying feature[30]	Analysis for potential effects	Likelihood of significant effects	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
			clangula) [A067], Lapwing *(Vanellus vanellus)* [A142], Little Grebe *(Tachybaptus ruficollis)* [A004], Mallard *(Anas platyrhynchos)* [A053], Shoveler *(Anas clypeata)* [A056], Teal *(Anas crecca)* [A052], Whooper Swan *(Cygnus cygnus)* [A038], Wigeon *(Anas penelope)* [A050]	surface hydrological pathways, and the lack of any sources for potential effects via indirect hydrological pathways (i.e., suburban drainage), there are no sources for effects via direct or indirect surface hydrological interactions. SCI species are sensitive to noise disturbance effects; in general distances beyond 2km are seen to be sufficient to preclude such effects[35,36]. These distances can vary due to factors such as species and/or time of year[37,38]. Given the distance between the proposed development area and the SPA there are no pathways for disturbance effects identified in this regard. Considering the SCIs of this SPA, and given the nature of the proposed development and the distances involved; there are no sources with a likelihood for potential significant effects, and no further assessment is required.		

[35] Ruddock, M. and Whitfield, D.P., 2007. A review of disturbance distances in selected bird species. A report from Natural Research (Projects) Ltd to Scottish Natural Heritage, 181.

[36] Bright, J.A., Langston, R. and Anthony, S., 2009. Mapped and written guidance in relation to birds and onshore wind energy development in England. Sandy: RSPB.

[37] Bötsch, Y., Tablado, Z. and Jenni, L., 2017. Experimental evidence of human recreational disturbance effects on bird-territory establishment. Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, 284(1858), p.20170846.

[38] Goss-Custard, J.D., Hoppe, C.H., Hood, M.J. and Stillman, R.A., 2020. Disturbance does not have a significant impact on waders in an estuary close to conurbations: importance of overlap between birds and people in time and space. Ibis, 162(3), pp.845

3.7. Other plans and projects

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that an assessment of a plan or project must consider other plans or projects that might, in combination with the plan or project, have potential significant effects on European sites.

Section 3.2 - receiving environment overview - identifies the overall characteristics of the area with respect to existing condition and general land use, and provides a discussion of and context on the receiving environment of the proposed development. In considerations of potential for in combination effects with respect to emerging or recent developments a search of the Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage planning database was undertaken to identify relevant plans and programmes which relate to the proposed development. All developments from the receiving area were considered; the area considered is defined by the authoring ecologist using criteria which depend on the characteristics of the proposed development and the associated sources (identified above); these criteria include:

- Having direct or indirect connectivity to a European site;
- Being in close proximity to a European site;
- Being of a substantial scale relative to the conditions and/or current works taking place in the surrounding landscape;
- Having disperse emissions or far-reaching sources for effects;
- Having sources for effects on ecological connectivity.

These factors are considered in the context of characteristics of the proposed development and on this basis a search radius of 500 m, within the last 5 years[39] was selected to be used to search for projects with applications to the local planning authority (i.e., Longford County Council) within the receiving environment. Applications made to An Bord Pleanála were also examined. The sources for effects from the proposed development are considered in combination with the potential sources for effects from the receiving environment for potential additive or interactive effects on the receiving environment.

Plans of relevance within the receiving environment or in-combination with effects arising from the proposed development:

- Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027

Considering the land use zoning of the above plan, and that the proposed development has a small-scale, temporary construction phase and the operational phase is consistent with the current site use, it is not foreseen that proposed development will have any likely significant in-combination effects with the above plans.

Projects considered for possible in-combination effects from the proposed development:
The proposed development is localised, with a small scale, temporary construction phase, and an operational phase that is consistent with the surrounding environment. Due to the scale and nature of the proposed development, there are no sources with a likelihood for significant effects identified

[39] Planning applications have a standard lifespan of 5 years as per Section 40 (3)(b) of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended; therefore, these are viewed to be the 'live' applications, all other projects are considered as part of the site other than refused and withdrawn applications, as these would not have any in-combination effects

as a result of the implementation of the proposed development. On this basis, the assessment guidance given in CIEEM, 2018 indicates that there is no need to consider cumulative effects. However, in taking a precautionary approach, relevant plans and projects have nonetheless been reviewed and assessed in-combination with the proposed development.

The results of the database search for applications to the local authority and An Bord Pleanála are presented in Table 3.2 and Table 3.3 respectively. There are a number of other proposed developments in the vicinity of the proposed development including works which are at planning stage or underway on various sites. The database search found that the majority of projects within the area are relating to the construction and alteration of residential structures, all of which undergo Appropriate Assessment where required.

The projects listed in Table 3.2 and Table 3.3 below are large to small in scale with Appropriate Assessment and/or EIA screening carried out if required. Therefore, given the nature and scale of the proposed development, and the lack of any sources with a likelihood for potential significant effects, there are no likely in-combination likely significant effects with the below projects or above plans, on any European site considered in this report.

Table 3.2 Local planning applications within the vicinity[40] of the proposed development

Project Details	Decision	Description	Distance from Proposed Development (m)	Status	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
Project Code: 21214 Grant Date: 2022-02-14 Project Area (sq m): 84259.40	Conditional	proposed construction of an Astro Turf Playing Pitch with goal posts & associated perimeter fencing & access gates, erection of lighting poles with lighting fixtures together with the proposed construction of a pedestrian walkway and all ancillary site works	38.19	Permission	This is a medium-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	No
Project Code: 2071 Grant Date: NA Project Area (sq m): 14507.20	Conditional	proposed demolition of existing public house formally known as Bohan's Bar & storage sheds/out-houses to the rear together with the proposed construction of a residential housing development of 14 no. dwelling houses consisting of 6 no. two bedroom bungalow type dwelling houses, 8 no. three bedroom two storey semi-detached type dwelling houses, entrance, internal access road, green open space, connection to the existing foul sewer, surface water & watermain networks servicing the village of Newtownforbes, and all ancillary works (COVID 19b)	142.72	Permission	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	No
Project Code:	Conditional	1) removal of two existing modular	12.12	Permission	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction	No

[40] Parameters used: planning application from within the last 5 years, within a radius of 200m around the proposed scheme boundary

Project Details	Decision	Description	Distance from Proposed Development (m)	Status	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
2054 Grant Date: 2020-07-14 Project Area (sq m): 8146.00		buildings to the southern side of the school 2) the relocation of 1 modular building from the south of the school to the play area at the North of the school for the duration of the construction works and the removal of the same modular building once construction of the proposed extension has been completed 3) the construction of a single storey extension consisting of 4 mainstream classrooms, an SET room and an assisted WC with associated circulation 4) construction of a rain canopy along the southern elevation of the existing school building 5) all siteworks associated with the aforementioned development COVID 19			phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	
Project Code: 2360206 Grant Date: 2024-04-09 Project Area (sq m): 5368.10	Conditional	proposed construction of two storey type dwelling, detached garage, proposed entrance & boundary wall/fence, relocation of agricultural entrance, connection to public foul and water connections and ancillary site works	481.72	Permission	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	No
Project Code: 19204	Conditional	proposed construction of a residential development of 8 no. dwelling houses consisting of 6 no.	338.23	Permission	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the	No

Project Details	Decision	Description	Distance from Proposed Development (m)	Status	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
Grant Date: NA Project Area (sq m): 5011.40		three bedroom two storey semi-detached type dwelling houses, 2 no. two bedroom single storey semi-detached type dwelling houses, entrances, access road, boundary fence/walls, green open space, demolition of existing detached domestic garage to the rear of the applicants existing dwelling house, proposed connections to the existing foul sewer, surface water & watermain networks servicing the village of Newtownforbes and all ancillary works			surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	
Project Code: 18253 Grant Date: 2019-02-26 Project Area (sq m): 2244.20	Conditional	proposed change of use of existing two storey type dwelling house from a residential dwelling house to a dentist practice together with adequate on site car parking and all ancillary works	128.23	Permission	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	No
Project Code: 22255 Grant Date: 2023-01-25 Project Area (sq m):	Conditional	to construct a two storey extension to the rear of an existing dwelling, internal and external alterations and all ancillary site works	365.69	Permission	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any	No

Project Details	Decision	Description	Distance from Proposed Development (m)	Status	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
1886.30					potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	
Project Code: 20252 Grant Date: 2021-08-16 Project Area (sq m): 865.90	Conditional	of domestic garage/store to the side of existing dwelling and all ancillary site works	495.04	Retention	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	No
Project Code: 2175 Grant Date: 2021-06-09 Project Area (sq m): 757.90	Conditional	to erect a domestic fuel storage shed, and all associated works	362.17	Permission	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	No
Project Code: 2356 Grant Date: 2023-06-12	Conditional	change of use of existing domestic storage/studio building to habitable living space and construction of a link corridor from said building to existing dwelling house, together with all	34.23	Permission	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment.	No

Project Details	Decision	Description	Distance from Proposed Development (m)	Status	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
Project Area (sq m): 688.60		associated site works.			Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	
Project Code: 19126 Grant Date: 2019-08-06 Project Area (sq m): 654.50	Conditional	Removal of existing hall extension including WC block to rear and construction of new rear extension, new internal layout and refurbishment, new detached storage block to rear, minor alterations to front façade and all associated works	329.29	Permission	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	No
Project Code: 2460072 Grant Date: NA Project Area (sq m): 654.50	N/A	is sought for alteration to previously approved reg ref 19/126 as Community Hub and Interpretative Centre. The revised development comprises: removal of rear extension block, new internal layout and refurbishment, construction of new rear extension to south as single storey, single block (292 sqm) including 100 sqm hall, kitchen areas, 2 No meeting rooms, welfare & storage facilities, minor alteration of fenestration to street elevation and all associated works	329.29	Permission	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	No

Project Details	Decision	Description	Distance from Proposed Development (m)	Status	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
Project Code: 2360112 Grant Date: 2023-11-08 Project Area (sq m): 523.90	Conditional	proposed construction of a two storey detached type dwelling house with garden shed, entrance, boundary fence/wall, proposed connections to the existing foul sewer, surface water & watermain networks servicing the existing estate and all ancillary site works	172.22	Permission	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	No
Project Code: 2133 Grant Date: 2021-07-20 Project Area (sq m): 452.70	Conditional	retention of existing partially constructed garage together seeking full planning permission to complete garage and construct an extension to same all of which is to be used for domestic purposes to service the applicants existing dwelling house and all ancillary works	377.63	Permission	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	No
Project Code: 19225 Grant Date: 2020-01-27 Project Area (sq m): 227.10	Conditional	proposed construction of a two storey extension to rear and side of existing two storey semi-detached type dwelling house and all ancillary works	151.23	Permission	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.	No

Project Details	Decision	Description	Distance from Proposed Development (m)	Status	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
					The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	
Project Code: 243 Grant Date: NA Project Area (sq m): 225.40	Unconditional	of 19/225 - proposed construction of a two storey extension to rear and side of existing two storey semi-detached type dwelling house and all ancillary works	151.30	Extension of duration	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	No
Project Code: 20226 Grant Date: 2021-01-04 Project Area (sq m): 68.90	Conditional	of the change of use from a Butcher's Shop to a Take-Away Restaurant/Food Outlet and all ancillary works	468.90	Retention	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	No

Table 3.3 An Bord Pleanála planning applications within the vicinity[41] of the proposed development

Case ID	Description	Decision	Date of decision	Distance from proposed development (m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
306923	Construction of 8 houses, demolition of existing detached domestic garage to the rear of the applicants existing house.	Grant permission with revised conditions	2020-09-18	338	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.	No

[41] Parameters used: planning application from within the last 5 years, within a radius of 200m around the proposed scheme boundary

4. Conclusion

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has considered potential effects which may arise during the construction and operational phases of the residential development at Lamagh, Newtownforbes. Through an assessment of the potential sources and potential pathways for significant effects; an evaluation of the project characteristics; taking account of the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated by this report, which intends to inform the competent authority on the Appropriate Assessment process, that there is no likelihood of potential significant effects occurring to the Qualifying Interests, Special Conservation Interests or The Conservation Objectives of any designated European site as a result of the implementation of the proposed development.

Given its small scale, temporary (i.e., under one year) of the construction period, the operational phase being in keeping with the context of the local environment setting, and the nature and context of the other plans and projects identified in this report; the proposed development is not foreseen to have any likelihood for potential significant in-combination effects arising from any other plans or projects.

It is concluded by this AA Screening Report that the proposed development is not foreseen to have any likelihood of significant effects on any European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects – and therefore any potential for significant effects on any European site as a result of the proposed development can be ruled out. This conclusion is made in view of the Conservation Objectives of the habitats or species for which these sites have been designated. Consequently, this report informs the competent authority undertaking the Appropriate Assessment process that the proposed development does not need to be subject to Stage Two Appropriate Assessment and a Natura Impact Statement is not required.

Appendix I Background information on European sites[42]

Site code	Site name	Qualifying feature	Pressure codes	Known threats and pressures
000440	Lough Ree SAC	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Otter *(Lutra lutra)* [1355], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *(Festuco-Brometalia)* * important orchid sites [6210], Limestone pavements [8240], Active raised bogs [7110], Alkaline fens [7230], Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior *(Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)* [91E0], Bog woodland [91D0], Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150]	E01.03, F02.03, A03.03, A04, A08, H02.06, H06.03, D03.01.02, G01.01, B02, G02.09, G01.02, L08, I01, J02.11.02, F03.01, H01.08, K03.05, J02.04	Dispersed habitation, leisure fishing, abandonment or lack of mowing , grazing, fertilisation, diffuse groundwater pollution due to agricultural and forestry activities, thermal heating of water bodies, piers or tourist harbours or recreational piers, nautical sports, forest and plantation management & use, wildlife watching, walking, horse-riding and non-motorised vehicles, inundation (natural processes), invasive non-native species, other siltation rate changes, hunting, diffuse pollution to surface waters due to household sewage and waste waters, antagonism arising from introduction of species, flooding modifications
001818	Lough Forbes Complex SAC	Active raised bogs [7110], Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150], Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150], Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior *(Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)* [91E0], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	A03.02, J02.07.02, F03.01, J02.15, I01, F02.03, H02.06, A03.03, A04.03, G02.09	Non-intensive mowing, groundwater abstractions for public water supply, hunting, other human induced changes in hydraulic conditions, invasive non-native species, leisure fishing, diffuse groundwater pollution due to agricultural and forestry activities, abandonment or lack of mowing, abandonment of pastoral systems lack of grazing, wildlife watching
002202	Mount Jessop Bog SAC	Bog woodland [91D0], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	I01, J01.01, I02, B02.02, J02.15	Invasive non-native species, burning down, problematic native species, forestry clearance, other human induced changes in hydraulic conditions
002346	Brown Bog SAC	Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150], Active raised bogs [7110], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	K01.03, J02.15, X	Drying out, other human induced changes in hydraulic conditions, no threats or pressures
002348	Clooneen Bog SAC	Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150], Active raised bogs [7110], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Bog woodland [91D0]	A03, A09, C01.03.02, A04.02.01	Mowing or cutting of grassland, irrigation, mechanical removal of peat, non-intensive cattle grazing
004064	Lough Ree SPA	Golden Plover *(Pluvialis apricaria)* [A140], Goldeneye *(Bucephala clangula)* [A067], Lapwing *(Vanellus vanellus)* [A142], Coot *(Fulica atra)* [A125], Tufted Duck *(Aythya fuligula)* [A061], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Common Scoter *(Melanitta nigra)* [A065],	G01.02, F02.03, A04, A08, G01.01, B, F03.01, I01	Walking, horse-riding and non-motorised vehicles, leisure fishing, grazing, fertilisation, nautical sports, sylviculture, forestry, hunting, invasive non-native species

[42] That have functional connectivity (ecological pathways) to the existing development area including their Qualifying Interests, known threats and pressures

Site code	Site name	Qualifying feature	Pressure codes	Known threats and pressures
		Common tern *(Sterna hirundo)* [A193], Little Grebe *(Tachybaptus ruficollis)* [A004], Mallard *(Anas platyrhynchos)* [A053], Shoveler *(Anas clypeata)* [A056], Teal *(Anas crecca)* [A052], Whooper Swan *(Cygnus cygnus)* [A038], Wigeon *(Anas penelope)* [A050]		
004101	Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA	Greenland White-fronted Goose *(Anser albifrons flavirostris)* [A395]	A04, G01.01, F02.03, F03.01, B	Grazing, nautical sports, leisure fishing, hunting, sylviculture, forestry

Appendix II Qualifying Interests of SACs that have undergone assessment[43]

EU code	Qualifying interests	Article 17 report summary - threats and pressures	Threats and pressures codes	Known threats and pressures	Sensitivity of qualifying interests
[1355]	Otter *(Lutra lutra)*	There are no pressures facing this species	Xxp, Xxt	No pressures, no threats	Surface and marine water dependent. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Sensitivity to pollution.
[3150]	Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition* - type vegetation	Most of the pressures on this habitat are as a result of pollution from agriculture, forestry activities and wastewater.	A25, A26, B23, C05, F11, F12, F13, K04, K05	Agricultural activities generating point source pollution to surface or ground waters, agricultural activities generating diffuse pollution to surface or ground waters, forestry activities generating pollution to surface or ground waters, peat extraction, pollution to surface or ground water due to urban runoffs, discharge of urban waste water (excluding storm overflows and/or urban run-offs) generating pollution to surface or ground water, plants, contaminated or abandoned industrial sites generating pollution to surface or ground water, modification of hydrological flow, physical alteration of water bodies	Surface and groundwater dependant. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution.
[6210]	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *(Festuco-Brometalia)* * important orchid sites)	The significant pressures related to this habitat are mainly associated with agricultural intensification causing loss of species-rich communities, or abandonment of farmland resulting in succession to scrub.	A02, A09, A10, C01, I02, I04	Conversion from one type of agricultural land use to another (excluding drainage and burning), intensive grazing or overgrazing by livestock, extensive grazing or under grazing by livestock, extraction of minerals (e.g., rock, metal ores, gravel, sand, shell), other invasive alien species (other than species of union concern), problematic native species	Changes in management such as grazing regime. Changes in nutrient or base status. Changes to vegetation composition. Introduction of alien species.
[7110]	Active raised bogs	The main pressures on active raised bog are peat extraction, drainage, afforestation and burning.	A11, B01, C05, K02, N01	Burning for agriculture, conversion to forest from other land uses, or afforestation (excluding drainage), peat extraction, drainage, temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature & extremes) due to climate change	Surface water interactions. Groundwater isolated system with sensitivities related to the bog basin. Drainage and land use management are the key things.

[43] Including known treats and pressures and sensitivities of qualifying interests

EU code	Qualifying interests	Article 17 report summary - threats and pressures	Threats and pressures codes	Known threats and pressures	Sensitivity of qualifying interests
[7120]	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration	The main pressure on degraded bogs come from peat extraction, drainage, afforestation and burning.	A11, B01, C05, K02, N01	Burning for agriculture, conversion to forest from other land uses, or afforestation (excluding drainage), peat extraction, drainage, temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature & extremes) due to climate change	Surface water interactions. Groundwater isolated system with sensitivities related to the bog basin. Drainage and land use management are the key things.
[7150]	Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*	The main pressures on the habitat are associated with impacts on the supporting bog habitats, especially overgrazing, burning, peat extraction, drainage and conversion to forestry.	A09, A11, B01, C05, K02, N01	Intensive grazing or overgrazing by livestock, burning for agriculture, conversion to forest from other land uses, or afforestation (excluding drainage), peat extraction, drainage, temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature & extremes) due to climate change	Surface and ground water interactions. Drainage and land use management are the key things.
[7230]	Alkaline fens	The main pressures facing this habitat are land abandonment (and associated succession), overgrazing, drainage and pollution.	A06, A09, A26, J01, K01, K02, K04, L02, N02, N03	Abandonment of grassland management (e.g., cessation of grazing or of mowing), intensive grazing or overgrazing by livestock, agricultural activities generating diffuse pollution to surface or ground waters, mixed source pollution to surface and ground waters (limnic and terrestrial), abstraction from groundwater, surface water or mixed water, drainage, modification of hydrological flow, natural succession resulting in species composition change (other than by direct changes of agricultural or forestry practices), temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature & extremes) due to climate change, increases or changes in precipitation due to climate change	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management.
[8240]	Limestone pavements	The main pressures facing this habitat are associated with conversion to agricultural land and housing construction, as well as scrub encroachment caused by under-grazing.	A01, A10, C01, F01, I02	Conversion into agricultural land (excluding drainage and burning), extensive grazing or under grazing by livestock, extraction of minerals (e.g., rock, metal ores, gravel, sand, shell), conversion from other land uses to housing, settlement or recreational areas (excluding drainage and modification of coastline, estuary and coastal conditions), other invasive alien species (other than species of union concern)	Erosion, overgrazing and recreation.
[91D0]	Bog woodland	Pressures facing this habitat are related to drainage, invasive species and	A11, B09, C05, I02, K01	Burning for agriculture, clear-cutting, removal of all trees, peat extraction, other invasive alien species (other than species of union concern), abstraction from groundwater,	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Introduction

EU code	Qualifying interests	Article 17 report summary - threats and pressures	Threats and pressures codes	Known threats and pressures	Sensitivity of qualifying interests
		burning.		surface water or mixed water	of alien species.
[91E0]	Alluvial forests with Alder and Ash *(Alnus glutinosa, Fraxinus excelsior, Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*	Many of the pressures facing this habitat include invasive species, particularly sycamore *(Acer pseudoplatanus)*, beech *(Fagus sylvatica)*, Indian balsam *(Impatiens glandulifera)* and currant species *(Ribes nigrum and R. rubrum)* as well as some native species such as brambles *(Rubus fruticoses agg.)* and common nettle, along with over felling.	B09, I02, I04, I05	Clear-cutting, removal of all trees, other invasive alien species (other than species of union concern), problematic native species, plant and animal diseases, pathogens and pests	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in management.

Appendix III Special Conservation Interests of SPAs that have undergone assessment[44]

Species code	Common name	Scientific name	Threats and pressures codes	Known threats and pressures
A050	Eurasian Wigeon	*Anas penelope*	C03, F01, F03, G01, H01, H03, H07, I01, J02, J03	Renewable abiotic energy use, marine and freshwater aquaculture, hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial), outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish), marine water pollution, other forms of pollution, invasive non-native species, human induced changes in hydraulic conditions, other ecosystem modifications
A056	Northern Shoveler	*Anas clypeata*	C03, F03, G01, H01, H03, H07	Renewable abiotic energy use, hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial), outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish), marine water pollution, other forms of pollution
A061	Tufted Duck	*Aythya fuligula*	C03, F03, G01, H01, H07, M02	Renewable abiotic energy use, hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial), outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish), other forms of pollution, changes in biotic conditions
A067	Common Goldeneye	*Bucephala clangula*	C03, F01, F03, G01, H01, H03, H07, M02	Renewable abiotic energy use, marine and freshwater aquaculture, hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial), outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish), marine water pollution, other forms of pollution, changes in biotic conditions
A125	Eurasian Coot	*Fulica atra atra*	C03, G01, H01	Renewable abiotic energy use, outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish)
A140	European Golden Plover	*Pluvialis apricaria*	A02, A04, B01, C01, C03, F01, G01, H03, J01, K03, M02	Modification of cultivation practices, grazing, forest planting on open ground, mining and quarrying, renewable abiotic energy use, marine and freshwater aquaculture, outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, marine water pollution, fire and fire suppression, interspecific faunal relations, changes in biotic conditions
A142	Northern Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	A02, C03, F01, G01, H03	Modification of cultivation practices, renewable abiotic energy use, marine and freshwater aquaculture, outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, marine water pollution
A193	Common Tern	*Sterna hirundo*	C03, D01, D03, G01, I01	Renewable abiotic energy use, roads, paths and railroads, shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions, outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, invasive non-native species
A395	Greater White-Fronted	*Anser albifrons flavirostris*	A02, A04, A06, A11, B01, C03, D02, D05, F01, F03, G01, H03,	Modification of cultivation practices, grazing, annual and perennial non-timber crops, agriculture activities not referred to above, forest planting on open ground, renewable abiotic energy use, utility and service lines, improved access to site, marine and freshwater aquaculture, hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial), outdoor sports and leisure activities,

[44] Including known treats and pressures of SCIs

Species code	Common name	Scientific name	Threats and pressures codes	Known threats and pressures
	Goose		H07, K03, M01, M02	recreational activities, marine water pollution, other forms of pollution, interspecific faunal relations, changes in abiotic conditions, changes in biotic conditions

Appendix IV Conservation objectives[45]

NPWS (2016) Conservation Objectives for Lough Ree SAC [IE0000440] Version 1.

NPWS (2016) Conservation Objectives for Lough Forbes Complex SAC [IE0001818] Version 1.

NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives for Mount Jessop Bog SAC [IE0002202] Version 1.

NPWS (2016) Conservation Objectives for Brown Bog SAC [IE0002346] Version 1.

NPWS (2016) Conservation Objectives for Clooneen Bog SAC [IE0002348] Version 1.

NPWS (2022) First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives for Lough Ree SPA [IE0004064] Version 1.

NPWS (2022) First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives for Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA [IE0004101] Version 1.

[45] NPWS/Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Appendix V Consultations carried out with the NPWS and Bat Conservation Ireland

1. National Parks and Wildlife Services – regarding Lesser horseshoe bat roosts[46]

From: Jochen Roller (Housing) <Jochen.Roller@housing.gov.ie>
Sent: Tuesday 23 April 2024 12:23
To: Karen Shevlin <karen@caas.ie>
Subject: FW: Information Request

Hi Karen,

I can confirm that there is no recorded Lesser horseshoe bat roost in the area, with the closest recorded roost around 70km to the west of Newtownforbes.

Bat Conservation Ireland may have data on other bat species in the area.

Best regards,
Jochen

Jochen Roller | GIS Consultant | National Parks & Wildlife Service | 90 North King Street, Smithfield, Dublin 7, D07 N7CV | Jochen.Roller@housing.gov.ie

[46] Note: an image of the approximate locations of LHS bat roosts in Ireland was included in this email but omitted from this report to protect roost locations.

2. Bat Conservation Ireland – regarding Lesser horseshoe bat roosts

From: Karen Healy <karenh@batconservationireland.org>
Sent: Thursday 25 April 2024 13:28
To: Karen Shevlin <karen@caas.ie>
Subject: LHS query

Hi Karen,

Thanks for your email enquiring about LHS roosts.

I checked with Niamh, and she can confirm that there are no known lesser horseshoe bat roosts around Newtownforbes.

Thanks.

All the best,
Karen

Karen Healy
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Appendix VI Photos from ecological site visit

Photo 1 NW view of proposed site showing rank grassland and existing buildings

Photo 2 N view of disused residential building with attached shed to be demolished

Photo 3 N view of stone outbuilding to be demolished

Photo 4 NW view of eastern site of the proposed site

Appendix VII Contributor details

Technical assistant - Callum O'Regan is an ecologist who holds a B.Sc. degree in Zoology from University College Cork and a Master's in Conservation Behaviour from Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology in 2021. Callum has skills in data management and analysis, report writing and GIS mapping. Callum has also worked on preparation of a number of reports including Ecological Impact Assessments (EcIAs) and Appropriate Assessment Screenings for private and public projects of various sizes and complexities.

Author - Karen Dylan Shevlin is an ecologist with over 9 years' experience working in multiple capacities in ecology in Irish and international research institutions and organisations, and holds a MSc in Biodiversity and Conservation from Trinity College Dublin (Dist. 2013). Karen has significant skills and experience in leading research and ecological surveys of bats, birds, insects, habitats and mammals, data analysis and managing resulting reports. Karen is also a specialist in ecological theory and the impacts/effects that altering natural dynamics may have on the surrounding environment. Karen has been the lead author and reviewed on many Appropriate Assessment Screenings, NISs, and EIARs for a range of public and private projects and plans ranging from residential and industrial projects, to County Development Plans, to major wind turbine sites. This combination of skills and knowledge provides the backbone of the assessment process, and ensure that all of the baseline and detailed data gathered in the field is interpreted in a manner that is grounded in best scientific knowledge.

Reviewer - Paul Fingleton has an MSc in Rural and Regional Resources Planning (with specialisation in EIA) from the University of Aberdeen. Paul is a member of the International Association for Impact Assessment as well as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. He has over twenty-five years' experience working in the area of Environmental Assessment. Over this period, he has been involved in a diverse range of projects including contributions to, and co-ordination of, numerous complex EIARs and EIA screening reports. He has also contributed to and supervised the preparation of numerous AAs and AA screenings.

Paul is the lead author of the current EPA Guidelines and accompanying Advice Notes on EIARs. He has been involved in all previous editions of these statutory guidelines. He also provides a range of other EIA related consultancy services to the EPA. Paul is regularly engaged by various planning authorities and other consent authorities to provide specialised EIA advice.