



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ABP-322284-25

Development

NIS Screening Determination for the proposed remediation of Ballymaurice Closed Landfill

Location

Ballymaurice, County Longford

Planning Authority

Longford County Council

Applicant

Longford County Council

Type of Application

NIS Direction / Screening determination under the provisions of Article 250 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended.

Date of Site Inspection

29th May 2025

Inspector

Máire Daly

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. Pursuant to Article 250(3) of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, Longford County Council is seeking a direction from An Bord Pleanála as to whether or not a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is required to be prepared in respect of its proposal to carry out remediation works to a closed landfill at Ballymaurice, Co. Longford.
- 1.2. The accompanying report entitled 'Ballymaurice Historic Landfill Appropriate Assessment Screening Report' prepared by the Fehily Timoney on behalf of Longford County Council has concluded that the proposed works, either alone or in combination with other plans and / or projects, do not have the potential to significantly affect any European Site, in light of their Conservation Objectives, and thus Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment along with the preparation of an NIS is not required in this instance.

2.0 Background

- 2.1. In December 2022, Longford County Council lodged an application to the Environmental Protection Agency for a Certificate of Authorisation, under the Waste Management (Certification of Historic Unlicensed Waste Disposal and Recovery Activity), Regulations, 2008, for proposed remediation works at Ballymaurice Closed Landfill.
- 2.2. In May 2023, under Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, the EPA carried out an Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination and concluded as follows:
 - *that the activity is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site and that it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the activity, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any European site and accordingly determined that an Appropriate Assessment of the activity was not required.*
- 2.3. I note that with respect to Regulation 42(21)(a) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, for the purposes of the regulation of the

proposed remediation work at Ballymaurice Closed Landfill, the EPA are the 'first authority' and An Bord Pleanála, are the 'second authority'. The sequencing of these applications to the competent authorities, was decided following engagement during 2019, between the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices (RWMPOs), the then named Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, the then named Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the EPA.

- 2.4. Following the outcomes of the above engagement Longford County Council are now submitting this request to the Board under Section 177U of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended.
- 2.5. The Board should note that Longford County Council received a Final Decision from the EPA on 20th of December 2024 with respect to the application for a Certificate of Authorisation for the proposed remediation of Ballymaurice Closed Landfill.

3.0 Site Location and Description

- 3.1. The proposed development site with an area of c. 1.2ha is located approximately 1.5km south of the settlement of Granard, located in the townland of Ballymaurice in County Longford. Access to the site is provided from the east via a locked gateway off the L1077 local road. The Granard Wastewater Treatment Plant (WwTP) is located to the site's immediate north. The surrounding lands predominantly comprise of agricultural lands and forestry plantation with scattered rural dwellings and farmsteads.
- 3.2. A small drainage channel runs along the northern and southern site boundary, and which are hydrologically linked to a stream and Loughanagower lake, a small lake adjacent to the site's southwestern boundary. The site in general slopes from the north to south. The waste material deposited on the site has created a raised mound i.e. a land raise, which is elevated above the surrounding landscape by approximately 2 - 6 metres.
- 3.3. As stated, the nearest surface water feature is the Loughanagower lake, located beyond the south-western boundary of the site. This feeds the Rhine stream (EPA code 26R04) which in turn flows in a north-westerly direction meeting the Camlin River (EPA code 26C01) 6.7 km (10.3 km in-stream distance) downstream of the

site. The Camlin River eventually meets the River Shannon [Upper] (EPA code 26S02), 28.2km west of the site.

4.0 Proposed Development

4.1. The proposed development comprises remediation works which were developed as part of an Environmental Risk Assessment that formed part of an application to the Environmental Protection Agency for a Certificate of Authorisation pursuant to the Waste Management (Certification of Historic Unlicensed Waste Disposal and Recovery Activity) Regulations, 2008.

4.2. Longford County Council are submitting this request in accordance with Step 3(c) of the aforementioned RWMPO Guidance document, which directs, following the legal advice obtained by the RWMPOs, that this request is to be submitted under Section 177U of the Planning & Development Act 2000. Longford County Council received a Final Decision from the EPA on 20th of December 2024 with respect to the application for a Certificate of Authorisation for the proposed remediation of Ballymaurice Closed Landfill.

4.2.1. The completed Tier 3 Quantitative Risk Assessment recommended remediation works comprising: invasive species management, landfill capping and environmental monitoring. These works are also detailed in the submitted AA Screening Report as outlined below and the relevant drawings can be found within the Tier 3 Risk Assessment (dated December 2022) which accompanies the application:

Site Clearance

4.2.2. Vegetation within the capping area (Drawing nr. P21-060-0100-0003) will be removed prior to remediation. Approx. 1.2 ha of vegetation will be removed. This vegetation will be removed to an authorised waste facility for disposal.

Invasive Species Treatment

4.2.3. Treatment of the full extent of invasive species rhizomal growth, including potential vector material will begin prior to the construction, and will commence for two or more growing seasons. Invasive vegetation will be buried to at least 2m and encapsulated in a 0.7mm visqueen barrier. The location and details of this burial site

are depicted in Drawing P21-060-0100-0004. Areas with the presence of invasive species will be isolated and have appropriate signage during and following works.

Land Capping

- 4.2.4. The existing capping will be excavated to formation level. This capping material will then be screened and reused where appropriate. The excavated surface will be trimmed and prepared to receive the new capping. Capping material that will not be reused will be removed to an authorised waste facility. An engineered landfill cap will be installed to reduce the generation of leachate via percolation of rainwater and subsequently the potential migration of leachate to surface water. A standard 1m capping layer will be installed across the site. The area of the proposed capping is shown on Drawing nr. P21-060-0100-0004. The capping will consist of a 200m topsoil layer on top of an 800mm sub soil layer. The cap will then be seeded with grass from a licensed source.

Landfill Gas Management

- 4.2.5. During capping works, the existing monitoring wells, will be protected and retained, and integrated into the final cap. The locations of these existing wells are detailed in Drawing nr. P21-060-0100-0005. Landfill gas management measures will include the installation of 9 no. passive landfill gas ventilation stacks subject to final detailed design. Proposed locations of the passive gas vents are shown on Drawing nr. P21-060-0700-0001. Installation of these gas vents will include light cable percussion boreholes and the installation of slotted vertical pipe below ground. A reinforced concrete foundation will be constructed. This will be a slab on CI 804 subbase. Subsequently, a standpipe with rotating cowl will be installed, including anchorages and holding down bolt assemblies. A diagram is presented in Drawing P21-060-0900-0001 (Section B-B) with details of the passive gas vents.

Drainage

- 4.2.6. The existing north-western perimeter drain will be culverted (Drawing P21-060-0900-0001, Section A-A). To achieve this, a 560mm diameter HDPE solid pipe will be installed, and the existing ditch will be backfilled with subsoil. In the adjacent French drain, a 160mm slotted pipe will be installed. The French drain will then be backfilled with 16-32mm rounded, non-calcareous drainage stone.

- 4.2.7. A total of 2 no. concrete headwalls and 1 no. concrete manhole will then be constructed. Drawing P21-060- 0900-0002 details the headwall and manholes. This may involve the use of concrete poured in situ, which will be decided in the detailed design stage. This worst case scenario is assumed.

Temporary Construction Compound

- 4.2.8. During the remediation phase, temporary facilities will be provided on site to accommodate personnel. A temporary site compound, requiring no permanent installations, will be set up in within the site boundary.

Perimeter Fencing and Site Security

- 4.2.9. Around the site perimeter, security palisade fencing will be installed with 2 no. lockable palisade gates (Drawing nr. P21-060-0200-0001).

Operational Phase/Post Construction

- 4.2.10. Post construction works there will be no operational activities associated with this site other than conducting environmental monitoring. Environmental monitoring shall comprise of surface water, groundwater and landfill gas monitoring. There will be no requirement for further ground investigations/excavations. Continued environmental monitoring will be undertaken on an annual basis up until the recommendations of the Certificate of Authorisation are known and remediation works are complete.

5.0 Legislative & Policy Context

5.1. The Planning & Development Regulations, 2001, as amended:

- 5.1.1. Under the provisions of article 250(1) of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, where a local authority proposes to carry out a development it is required to carry out a screening of the proposed development to assess if the development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site. If on the basis of a screening under 250(1), it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would have a significant effect on a European site, the local authority is required to determine that appropriate assessment of the proposed development is required and

to prepare an NIS and submit the proposed development for approval to the Board under section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. Under article 250(3) any person may apply to the Board for a determination as to whether the development proposed to be carried out by a local authority would be likely to have such significant effect on a European site.

- 5.1.2. The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) deals with the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora throughout the European Union. Article 6(3) and 6(4) require an appropriate assessment of the likely significant effects of a proposed development on its own and in combination with other plans and projects which may have an effect on a European Site (SAC or SPA). The guidance contained in 'Appropriate Assessment for Plans and Projects in Ireland -Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoEHLG 2009) advises that all plans and projects not directly connected to, or, for the management of a Natura 2000 site must be assessed for its potential significant effects on that site before any decision is made to allow that plan or project to proceed. Each plan or project must also be assessed for its possible in-combination effects with other plans or projects. This process is designated 'appropriate assessment' and arises from obligations under Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.

6.0 Request for a Direction and the Documentation Submitted

- 6.1. This application for a determination under the provisions of Article 250 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, was lodged on 11th April 2025 and has been accompanied by the following documentation:

- Cover letter from Longford County Council.
- A report entitled 'Appropriate Assessment Screening Report' prepared by Fehily Timoney, dated December 2022, on behalf of Longford County Council and submitted to EPA as part of the CoA application process, to inform the EPA in making an Appropriate Assessment screening determination.
- Ballymaurice AA Screening determination by the EPA, dated 17th May 2023.
- A report entitled 'Tier 3 Risk Assessment' which contains a Remedial Action Plan. This Remedial Action Plan explains the need for the proposed

remediation works and provides a description of the proposed works (also submitted to EPA as part of CoA application), dated December 2022.

- RWMPO Guidance document for local authorities entitled 'RWMPO Guidance re 'closed landfill' planning and planning exemptions'.

7.0 Planning History

7.1. On Site or on adjacent sites

7.1.1. None.

8.0 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

8.1. Introduction

8.1.1. The proposed development comprises remediation works to a closed landfill at Ballymaurice, Co. Longford.

8.1.2. A Tier 2 Assessment was conducted, with findings of the site investigation showing that the waste material comprised mixed municipal waste material that was deposited in a single infill area with an estimated footprint of 11,000m². Assuming an average waste thickness of 5.65m a calculated volume of waste of approximately 62,150 m³ is deposited at the site. This equates to 87,010 tonnes, assuming a waste density of 1.4 tonne/m³. Trial pitting confirmed the waste material is close to the surface with a minimal topsoil cover present across the site.

8.1.3. Fehily Timoney on behalf of Longford County Council has prepared an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report. The submitted screening report assesses the proposal for remediation works to the Historic Landfill at Ballymaurice, Co Longford. There are no plans for post-remediation development, with environmental monitoring to continue post remediation. The report describes the proposed development, the receiving environment, and the assessment methodologies. It has been informed by a series of desk-top studies and survey work, including the Tier 2 Assessment as outlined above.

8.2. Existing Environment

Surface Water and Groundwater

- 8.2.1. The site of remediation works is located within the Upper Shannon catchment, sub-catchment Camlin_SC_010. The nearest surface water feature is the Loughanagower lake which is located beyond the south-western boundary of the site and feeds the Rhine Stream (EPA code 26R04). The Rhine Stream flows in a north-westerly direction meeting the Camlin River (EPA code 26C01) 6.7km (10.3 km in-stream distance) downstream of the site. The Camlin River is currently under review according to it's WFD status. The Camlin River eventually meets the River Shannon [Upper] (EPA code 26S02), 28.2km west of the site. The latest (2020) biological quality status (Q-rating) for the nearest section of the Rhine stream is 'poor', with a Q-value score of 3.
- 8.2.2. A small drainage channel runs along the northern and southern site boundary, and these have hydrological links to the stream/lake adjacent to the site known as Loughanagower, located beyond the south-western boundary of the site. The Screening Report outlines that through applying the EPA risk screening tool for the assessment of unregulated waste disposal sites, the site presented has a high risk to surface water i.e., the Loughanagower lake. However interpretation of surface water monitoring, review of EPA monitoring data and assimilative capacity assessment indicated that an assumed leachate discharge from the historical landfill is unlikely to have a significant impact on the water quality of the Loughanagower Lake and Rhine Stream.
- 8.2.3. With regards to groundwater vulnerability, the site lies within the Longford Ballinalee groundwater body (Code: IE_SH_G_149). The groundwater within the historic landfill boundary is classified under the update on pressures impacting on water quality published by the EPA as not at risk according to the WFD risk status 2016-2021.

Habitats

- 8.2.4. The habitats on site were assessed by a qualified ecologist and categorised according to Fossitt 2000. The site contained large areas of spoil, and bare ground (ED2), which were comprised of low levels of surfaced landfill and provided a track through the landfill. Large areas of the site were covered in scrub (WS1) and wet willow-alder-ash woodland (WN6). A drainage ditch (FW4) runs along the east and

north and south of the landfill boundary. Freshwater marsh (GM1) dominates the western portion of the site, but also extends along the south of the site, outside the site boundary of the remediation works.

Invasive species

- 8.2.5. Japanese knotweed was recorded on site during the site walkover with an area of approx. 600m² covered in the southeast of the site (see drawing no. P21-060-0100-0003 for location).

8.3. Description of proposed works

- 8.3.1. A full description of the proposed works is contained within the completed Tier 3 Quantitative Risk Assessment which recommended remediation works comprising: invasive species management, landfill capping and environmental monitoring. The details of the proposed works have been already outlined under Section 4.0 of this report above. These works are also detailed in the submitted AA Screening Report as outlined below and the relevant drawings can be found within the Tier 3 Risk Assessment (dated December 2022) which accompanies the application.

8.4. Potential Impacts Arising

- 8.4.1. Taking account of the characteristics of the proposed development in terms of its location and the scale of works, the following issues are considered for examination in terms of implications for likely significant effects on European sites:
- Pollution / contamination via surface water runoff & overland flow;
 - Groundwater contamination;
 - Habitat loss / fragmentation; and
 - Habitat disturbance / species disturbance.
- 8.4.2. Table 2-1 of the AA Screening Report identifies the potential impacts that could arise during the proposed remediation works and include the following:
- Emissions – dust, noise.
 - Pollution to water sources.
 - Spread of invasive species.

- Impact of waste and residues.

8.4.3. There are no operational stage impacts predicted to occur.

8.4.4. The AA screening report concludes *“No pathways for likely significant effects have been identified on any European sites as a result of direct or indirect effects from the remediation works at Ballymaurice Historic Landfill.... Given the scale and nature of the proposed project, it is identified that there are no sources with pathways for effects to any European sites - therefore, there are no further considerations required; this assessment was made in view of the conservation objectives and potential for in combination effects. Thus, a stage 2 Natura Impact Statement is not recommended”*.

8.5. **Identification of Natura 2000 Sites:**

8.5.1. The screening exercise conducted on behalf of the local authority identifies a total of 9 No. European Sites within a 15km Zone of Influence and also beyond the initial 15km buffer another 5 no. sites with hydrological connection which it was determined required further examination.

8.5.2. Table 1 below includes a list of all the sites I have considered in the screening of the proposed development, all of which were also considered by Longford County Council within the Appropriate Assessment Screening document submitted to the Board.

Table 1. European Sites Considered for Stage 1 Screening:

| European Site | Qualifying interests | Distance from proposed development | Connections (source-pathway-receptor) and Zone of Influence (Zol) | Considered further in screening |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Ardagullion Bog SAC (002341) | Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002341.pdf | 3.9km | No connectivity (physical or hydrological) between the QI's and the project site, the European Site is assessed as outside of the Zol of the remediation works. None by reference to the separation distances involved and topographical considerations. | N |
| Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA (004061) | Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>) [A059] Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004061.pdf | 4.5km | Foraging distance for pochard and tufted duck is 105m and 139m respectively (Mori et al., 2001). No connectivity (physical or hydrological) between the SCIs and the remediation site, the European Site is assessed as outside of the Zol of the proposed remediation works. | N |
| Derragh Bog SAC (002201) | Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002201.pdf | 5.3km | No connectivity (physical or hydrological) between the QI's and the project site, the European Site is assessed as outside of the Zol of the proposed remediation works. | N |
| Moneybeg and Clareisland Bogs SAC (002340) | Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] | 7.7km | No connectivity (physical or hydrological) between the QI's and the project site, the European Site is assessed as outside of the Zol of the proposed remediation works. | N |

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|--------------------------------|--|--------|--|---|
| | https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002340.pdf | | | |
| Lough Sheelin SPA (004065) | Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>) [A059] Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004065.pdf | 7.9km | The mean foraging flight distance for pochard and tufted duck is 105m and 139m respectively (Mori et al., 2001). Mean foraging distance for great-crested grebe is 3km (Gittings, 2017). While goldeneye can travel large distances, they typically nest in tree cavities in the proximity of rivers. No hydrological connectivity between the proposed remediation works and the European site, therefore, due to no connectivity between the SPA and proposed remediation site, it is assessed as outside of the Zol of the project. | N |
| Garriskil Bog SAC (000679) | Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000679.pdf | 10.9km | No connectivity (physical or hydrological) between the QI's and the project site, the European Site is assessed as outside of the Zol of the proposed remediation works. | N |
| Garriskil Bog SPA (004102) | Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004102.pdf | 11.1km | No physical connectivity as Greenland white fronted goose has a core foraging range of 5-8km (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2016). There is also no hydrological connection. Therefore, as there is no connectivity between the SCI and project site, the European Site is assessed as outside of the Zol of the proposed remediation works. | |
| Lough Derravaragh SPA (004043) | Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>) [A059] Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] | 12.0km | Whooper swan has a core foraging range of <5km (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2016). The mean foraging flight distance for pochard and tufted duck is 105m and 139m (Mori et al., 2001). Therefore, all special conservation interests are outside the core feeding ranges and the European site is | N |

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|---|--|---|--|---|
| | https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004043.pdf | | assessed as outside the Zol of the proposed remediation works. | |
| Glen Lough SPA (004045) | Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004045.pdf | 13.4km | The Glen Lough SPA lies within the same groundwater body as the historic landfill. However, there is no hydrological connectivity with the Special Conservation Interest (whooper swan, core range <5km (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2016) and the project site, the European Site is assessed as outside of the Zol of the proposed remediation works. | N |
| Mount Jessop Bog SAC (002202) | Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Bog woodland [91D0] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002202.pdf | 22.1km | This bog is within the same groundwater body as the historic landfill. However, remediation of the landfill will alleviate impacts on the groundwater body. Therefore, this European Site is assessed as outside of the Zol of the proposed remediation works. | N |
| Lough Forbes Complex SAC (001818) | Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> - type vegetation [3150] Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO001818.pdf | 38.2km instream 23.4km direct distance | Very weak indirect hydrological connection between the historic landfill and the SAC, via the Rhine stream and Camlin River. However, due to the physical distance and volume of dilution, there are no likely significant effects. Therefore, Lough Forbes Complex SAC is assessed as outside the Zol of the proposed remediation works. | N |
| Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101) | Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004101.pdf | 38.2km instream 23.4km direct Distance | Very weak hydrological connection exists between the historic landfill and the SPA, via the Rhine stream and Camlin River. However, there is no physical connectivity as Greenland white-fronted goose has a core foraging range of 5-8km (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2016). Therefore, as there is no | N |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | | | connectivity between the SCI and the historic landfill, the European Site is assessed as outside of the Zol of the proposed remediation works. | |
| Lough Ree SAC (000440) | <p>Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> - type vegetation [3150] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Bog woodland [91D0] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</p> <p>https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2023/si/466/made/en/pdf</p> | <p>54.5km Instream</p> <p>32.1 direct Distance</p> | <p>Very weak hydrological connection between the historic landfill and the SAC, via the Rhine stream, Camlin River, and Upper Shannon. However, due to the physical distance and volume of dilution, there are no likely significant effects. Therefore, Lough Ree SAC is assessed as outside the Zol of the proposed remediation works.</p> | N |
| Lough Ree SPA (004064) | <p>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]</p> <p>https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004064.pdf</p> | <p>54.5km instream</p> <p>32.1 direct distance</p> | <p>Very weak hydrological connection between the historic landfill and the SPA, via the Rhine stream, Camlin River, and Upper Shannon. However, due to the large distance the remediation works is beyond the foraging range of SCI species, therefore, the Lough Ree SPA is assessed as outside the Zol of the proposed remediation works.</p> | N |

- 8.5.3. It should be emphasised that there are no European Sites within c. 4km of the subject site. The main potential for indirect effects on the conservation objectives of European sites are surface water pollution, indirect habitat loss, disturbance/ displacement and loss of ex-situ habitat on site for SCI birds. However, there will be no habitat loss nor ex-situ habitat on site suitable for SCI birds. Disturbance/ displacement effects are not possible as QIs do not use the site. The qualifying interest species/ habitat listed are a substantial distance from the subject site and there is no interaction with the SPAs listed.
- 8.5.4. Of the European sites identified within the table above as having very weak hydrological links these are all via the Rhine stream and Camlin River. In the case of the two SPA's identified, the Lough Ree SPA (004064) and Ballykenny Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101) given the large separation distances involved these sites are considered outside the zone of influence. With regard to the two SAC's listed above, the Lough Ree SAC (000440) and the Lough Forbes Complex SAC (001818) again due to the large separation distances involved these are also considered outside of the Zol. I note that the Mount Jessop Bog SAC (002202) and Glen Lough SPA (004045) are located within the same groundwater body as the historic landfill, however, given the proposed remediation works will result in a reduction in the intensity of the existing pressure of leachate at the landfill site, it is expected that any impacts on groundwater would be positive and therefore no likely significant effects are expected on either of the qualifying interests listed or their conservation objectives. All connections are over a substantial separation distance and separated from the subject site by intervening agricultural land and urban development. Having regard to the scale of the proposed development and the nature of the works, together with the separation distances involved, I am satisfied that there is no potential for impacts on any European Site to occur from water quality impacts.

8.6. Potential for In-Combination Effects

- 8.6.1. The potential for cumulative and in-combination effects with other plans and projects is considered in Table 2-1 of the submitted Screening Report, with a list of all projects considered under Appendix 1 of same report. The assessment involved a planning search on townlands within 1km of the proposed remediation site within the years 2017-2022 (i.e. the last five years up to the time of the submitted report).

Having conducted an updated search of the surrounding area for more recent planning applications I am satisfied that no significant effects would occur in-combination with the proposed remediation works.

- 8.6.2. In this regard, having considered the planning history of the surrounding area and the potential plans identified in the screening exercise which includes for the extant Longford County Development Plan, I am satisfied that the that the proposed development would therefore have no likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects on the qualifying features of any European sites and therefore no further assessment is required for the project.

8.7. Mitigation Measures

- 8.7.1. No measures designed or intended to avoid or reduce any harmful effects of the project on a European Site have been relied upon in this screening exercise.

8.8. Conclusion on AA Screening – Screening Determination

- 8.8.1. Having regard to the foregoing, I conclude that that the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. It is therefore determined that Appropriate Assessment (stage 2) is not required.

- 8.8.2. This conclusion is based on:

- Objective information presented in the Screening Report,
- The limited zone of influence of potential impacts,
- Unsuitability of habitats at the application site for supporting mobile species associated with any European Site,
- Standard pollution controls that would be employed regardless of proximity to a European site and effectiveness of same,
- Distance from European Sites,
- The absence of meaningful pathway to any European site,
- Impacts predicted would not affect the conservation objectives.

8.8.3. As stated previously no measures intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on European sites were taken into account in reaching this conclusion.

9.0 Recommendation

9.1. I recommend that Longford County Council be advised that the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement in respect of the proposed remediation works at the Ballymaurice Historic Landfill is not required for the reasons and considerations set out below.

10.0 Reasons and Considerations

10.1. Having regard to:

- (a) the nature and scale of the proposed development;
- (b) the physical, topographical and hydrological separation distances between the proposed development and European sites;
- (c) the unsuitability of habitats at the application site to support mobile species associated with any European Site,
- (d) the lack of meaningful hydrological connections between the site and the European sites;
- (e) the standard pollution controls that would be employed regardless of proximity to a European site and effectiveness of same,
- (f) the submission made on behalf of the local authority, including the Screening for Appropriate Assessment prepared on behalf of the local authority;
- (g) the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027; and
- (h) the report and recommendation of the person appointed by the Board to make a report and recommendation on the matter,

10.2. It is considered reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information available, which is considered adequate to issue a screening determination, that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to have a significant effect on the identified European sites, in view of

the conservation objectives of these sites and that a Stage 2 AA and the submission of a NIS for the proposed development is not required.

Professional Declaration

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

Máire Daly

Senior Planning Inspector

30th June 2025