



**PROVISION OF 22 No. HOUSING UNITS
AT
LANESBOROUGH
COUNTY LONGFORD**

SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

August 2024

Longford County Council,
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1. INTRODUCTION

Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited have been commissioned by Longford County Council to carry out a Stage I Appropriate Assessment Screening under Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) for the proposed 22 No. Units at Lanesborough, County Longford hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'.

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment forms Stage 1 of the Habitats Directive Assessment process and is being undertaken in order to comply with the requirements of the Habitats Directive Article 6(3). The function of this Screening Report is to identify the potential for the project to result in likely significant effects to European Sites and to provide information so that the competent authority can determine whether a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required for the project.

1.1 AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION AND EXPERTISE

This Stage I Appropriate Assessment Screening has been prepared by Sarah Jones and Sarah Moore of Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited.

Sarah Jones is an Environmental Scientist and Planner and holds a first-class MSc in Environmental Sustainability from University College Dublin and a Bachelor (Hons.) Degree in Geography from Manchester Metropolitan University. Sarah holds a Higher Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law from King's Inns, Dublin. Sarah's key capabilities include Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screenings, Appropriate Assessment (AA) screenings, Planning and Environmental Reports and Planning Applications, Environmental Impact Assessments, Feasibility Studies, Construction Environmental Management Plans, Stakeholder Engagement and Project Management.

Sarah Moore is an Environmental Scientist in JOD with over 17 years of environmental consultancy experience. She has obtained a MSc in Environmental Engineering from Queens University, Belfast, and a BSc in Environmental Science from University of Limerick. Since joining JOD, Sarah has been involved as a Project Environmental Scientist on a range of renewable energy, wastewater, structures and commercial projects. She has experience in the preparation of Appropriate Assessments, Ecological Impact Assessments, Environmental Impact Assessments and Geographic Information Systems.

David Kiely has a Bachelor of Engineering Degree in Civil Engineering and a Master's of Science degree in Environmental Protection, in addition to 40 years' experience in the civil engineering/ environmental sector. David has led/managed EISs/EIARs and overseen the development of over 50 wind farms in Ireland. This includes whole life cycle from feasibility, planning and environmental assessment through to construction, including the preparation of alternative consideration chapters for other wind farms. David Kiely has undertaken EISs/ EIARs for wind farms throughout Ireland. He has 40 years' experience in the civil engineering and environmental sector and has obtained a Bachelor of Engineering Degree in Civil Engineering and a Master of Science degree in Environmental Protection. David has overseen the development of over 50 wind farms from feasibility, planning and environmental assessment through to construction.

1.2 REGULATORY CONTEXT

Under Section 177U (1) of the Planning Acts, a Screening for AA of the Proposed Development shall be carried out by the competent authority (in this case, Longford County Council) to assess in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect(s) on any European sites.

Collectively, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are referred to as the Natura 2000 Sites. The legal basis on which SACs are selected and designated is the EU Habitats Directive, 92/43/EEC transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), as amended. The designation features of SACs are referred to as Qualifying Interests (QI) and include both species (excluding birds) and habitats. Similarly, Special Protection Areas (SPA's) are legislated in the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC. The designation features of SPAs are referred to as Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) which comprise bird species as well as wetland bird habitats.

In general terms, SACs and SPAs are considered to be of exceptional importance in terms of rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats and species within the European Community.

Article 6, paragraph 3 of the Habitats Directive states that:

“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”.

The statutory agency responsible for the European sites is the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

This report has been prepared in accordance with current guideline documents:

- Assessment of plans and projects significantly effecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001)
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG 2009, Revised February 2010)
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG, 2009, revised 2010)
- OPR Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, March 2021, Office of the Planning Regulator
- Communication from the Commission on the Precautionary Principle. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, (EC, 2000a)

- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I. No.477 of 2011).
- Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. European Commission (EC, 2013).
- EU Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC (EC, 2007)
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018)
- Strict Protection of Animal Species, NPWS, 2021

The following European Court and Irish High Court rulings have been considered:

- C-721/21 Eco Advocacy CLG v An Bord Pleanála and Keegan Land Holdings Limited
- C-127/02 Waddenzee v Staatssecretaris
- C-258/11 Sweetman v An Bord Pleanála
- C-512/12 Briels
- C-387/12 & C388/15 Orleans and others v Vlaams Gewest
- C-142/15 Moorbug
- C-323/17 People Over Wind and Peter Sweetman v Coillte
- C-162/17 Grace and Sweetman
- C-883/18 Holohan and others v An Bord Pleanála
- IEHC 84 (2019) - Kelly v An Bord Pleanála

Relevant plans from national to local scales are critical to inform a robust assessment of in-combination impacts; these are listed below:

- National Biodiversity Action Plan, for the period 2023-2030
- River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021
- Longford County Development Plan 202 – 2027

1.3 THE STAGES IN AN APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

There are 4 stages in an Appropriate Assessment as outlined in the European Commission Guidance document (2001). The following is a brief summary of these steps:

Stage 1 - Screening: This stage examines the likely effects of a project either alone or in- combination with other projects upon a European site and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant.

Stage 2 - Appropriate Assessment: In this stage, the impact of the project on the integrity of the European site is considered, with respect to the conservation objectives of the site and to its structure and function.

Stage 3 - Assessment of Alternative Solutions: Should the Appropriate Assessment determine that adverse impacts are likely upon the European site, this stage examines alternative ways of implementing the project that, where possible, avoid these adverse impacts.

Stage 4 - Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain: Where imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist, an assessment to consider

whether compensatory measures will or will not effectively offset the damage to the European site will be necessary.

As part of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment, a desk-based study of the European site within the zone of influence (Zoi) of the Proposed Development is required.

1.4 SCREENING METHODOLOGY

This Screening Report has been prepared in order to comply with the legislative requirements outlined in Section 1.1 above and aims to establish whether or not the proposed project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site's conservation objectives. In this context "likely" refers to the presence of doubt with regard to the absence of significant effects (ECJ case C-127/02) and "significant" means not trivial or inconsequential but an effect that has the potential to undermine the site's conservation objectives (ECJ case C-127/02). In other words, any effect that compromises the functioning and viability of a site and interferes with achieving the conservation objectives for the site would constitute a significant effect. In the event that land use activities result in effects that do not have the potential to compromise the conservation objectives of a European Site, and that the judgement of such an effect has been made in the absence of reasonable scientific doubt, then such an effect is considered to be representative of a de minimis effect and can be screened out for the need for Appropriate Assessment. This approach is supported by ECJ Case C/258/11 which states that:

"the requirement that the effect in question be 'significant' exists in order to lay down a de minimis threshold. Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on a European site are thereby excluded. If all plans or projects capable of having any effect whatsoever on the site were to be caught by Article 6(3), activities on or near the site would risk being impossible by reason of legislative overkill".

The nature of the likely interactions between the project and the integrity of a European Site will depend upon the sensitivity of the European Site's qualifying features to potential impacts arising from the project; the current conservation status of the European Site and its qualifying features; and any likely changes to key environmental indicators (e.g. water quality) that underpin the conservation status of European Sites and their qualifying features, in-combination with other plans and projects.

The European Commission (2018) Guidelines outline the stages involved in undertaking a Screening Assessment of a project that has the potential to have likely significant effects on European Sites. The methodology adopted for this Screening Assessment is informed by these guidelines and was undertaken in the following steps:

1. Define the project and determine whether it is directly connected with or necessary for the conservation management of European Sites
2. Identify other plans or projects that, in-combination with the project, have the potential to effect European Sites
3. Assess whether or not the project is likely to have significant effects on European Sites in the view of its conservation objectives.

1.5 DESK STUDY

A desk study was carried out to collate the available information on the ecological environment of the proposed site. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) database was consulted concerning designated conservation areas and records of rare and protected plant and animal species in the vicinity of the Proposed Development. The EPA Geoportal website was used when researching European designated sites and watercourses. The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) website was also consulted.

The Proposed Development Site boundary is 0.837 ha (**Figure 1.1**). The Proposed Development is entirely contained within the 1 one-kilometre Grid square 'N0168'. One protected species has been recorded in this grid namely Eurasian Badger (*Meles meles*).

The Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Longford County Council planning enquiry website were reviewed to identify any proposed plans or projects which may have a significant cumulative impact with this Proposed Development.

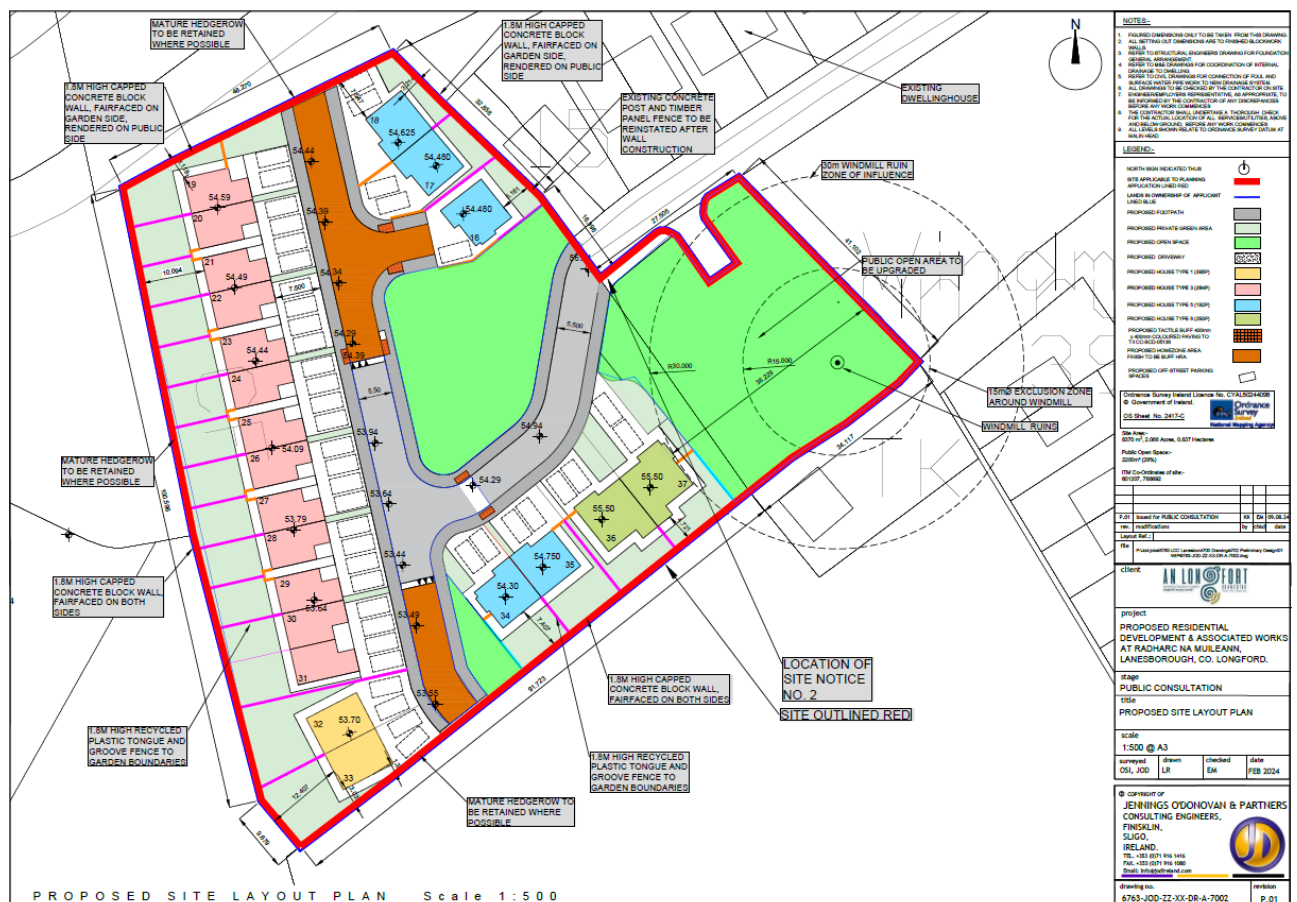


Figure 1.1: Proposed Site Plan

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

It is proposed to construct a new housing development of 22 houses with associated services, access roads and car parking at the proposed site. The site is currently a greenfield site. The proposed

construction is envisaged to consist of conventional foundations and pavement make up, with some local excavations for services and plant.

The proposal is for a residential development on a net site area of c. 0.837 ha. The proposal consists of the following:

- 13 No. 2 bed, 2 storey units
- 2 No. 2 bed, single storey units
- 5 No. 1 bed, single storey units
- 2 No. 3 bed, two storey units
- All associated site development works including landscaping, boundary treatments, public lighting, site services, drainage works and all associated infrastructure.

All units will have a nap plaster and grey brick finish. Windows and doors will be dark grey in colour. All units will include heat pumps with underfloor heating to ground floors and radiators to first floors.

Key construction activities will include;

- Site Clearance
- Stripping topsoil
- Placing foundations
- Building works
- Boundary erection
- Connection to existing services
- Hard surfaces and roads
- Finishes
- Landscaping

The site will be accessed via the existing road to the adjoining housing development. The mature hedgerow on the southern edge of the development will be retained. The layout of the development was designed using best practice principles to enhance the durability and function of the site, while minimising its visual intrusion where possible.

2.2 PROJECT SITE DESCRIPTION

The site (0.837 hectares) is located in the townland of Knock, approximately 600m from the town centre of Lanesborough, County Longford and 700m from National Road N63 (**Figure 2.1**). The site had planning permission in place under planning reference PL04/745 for the construction of 34 units. 14 no. of the original 34 houses were constructed. A further 2 no 3 bed units were constructed under planning reference PL18/182. All 16 no existing houses are completed and occupied. These adjoin the Proposed Development (**Figure 2.2**).

The site is zoned for residential development in the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, it is currently not used and contains grass and scrub growth with some sapling trees. The site slopes in a southwest direction. AOD in the north to 54m AOD in the south and west corners.



Figure 2.1: Location of the Proposed Development Site



Figure 2.2: Site Location Map

3. RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 HYDROLOGY AND HYDROGEOLOGY

There are no watercourses within or in the vicinity of the project site (**Figure 3.1**). The Proposed Development site is located within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) wider catchment area of the Shannon upper and lower River Basin. The total area draining into the Shannon Upper and Lower River Basin is approximately 11,600 km².

The Proposed Development is located specifically in the Upper Shannon catchment, one of the country's largest catchments draining an area of approximately 2,800km², Lough Ree forms the boundary between the Upper Shannon catchment and the Middle Shannon catchment. The flood risk management plan for the Shannon Upper and Lower River Basin identifies the Lanesborough Power Station (approximately 0.5km from the Proposed Development) as a community of very low risk.

Office of Public Works (OPW) website and the EPA mapping services were accessed (April 29, 2022) to determine flood areas within and near the Proposed Development. The EPA mapping service shows that the proposed development site is outside of any low, medium or high risk of flooding areas (**Figure 3.2**).

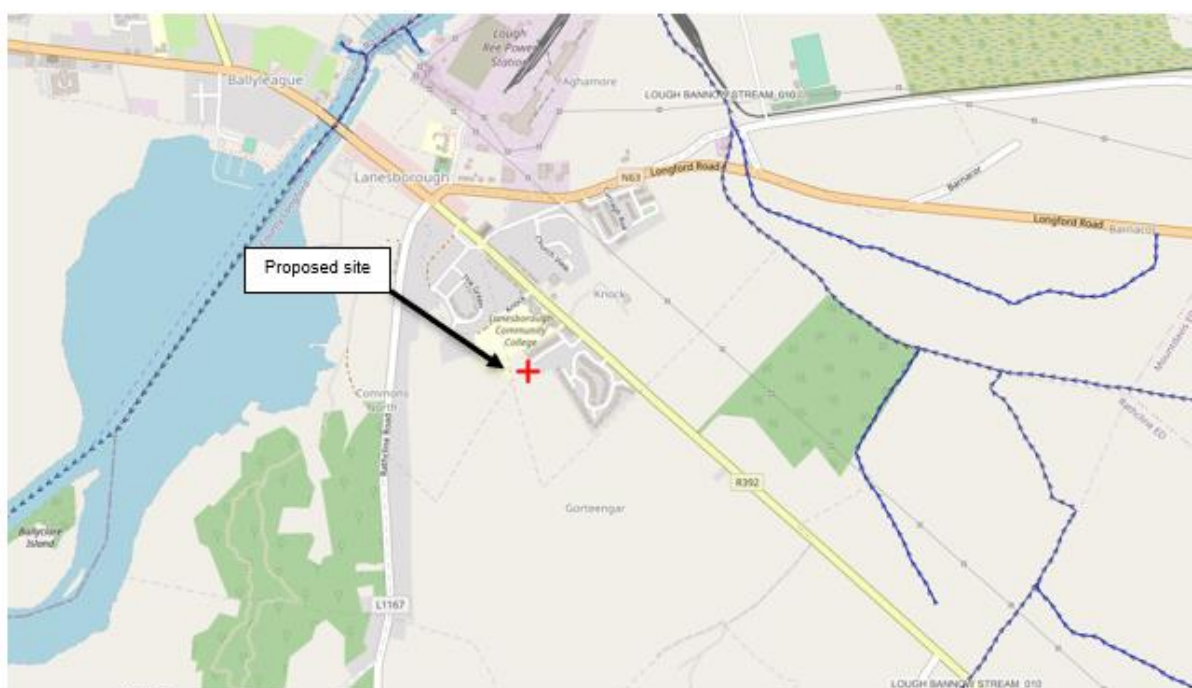


Figure 3.1: Watercourses in the area of the development

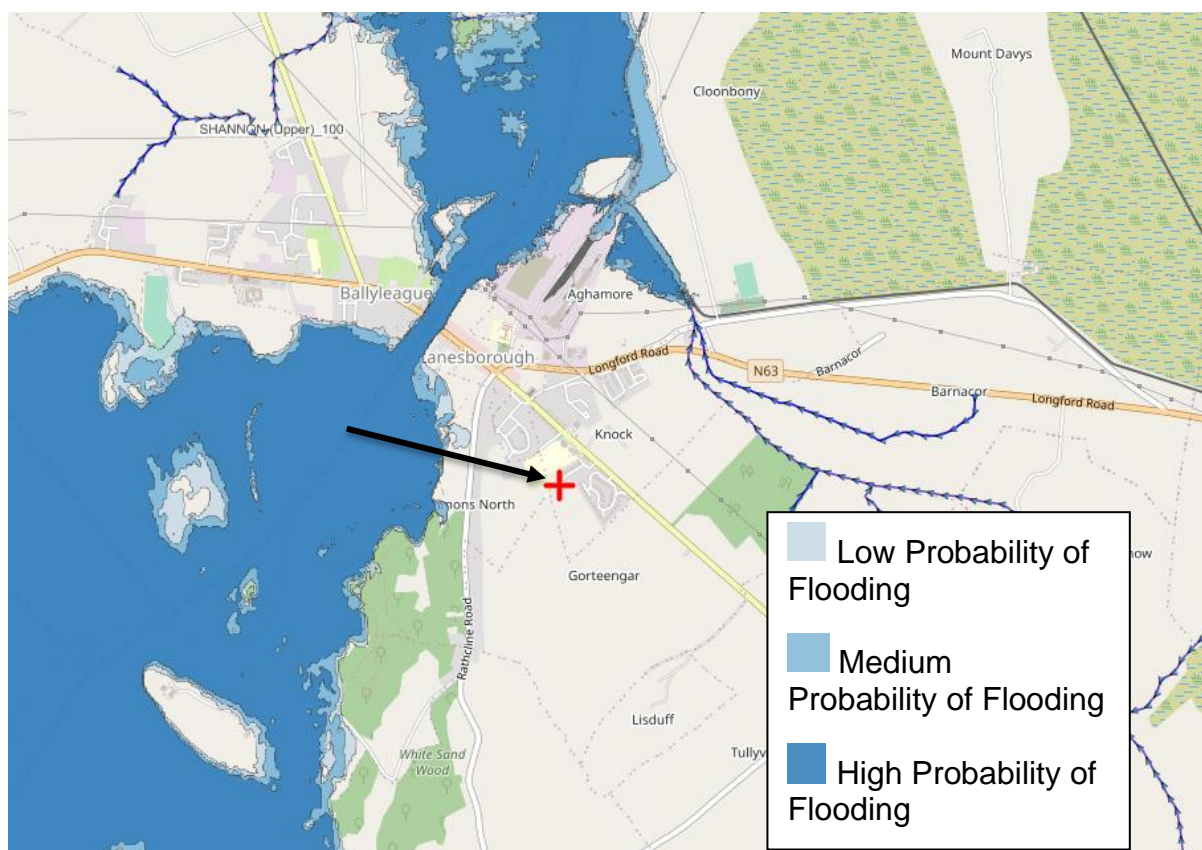


Figure 3.2: Flooding probability map of the surrounding area

Given the absence of watercourses in the surrounding area and the site being outside of areas likely to flood there is no hydrological impact pathway connecting the project site to European Sites in the surrounding area.

3.2 IS THE PROJECT NECESSARY FOR THE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN SITES

The project is Proposed site connected with or necessary for the future conservation management of any European Sites.

4. THE PROJECT & EUROPEAN SITE BASELINE

4.1 IDENTIFICATION OF EUROPEAN SITES

Current guidance informing the approach to screening for Appropriate Assessment defines the zone of influence of a proposed development as the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. It is recommended that this is established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor (SPR) framework.

Given that the project is very small in scale and duration it is considered that only those European Sites occurring in the immediate vicinity of the project will be located within its potential zone of influence.

As can be seen on **Figure 3.1** two European sites are located within the area surrounding the project site. These are;

- Lough Ree SPA
- Lough Ree SAC

These are shown on **Figure 3.1** below

The nearest point of the Lough Ree SAC is 0.38km to the west of the proposed development at the nearest point, Lough Ree SPA is 0.55km west.

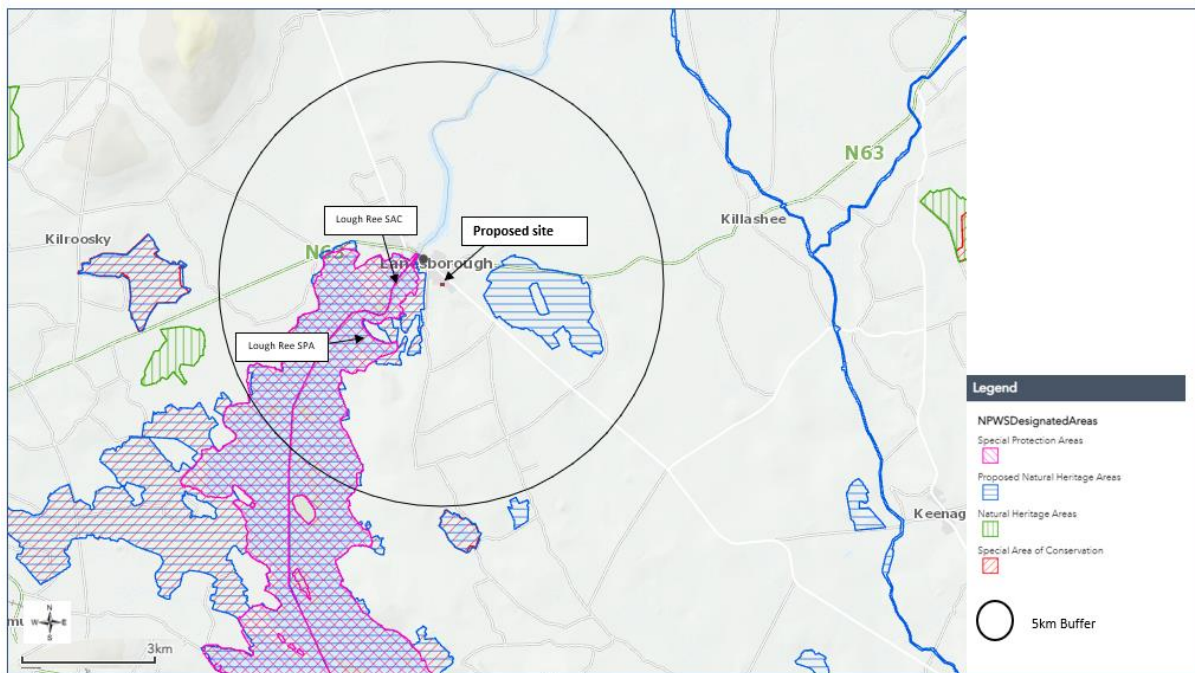


Figure 4.1: European sites within 5km buffer of proposed development

4.1.1 Overview of Lough Ree SPA

Lough Ree is one of the most important sites for wintering waterfowl in the midlands, it supports several nationally important species, including breeding populations.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species:

- Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) [A004]
- Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) [A038]
- Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) [A050]
- Teal (*Anas crecca*) [A052]
- Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) [A053]
- Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) [A056]
- Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) [A061]
- Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) [A065]

- Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) [A067]
- Coot (*Fulica atra*) [A125]
- Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140]
- Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [A142]
- Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193]
- Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]

4.1.2 Overview of Lough Ree SAC

Lough Ree is the third largest lake in Ireland, its situated on the River Shannon system between Lanesborough and Athlone, spanning counties Longford, Roscommon and Westmeath. It has a long-indented shoreline and many sheltered bays. The main habitat is the lake itself, though shoreline, semi-aquatic and terrestrial habitats also occur.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive;

(numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

- [3150] Natural Eutrophic Lakes
- [6210] Orchid-rich Calcareous Grassland
- [7110] Active Raised Bog
- [7120] Degraded Raised Bog
- [7230] Alkaline Fens
- [8240] Limestone Pavement
- [91D0] Bog Woodland
- [91E0] Alluvial Forests
- [1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

Table 4.1 below shows the qualifying interests for the two sites.

Table 4.1 European Sites within 5km to the Proposed Development

European Site	Qualifying Habitats	Qualifying Species	Species of Conservation Interest (SCI)
Lough Ree SPA	NA	NA	Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]
Lough Ree SAC	Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco- Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration Alkaline fens Limestone pavements Old sessile oak woods Bog woodland	Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)	

4.1.3 Documented Threats & Pressures to European Sites

The threats and pressures to the Lough Ree SAC and Lough Ree SPA have been documented by the NPWS in the latest Natura 2000 Standard Data Return form for these SPAs and SAC (dated October 2020). Table 4.2 lists these threats and pressures.

Table 4.2: Threats and Pressures to European Sites

Site	Threat Code	Threat	Threat Rank
Lough Ree SPA	F03.01	Hunting	Medium
Lough Ree SPA	A04	Grazing	Medium
Lough Ree SPA	B	Sylviculture, forestry	Medium
Lough Ree SPA	F02.03	Leisure fishing	High
Lough Ree SPA	G01.02	Walking, horse-riding and non-motorised vehicles	Medium
Lough Ree SPA	I01	Invasive non-native species	Medium
Lough Ree SPA	G01.01	Nautical sports	Medium
Lough Ree SPA	A08	Fertilisation	Medium
Lough Ree SAC	J02.11.02	Other siltation rate changes	High
Lough Ree SAC	H01.08	Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to household sewage and waste waters	Medium
Lough Ree SAC	K03.05	Antagonism arising from introduction of species	High
Lough Ree SAC	A04	Grazing	Medium
Lough Ree SAC	F03.01	Hunting	Medium
Lough Ree SAC	B02	Forest and Plantation management & use	Medium
Lough Ree SAC	H02.06	Diffuse groundwater pollution due to agricultural and forestry activities	Medium
Lough Ree SAC	G01.01	Nautical sports	Medium
Lough Ree SAC	G01.02	Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles	Low
Lough Ree SAC	J02.04	Flooding modifications	Low
Lough Ree SAC	L08	Inundation (natural processes)	Low
Lough Ree SAC	A03.03	Abandonment / lack of mowing	Medium
Lough Ree SAC	D03.01.02	Piers / tourist harbours or recreational piers	Low
Lough Ree SAC	H06.03	Thermal heating of water bodies	Low
Lough Ree SAC	E01.03	Dispersed habitation	Medium
Lough Ree SAC	F02.03	Leisure fishing	Medium
Lough Ree SAC	A08	Fertilisation	Medium
Lough Ree SAC	I01	Invasive non-native species	High

4.1.4 Conservation Objectives for European Sites within the zone of influence of the Strategy

Generic Conservation Objectives have been published for all European Sites occurring in Ireland. The generic Conservation Objectives for SACs and SPAs and their features of interest are:

To maintain the features of interest, for which the SAC/SPA has been designated, at favourable conservation status.

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”.

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.

In addition to the published generic Conservation Objectives for all European Sites, Site Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) have been published for a number of individual European Sites across Ireland. These SSCOs identify the attributes that underpin the conservation status of qualifying features of interest/special conservation interests and provide targets for ensuring that their favourable status is maintained and/or restored.

The Lough Ree SPA has the following conservation objectives;

“To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA”

and

“To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at Lough Ree SPA as a resource for the regularly occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.”

Site specific Conservation objectives for Lough Ree SAC are shown in Table 4.3 further information on specific attribute targets can be found in the NPWS Conservation Objective Report for the site.

Table 4.3 Qualifying features and conservation objectives of Lough Ree SAC

Qualifying Feature	Objective
Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation in Lough Ree SAC
Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites)	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) in Lough Ree SAC
Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration in Lough Ree SAC
Alkaline fens	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Alkaline fens in Lough Ree SAC,
Limestone pavements	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements in Lough Ree SAC
Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles	The status of Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles as a qualifying Annex I habitat for the Lough Ree SAC is currently under review. The outcome of this review will determine whether a site-specific conservation objective is set for this habitat
Bog woodland	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Bog woodland in Lough Ree SAC
Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Otter in Lough Ree SAC

A source-pathway-receptor (SPR) model was used to assess if any of the European Sites located within 5km of the proposed developed were actually within the Zone of Influence (Zoi) for impacts from the Proposed Development. This assessment is outlined in **Table 4.4**.

Table 4.4 SPR assessment of the European Sites located within 5km of Proposed Development

European Site	Distance from Proposed Development Site	Hydrological Pathway	Do Qualifying Habitats occur within the Zoi of the Project	Does the project have the potential to interact with Qualifying Species	Is the European Site within the Project Zone of Influence
Lough Ree SPA	0.55km	No. There is no hydrological link between the Proposed Development and this SPA	No. There is no hydrological pathway.	No. The distance between the proposed works and this SPA and no hydrological link means there is no potential for the proposed works to impact the SCI of this SPA. The proposed development site does not contain the habitats to support the 13 SCI. Therefore, there is no potential for the	No. This SPA is not located within the zone of influence of the project.

European Site	Distance from Proposed Development Site	Hydrological Pathway	Do Qualifying Habitats occur within the Zol of the Project	Does the project have the potential to interact with Qualifying Species	Is the European Site within the Project Zone of Influence
				proposed works to negatively impact the SCI.	
Lough Ree SAC	0.38km	No. There is no hydrological link between the Proposed Development and this SAC.	No. There is no hydrological pathway.	<p>No. The distance between the proposed works and this SAC and no hydrological link means there is no potential for the proposed works to impact the habitats or qualifying species of this SAC</p> <p>The proposed development site does not contain any of the seven qualifying habitat of this SAC.</p> <p>Therefore, there is no potential for the proposed works to negatively impact the QI of this SAC.</p>	No. This SAC is not located within the zone of influence of the project.

5. SCREENING ASSESSMENT

This section will examine the likelihood of significant effects on European Sites within the project's Zol and the possibility that the project alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, would undermine the conservation objectives of the European Sites.

There are two European Sites within 5km of the proposed development. However, none of these sites are within the Zol of the proposed development.

5.1 CUMUMLATIVE IMPACTS

As part of Stage 1 Screening, in addition to the Project, other relevant projects and plans which may interact with the proposal must also be considered. This step aims to identify at this early stage any possible significant effects on the European Sites from the Project in-combination or cumulatively with other plans and projects. This includes an assessment of those plans and projects which would have the potential to interact or impact on any designated European Site, resulting in a cumulative or in-combination effect, either temporally or spatially/geographically, with respect to the sensitive qualifying interests or conservation objectives of such designations.

The Longford County Council on-line planning application portal was used to search planning applications close to the Project (July 2024). A five-year search timeframe was assessed; Retention, refused and withdrawn planning applications were excluded. **Table 5.1** shows the planning applications in close proximity to the Project (circa 1000m).

Table 5.1: Planning applications in close proximity to the Project.

Planning Reference	Description of Development	Site Address	Decision Date	Distance from Site
2460008	the retention and completion of existing partially constructed single storey apartment type building consisting of 2 no. one bedroom studio type apartments, provision of onsite car parking, proposed connections to existing services and all ancillary site works	Rear of Lough Ree House, Main Street, Lanesborough, Co. Longford, N39 YD40Ballymahon, Co. Longford, (including rear of former St. Matthews National School, Nally Tyres / Circle K and adjoining lands)	N/A	approx. 1km
2360124	the proposed development will comprise: • the replacement (“restringing”) of the existing overhead line circuit conductor wires with a new higher capacity conductor including installation of a new fibre communication connection; • the replacement of 52no. existing polesets and 4no. towers - any replacement structures will be constructed at, or immediately adjacent to the existing structures they will replace, will be along the same alignment as existing; • the replacement of angle mast AM3A with a poleset; • the retention and refurbishment, steel member replacement, painting and foundation strengthening of the one retained end mast EM1; • the replacement of hardware and fittings at all structure locations; • the replacement of stay arrangements at 27no. locations; • the replacement of crossarms at 27no. locations; • the installation of insulators at 13no. locations; • the replacement of vibration dampers at 12no. locations; • the reinstallation of all anti-	Lanesborough, Aghamore, Knock, Gorteengar, Tullyvrane, Leherly, Magheraveen, Cloonfore, Derrygeel, Derryshannoge, Derraghan More, Derraghan Beg, Derryad, Derrylough, Derryweagh, Foygh, Cornacarta, Tirlickeen, Lismacmurrough, Lislom, Moygh, Drinan, Knappoge, Barry, Agharanagh, Listobit, Kilcurry, Corrabola, Taghshinny, Co. Longford	17/10/2023	approx. 756m

Planning Reference	Description of Development	Site Address	Decision Date	Distance from Site
	<p>climbing guards; • the reinstallation of aircraft warning spheres at span 127-128; • all associated works within the existing Lanesboro 110 kV substation to accommodate the uprated 110 kV OHL including uprating of the Mullingar bay in Lanesboro 110 kV substation, routing of fibre optic cable from end mast into substation and alterations to existing hardware; • all associated temporary site development works to gain access to the existing structures including clearance of vegetation, disassembly and reassembly of gate posts / piers and removal and reinstatement of existing fencing; and • other temporary associated and ancillary site development works required for the purpose of the uprate of the existing circuit, including construction compounds, silt traps, silt fences, stone tracks, ground protection mats, infrastructure crossing support systems and temporary watercourse crossings</p>			
2275	<p>development at the 13.1 Ha site known as 'Lough Ree Power (LRP) Station' located in Lanesborough (Lanesboro), in the townlands of Aghamore and Lanesborough, Eircode N37E180; in County Longford. The development will consist of the demolition of the existing LRP station (as approved under Longford County Council reg.ref 01/115 'An Board Pleanala Ref. PL14.125540 and all subsequent permissions);and the development and operation of electricity grid services - namely a battery energy storage system (BESS) and a Synchronous Condenser (Sync Con). The proposed development comprises two distinct phases of activity - the initial demolition and site reinstatement (Phase 1); following by construction and operation of the new BESS and Sync Con (phase 2). Phase 1 comprises the demolition of</p>	Aghamore, And Lanesborough, Co Longford	08/12/2022	approx. 900m from the project site

Planning Reference	Description of Development	Site Address	Decision Date	Distance from Site
	existing site structures (with a total footprint of c. 11.195sq.m. and a total gross floor area of c. 20,000 sq.m) including the former LRP station (boiler house, turbine house, bag filter house and associated 80 m high stack); the intermediate peat storage building and associated fuel management system; and ancillary buildings including, electrical building, tippler building and associated control room and office, the screening building, lorry uploading building, water treatment plant building, offices building, laboratory building, workshop and maintenance buildings, oil pumphouse, electrics rooms, railway/locomotive service building, cooling water pump house and sewage/foul water treatment facility. All buildings and structures (including storage tanks and vessels) will be demolished to ground level, with below ground voids filled. Existing hard standing surfaces (e.g. building ground floor concrete slabs, tarmacadam surfaces, concrete footpaths and road kerbs) will remain in site; and the site will be reinstated and secured with boundary gates and fences, etc. Associated with the demolition activity there will be on-site crushing of material using mobile machinery for the purpose of disposal and/or material re-use. Phase 2 comprises the proposed development of the BESS, Sync Con; and all associated development (Full description scanned/attached)			
21338	proposed retention and completion of existing partially constructed single storey apartment block consisting of 2 no. apartments and all ancillary site works	The Rear of Main Street, Lanesborough, Co. Longford	21/09/2023	approx. 956m from the project site

Planning Reference	Description of Development	Site Address	Decision Date	Distance from Site
20131	of sun room to rear of dwelling house, and also domestic garage, and all associated works	Gorteengar, Lanesboro, Co. Longford	07/08/2020	approx. 943m from the project site

Given the scale, nature and limited duration of the proposed works themselves, there is no potential for the Project to give rise to significant effects 'alone'; and therefore no potential for the scheme to interact with any other project to contribute to cumulative impacts on any European Site.

6. CONCLUSION

It can be objectively concluded that there are not likely to be significant effects on any European Site as a result of the proposed works at Knock, Lanesborough, Co. Longford. Therefore, an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

7. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A: DRAWING REGISTER & DRAWINGS