N55 Ballymahon Main Street Improvement Works

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

for

Longford County Council

August 2018
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General introduction

Roadplan Consulting was commissioned by Longford County Council to undertake Appropriate Assessment Screening (Stage 1 of Appropriate Assessment as described in Section 2: Methodology) of a project in Ballymahon, consisting of the proposal to realign and improve two junctions (Nally’s Corner and the Athlone Road junction) and the section of Main Street between them. The following Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening report considers the likelihood of significant effects on Natura 2000 Sites and was conducted in accordance with the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Article 6(3).

1.2 Legislative requirements

Assessment is a requirement of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (also known as the Habitats Directive). This states:

6(3) “Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (Natura 2000 sites) but likely to have 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 sites 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”.

6(4) “If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.”

1.3 Regulatory Context

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas for birds (SPAs) are sites that form part of a network of environmental sites within the EU, known as Natura 2000 sites. SACs are designated under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), as transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I. 477) (referred to as the Habitats Regulations), while SPAs are designated under the EU Birds Directive (79/4089/EEC, as amended and codified in 2009/147/EC).
Under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken for any plan or program that is likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site.

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) is an evaluation of the potential impacts of a project on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site, and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects.

When screening the project, there are two possible outcomes:

- The project poses no risk of a significant effect and as such requires no further assessment; and
- The project has potential to have a significant effect (or this is uncertain) and AA of the project is necessary.

This report contains information required for the competent authority to undertake an Appropriate Assessment (AA) process on the effects of a project.
2. METHODOLOGY

There are 4 stages in an Appropriate Assessment as outlined in the European Commission Guidance document “Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites”.

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 Natura 2000 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 Natura 2000 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 a Natura 2000 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 Natura site will be necessary.

A screening assessment was carried out and is presented below. Methodology used to complete the Appropriate Assessment follows best practice guidance, including:

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

Locations and boundaries of all Natura 2000 sites within 15 km of the proposed development were identified and reviewed.

The assessment is based on a combination of a desk study and a visit to the site.
3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is to realign and improve the junctions and the section of Main Street between them by replacing the existing T-junction at Nally’s Corner with traffic signals, and the existing T-junction at the Athlone Road with a roundabout. The section of road (N55) between both junctions will be altered to suit. The red line on the photo below shows scheme extents.

Nally’s Corner Junction

The proposed traffic signals would have the following characteristics:

- Two no. entry lanes on the N55 Edgeworthstown approach;
- Two no. entry lanes on the R392 Mullingar approach;
- The approach to the signals from Main Street (from Lanesborough) would have a single entry lane.
- The lights would include a pedestrian stage during which all vehicular traffic would be stopped.
- Each cycle of the traffic lights would be two minutes duration approximately.
Athlone Road Junction

The proposed roundabout would have the following characteristics:

- An inscribed circle diameter of 26m;
- A single entry lane on each approach;
- Uncontrolled pedestrian crossings of each arm, with the crossing manoeuvres split by the channelizing island on each arm.
- Widened footpaths on all sides of the junction.

N55 Main Street

The section on Main Street between both junctions will be amended in its layout to suit the proposed junction improvements. The road pavement will be renewed and new road markings and signage will be provided.

Proposals for the Main Street also include:

- Redesign and reconstruction of the footpath & parking layout;
- Cycle track - it is proposed to provide a two-way cycle track on the footpath to the western side of the street;
- Reconstruction of the road pavement - the N55 carriageway will be renewed as part of the works;
- Improvement to pedestrian facilities;
- Improvements to street furniture and landscaping to include hard and soft landscaping, street furniture, planters, seating and lighting.
4. IDENTIFICATION OF NATURA 2000 SITES

4.1. Description of Natura Sites

Departmental guidance suggests an assessment of Natura 2000 sites within a zone of influence of 15 km which can be revised down depending on the proposed development and location of Natura 2000 sites. Natura sites that are located in the vicinity of the project area are listed in Table 1 and shown in Figure 1. The red dashed line outlines the area with a 15 km radius from the project site (the site is located at the centre of the circle).

![Natura sites located within 15 km radius of the Project](source npws.ie)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE CODE</th>
<th>SITE NAME</th>
<th>Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>000440</td>
<td>Lough Ree SAC</td>
<td>5 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>004064</td>
<td>Lough Ree SPA</td>
<td>5.3 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>002313</td>
<td>Ballymore Fen SAC</td>
<td>9 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>002202</td>
<td>Mount Jessop Bog SAC</td>
<td>13 km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Natura 2000 sites located within 15 km radius of the Project

The closest point of the Lough Ree SAC (Site Code 000440) to the project site is approximately 5 km and that of the Lough Ree SPA (Site Code 004064) is approximately 5.3 km (the outlines of both areas overlap but do not coincide exactly).
The River Inny flows through Ballymahon to Lough Ree. It crosses the project site at Inny Bridge, Ballymahon and it outfalls, as the Owenacharra River, to Lough Ree at Derry, Co Longford, a location that lies within the Lough Ree SAC/SPA. The length of river between the site and the nearest point of the SAC/SPA is 8.2 km.

Details of the qualifying interests of relevant Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) of Natura 2000 sites are listed in Table 2, while details of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are listed Table 3. Site Synopses are available from the NPWS website. Data on the Natura 2000 network was extracted from the NPWS website on 31st July 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Code</th>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Qualifying Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>000440</td>
<td>Lough Ree SAC</td>
<td>1355 Otter Lutra lutra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7230 Alkaline Fens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8240 Limestone pavements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>91A0 Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>91D0 Bog woodland*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>002313</td>
<td>Ballymore Fen SAC</td>
<td>7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>002202</td>
<td>Mount Jessop Bog SAC</td>
<td>7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>91D0 Bog woodland*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Priority Habitat

Table 2: SACs located within the potential zone of influence of the Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Code</th>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Qualifying Species*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>004064</td>
<td>Lough Ree SPA</td>
<td>A004 Little Grebe - Tachybaptus ruficollis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A038 Whooper Swan - Cygnus cygnus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A050 Wigeon - Anas penelope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A052 Teal - Anas crecca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A053 Mallard - Anas platyrhynchos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A056 Shoveler - Anas clypeata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A061 Tufted Duck - Aythya fuligula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A065 Common Scoter - Melanitta nigra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A067 Goldeneye - Bucephala clangula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A125 Coot - Fulica atra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A140 Golden Plover - Pluvialis apricaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A142 Lapwing - Vanellus vanellus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A193 Common Tern Sterna - Hirundo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* There are no Qualifying Habitats

Table 3: SPAs located within the potential zone of influence of the Project

It is noted that this Lough Ree SAC (004400) overlaps with Lough Ree SPA (004064) and that the conservation objectives for both sites should be used in conjunction.
4.2. Conservation Objectives of the relevant Natura 2000 Sites

Specific attributes, measures and targets are presented in the relevant Conservation Objectives documents and will be addressed in more detail if required after potential impacts have been determined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Conservation Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lough Ree SAC - 000440</td>
<td>1355 To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Otter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3150 To restore the favourable conservation condition of Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6210 To restore the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7120 To restore the favourable conservation condition of Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7230 To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Alkaline fens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8240 To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>91A0 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>91D0 To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Bog woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymore Fen SAC - 002313</td>
<td>7140 To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Transition mires and quaking bogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Jessop Bog SAC - 002202</td>
<td>7120 To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>91D0 To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lough Ree SPA - 004064</td>
<td>General To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at Lough Ree SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory water birds that utilise it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Conservation Objectives

The favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- 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, and
- 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.
4.3. Assessment Criteria

The assessment criteria used within the Appropriate Assessment screening may include:

- Description of the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site.
- Description of any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of:
  1. Size and scale.
  2. Land-take.
  3. Distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site.
  4. Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.).
  5. Emissions (disposal to land, water or air).
  6. Excavation requirements.
  7. Transportation requirements.
  8. Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.
- Description of any likely changes to the site arising as a result of:
  1. Reduction of habitat area and habitat alteration.
  2. Disturbance to key species habitat or species fragmentation.
  3. Reduction in species density.
  4. Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.).
  5. Climate change.
- Description of any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site, as a whole, in terms of:
  1. Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site.
  2. Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site.
- Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above, in terms of:
  1. Loss.
  2. Fragmentation.
  3. Disruption.
  4. Disturbance.
  5. Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.).

Description from the elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant, or where the scale or magnitude of impacts are not known.

For specific Natura 2000 Sites Qualifying Interests previously listed (Table 4), the current threats are identified and are shown in Table 5 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifying Interests</th>
<th>Key environmental conditions supporting site integrity</th>
<th>Current Threats to Qualifying Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alkaline fens</td>
<td>High water table. Ground surface water supply. Calcium-rich conditions</td>
<td>Groundwater dependant. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bog woodland</td>
<td>Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management</td>
<td>Drainage, peat cutting, burning and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration</td>
<td>Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management</td>
<td>Changes in agricultural practices; afforestation and general forest management; burning; peat extraction; drainage; and the introduction of invasive species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limestone pavements</td>
<td>Physical removal. Scrub encroachment</td>
<td>Quarring, reclamation for agriculture and reduced farming activity which has facilitated the spread of scrub over some areas. Intensive agriculture and domestic/municipal waste sources in the vicinity of pavement may also threaten groundwater.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition – type vegetation</td>
<td>Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution.</td>
<td>Nutrient enrichment arising from intensification of agriculture and urban developments. Hydrological changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles</td>
<td>Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Introduction of alien species.</td>
<td>The introduction of alien species; suboptimal grazing patterns; general forestry management; increases in urbanisation and human habitation adjacent to oak woodlands; and the construction of communication networks through the woodland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otter (Lutra lutra)</td>
<td>Prey availability. Water Quality. Riparian vegetation for breeding sites. Unhindered passage along waterways.</td>
<td>Decrease in water quality: Use of pesticides; fertilization; vegetation removal; professional fishing (including lobster pots and fyke nets); hunting; poisoning; sand and gravel extraction; mechanical removal of peat; urbanised areas; human habitation; continuous urbanization; drainage; management of aquatic and bank vegetation for drainage purposes; and canalization or modifying structures of inland water course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia) (*important orchid sites)</td>
<td>Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change.</td>
<td>The main threats to this habitat include the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices and reclamation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wetlands &amp; Waterbirds</td>
<td>Highly sensitive to hydrological changes and loss of wetland habitat. Sensitive to disturbance.</td>
<td>A number of pressures have been identified by Crowe (2005). These pressures include: the modification of wetland sites, particularly for industry or housing and increased levels of disturbance, largely related to recreational activity. Eutrophication at a number of wetland sites as a result of nutrient inputs from a range of polluting activities were also identified as a potential pressure. However this latter pressure is now being alleviated through stricter control of activities associated with water discharge/runoff etc. Climate change was also noted as a significant factor underlying changes in trends of wintering water birds in Ireland.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Threats to Qualifying Interests
The most likely link between the proposed project and Natura 2000 Sites based on the identified threats can be:

- Any hydrological changes,
- Decrease in water quality.

4.4. Ecological Network Supporting Natura 2000 Sites

An analysis of the proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) and designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) in terms of their role in supporting the species using Natura 2000 sites was undertaken. It was assumed that these supporting roles mainly related to mobile fauna such as mammals and birds.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations 2011 place a high degree of importance on such non-Natura 2000 areas as features that connect the Natura 2000 network. Features such as ponds, woodlands and important hedgerows were taken into account during the screening process.

There are two NHAs within the 15 km radius from the scheme location - Forthill Bog (Site Code 001448) and Mount Jessop Bog (Site Code 001450 - overlapping area with Mount Jessop SAC). There is no direct connectivity to the proposed Project.

There is one pNHA - The Royal Canal (Site Code 002103) located approximately 1.8 km to the north and west of the Project; however, there is no hydrological or biological connectivity of significance with the proposed Project.
5. IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS & ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

There are no Natura 2000 Sites within the proposed works area; therefore no Qualifying Interest or habitats will be subject to direct impacts or habitat loss.

5.1. Identification of potential, accumulative and in-combination potential Impacts

The project is located beside the River Inny, which is a hydrological pathway between the area surrounding the site and the Lough Ree SAC/SPA. A worst-case scenario to be considered is a change in water quality in Lough Ree from an accidental spillage into the River Inny. The effect would have to be considered in terms of changes in water quality which would affect the Qualifying Interest species and/or Qualifying Interest habitats for which the downstream SAC and SPA species are designated. In that regard it is noted that the works have the following characteristics:

- there are no works to be undertaken in the River Inny;
- the structure of the existing bridge (Ballymahon bridge) is not being changed. The only works at the bridge are modifications to the footpaths on the deck and renewal of the road pavement over the bridge;
- the existing drainage network is to be re-used. No new outfalls are to be constructed to the Inny River. Hydrocarbon interceptors and silt traps are to be provided on new drainage runs thereby removing the risk of runoff containing contaminants or sediments entering the river;
- existing angled wing walls extending from the bridge retain the adjacent ground. No work is to be done to these wing walls and the existing ground at the wing walls is to be undisturbed. The earthworks associated with the Athlone Road roundabout are small scale and are located away from the river.

There is therefore no direct connectivity between the proposed project and the River Inny or the Lough Ree SAC / SPA.

Specifically, in relation to construction phase risks the description of the works contains the following list of construction-stage measures:

- Construction of the project is to be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan;
- Disposal of waste – construction and demolition waste such as excavated road pavement and footpaths - to be deposited to licenced facilities;
- Liquid and fluid material to be stored in bunded areas distant from the river.
- Spill kits to be kept on site;
- Drip trays to be used for any static machinery;
- Refuelling by mobile machinery to be done at designated bunded areas;
- No stockpiled material or materials storage near the river; and
- Hydrocarbon interceptors and silt traps are to be provided on new drainage runs.

During the construction stage there will be no connectivity between the project and the River Inny or the Lough Ree SAC / SPA.
The distances over which water-borne pollutants would be likely to remain suspended and have sufficient concentrations to cause a significant impact on receiving waters is difficult to quantify and is highly case specific (dependent on the type of pollutant, nature of the pollution event and hydrologically related flow-proportional concentrations, etc.). A conservative estimate is that the distance over which a short-duration accidental surface water discharge could have a significant impact on receiving freshwater receptors is considered to be no more than 5 km (for large order waterbodies) but may be substantially less for smaller waterbodies (especially during dry weather flow conditions). The closest Natura 2000 Site is 8.2 km distant by river from the scheme location. Therefore, notwithstanding that there is no connectivity between the project and the river, a short-duration accidental spillage would not be considered to cause a significant impact on the Lough Ree SAC / SPA.

5.2. Identification of potential, accumulative and in-combination potential Impacts

As part of the Screening for an Appropriate Assessment, in addition to the proposed works, other relevant projects and plans in the region must also be considered at this stage.

Table 6 lists projects in the region that were included in the assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Plan or Project</th>
<th>Potential cumulative or in-combination impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15174</td>
<td>Forest Holiday Village at Newcastle Wood - Center Parcs Development</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Construction of a Cycle Track from Ballymahon to Newcastle Bridge</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Projects in the Ballymahon region

There are no in-combination effects predicted between the above listed and the proposed Project.

5.3. Outline on Potential Impacts

All information collected on the sensitivity of each Natura 2000 site was used to identify any likely significant effects of implementation of the Project.

The likelihood of significant effects to a Natura 2000 site from the project were determined based on a number of indicators including:

- Habitat loss.
- Habitat alteration.
- Water quality.
- Disturbance and/or displacement of species.
- Habitat or species fragmentation.
The following *Table 7* outlines the potential impacts on the Natura 2000 Sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Potential Direct or Indirect Impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Habitat loss / alteration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lough Ree SAC - 000440</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymore Fen SAC - 002313</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Jessop Bog SAC - 002202</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lough Ree SPA - 004064</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7 Outline of the potential impacts*
6. SCREENING STATEMENT

It is acknowledged that it is for the competent authority, in this case Longford County Council, to carry out a screening for AA and to reach one of the following determinations:

- AA of the proposed development is required if it cannot be concluded, on the basis of the objective information, that the proposed project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 site.
- AA of the proposed development is not required if it can be concluded, on the basis of the objective information, that the proposed project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 site.

The potential impacts associated with the implementation of the proposed development have been considered in the context of the Natura 2000 sites, and their Qualifying Interests and conservation objectives.

It is concluded that the proposed development, as it stands:

- is not directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of the Natura 2000 sites considered in this assessment;
- is unlikely to indirectly, significantly affect the Qualifying interests or Conservation Objectives of the Natura 2000 sites considered in this assessment;
- alone or in combination with other projects, is not likely to have significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites considered in this assessment in view of their conservation objectives;
- It is possible to conclude that there would be no adverse effects on site integrity resulting from the project and that there would be no significant effects, no potentially significant effects and no uncertain effects if the project were to proceed.

It is our opinion that it is not necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process.

A finding of no significant effects report is presented overleaf in the format required by Longford County Council.
Step 1

Is development required for management of Natura 2000 site?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 2 - Description of proposed development

Size, Scale, Area, land Take

To improve the existing T-junction at Nally’s Corner to traffic signals and the existing T-junction at the Athlone Road to a roundabout and to upgrade the section of Main Street between them to suit. Approximate length of the scheme is 500 m.

Physical changes – excavation / Piling / Dredging etc.

Improvement of junctions’ layout.

- Signing and road lining to appropriate standard.
- Redesign and reconstruction of the footpath & parking layout.
- Cycle track - it is proposed to provide a two-way cycle track on the footpath to the western side of the Main street.
- Reconstruction of the road pavement on the N55 and R392 carriageways will be renewed as part of the works.
- Improvement to pedestrian facilities.
- Landscaping works.
- Improvements to street furniture, planters, seating and lighting.
- Diversion of Utilities.

Resource requirements

Pavement Materials

Other typical materials may include:

- Drainage and ducting materials
- Geotextiles
- Road lining
- Concrete
- Street furniture
- Lighting poles
- Signage
- Haulage and excavation plant associated with earthworks and other works etc.

It is intended to maximise use of site earthworks material. Imported earthworks materials are not expected to be significant in quantity and will be from local quarries.

Emissions and waste

Identification of possible waste arising from the project:

- Construction waste
- Vegetation clearance
- Utilities waste
- Fuels and oils

Wastes arising from this project will be typical of road construction projects. The project construction will be undertaken in accordance with the NRA Guidelines for the Management of Waste from National Road Construction Projects.

Transportation requirements

N55 and R392 to be used for access to the site.

Duration of construction/operation/ decommissioning

Estimated duration is 7 months.

Distance from Natura 2000 Site (or key Features)

The distance to the closest Natura 2000 Site (Lough Ree SAC) is 5 km.

Other relevant projects/Plans

Center Parc Development

Construction of a Cycle Track from Ballymahon to Newcastle Bridge

Step 3 – Characteristics of the Site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE CODE</th>
<th>SITE NAME</th>
<th>Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>004064</td>
<td>Lough Ree SPA</td>
<td>5.3 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>000440</td>
<td>Lough Ree SAC</td>
<td>5 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>002313</td>
<td>Ballymore Fen SAC</td>
<td>9 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>002202</td>
<td>Mount Jessop Bog SAC</td>
<td>13 km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Characteristics (PlanReg report)

See AA screening report
### Step 4 – Assessment of Significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Significant Effects</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicator</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Habitat Area</td>
<td>% of loss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragmentation</td>
<td>Duration/Permanence/level in relation to original context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance</td>
<td>Duration/Permanence – distance from site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Species Population Density</td>
<td>Timescale for Replacement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Resource</td>
<td>Relative change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Quality</td>
<td>Relative change in key elements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Combination effects</td>
<td>Other Plans or Projects in Vicinity*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of advice from NPWS**

### Screening Conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AA is Not Required</th>
<th>Plan or Project directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the site</th>
<th>No Potential for significant effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA is required</td>
<td>Significant effects Certain/ Likely/ Uncertain</td>
<td>Applicant advised of requirement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 8 Appropriate Assessment Conclusion Statement**