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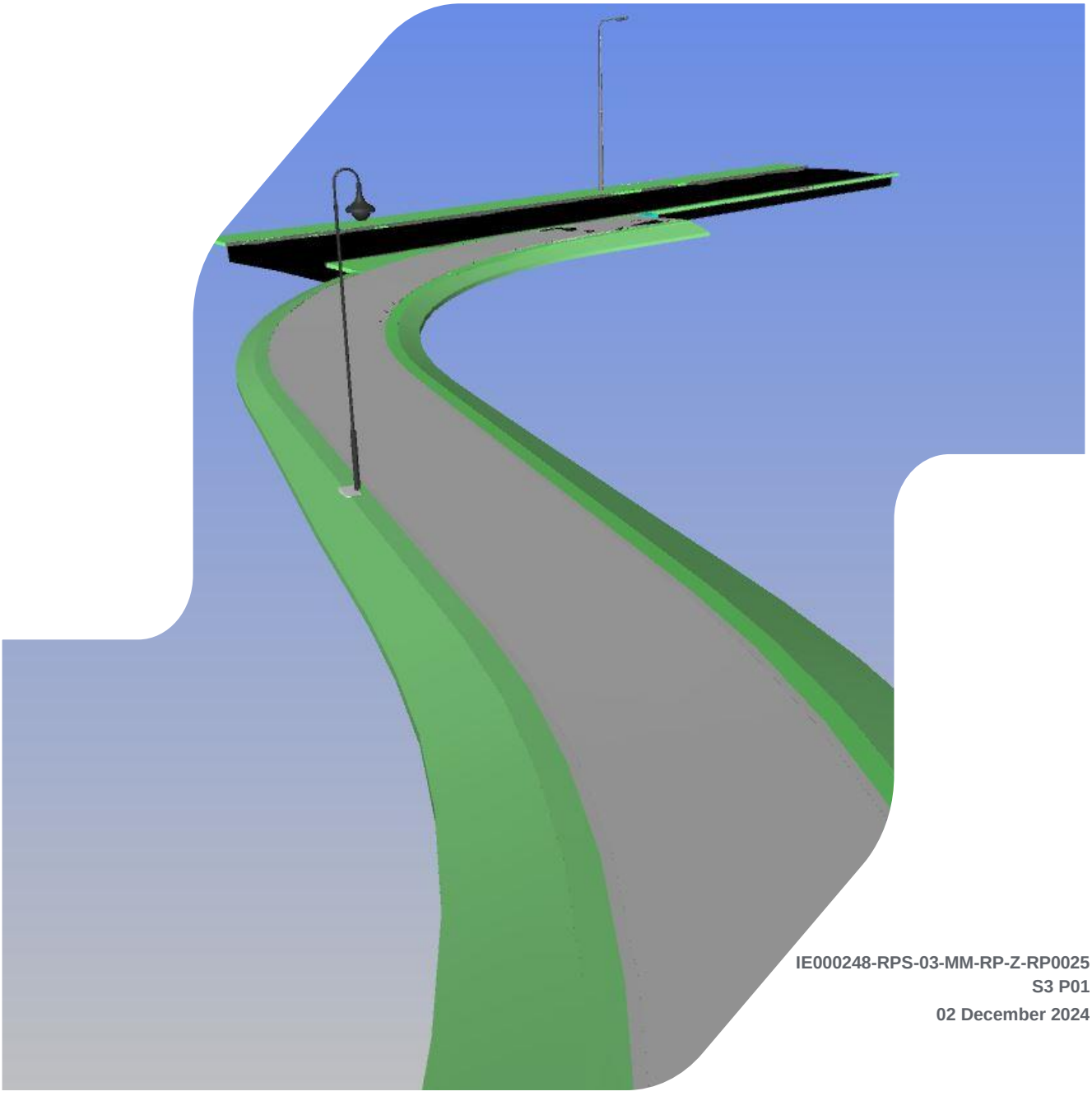
MONEYMORE / CASTLE MANOR PEDESTRIAN LINK

Report to Inform Screening for Appropriate Assessment



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Prepared By:

RPS

Prepared For:

Louth County Council

Dublin | Cork | Galway | Sligo | Kilkenny
rpsgroup.com

RPS Group Limited, registered in Ireland No. 91911
RPS Consulting Engineers Limited, registered in Ireland No. 161581
RPS Engineering Services Limited, registered in Ireland No. 99795
The Registered office of each of the above companies is West Pier Business Campus, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, A96 N6T7

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of Report

RPS was commissioned by Louth County Council to prepare this report to inform their Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) with respect to the upgrading of an existing informal pedestrian route to a formal permanent footpath between the Moneymore and Castle Manor housing estates in Drogheda, Co. Louth (hereafter referred to as the "Proposed Project"). The location of the Proposed Project is shown in **Figure 2-2**.

This report is an examination of whether, in view of best-scientific knowledge and applying the precautionary principle, the Proposed Project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on any European Site(s). The assessment was carried out in accordance with the legislative context outlined in **Section 1.2**.

1.2 Legislative Context

1.2.1 European Sites

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as the 'Habitats Directive', provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of a European Union-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000 (hereafter referred to as 'European Sites'). In the Republic of Ireland, European Sites comprise:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated for habitats, plants, and non-bird species, under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC);
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified for bird species and their habitats, under the Birds Directive (79/409/ECC as codified by Directive 2009/147/EC); and
- 'Candidate' sites including 'cSACs' and 'proposed' sites including 'pSPAs'. The process of designating cSACs as SACs and pSPAs as SPAs is ongoing in Ireland. The terms SAC and SPA are used throughout this report for both SACs and cSACs and SPAs and pSPAs given they are subject to equal protection.

Each European Site has assigned Conservation Objectives (COs) and a list of Qualifying Interests (QIs) or Special Conservation Interests (SCIs). The CO concept appears in the eight recital of Directive 92/43/EEC, which reads: '*whereas it is appropriate, in each area designated, to implement the necessary measures having regard to the conservation objectives pursued'.* Article 1 then explains that *'conservation means a series of measures required to maintain or restore the natural habitats and the populations of species of wild fauna and flora at a favourable status'.*

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) publish COs for European Sites on their website. The NPWS advise in the general introductory notes of their site-specific CO series publications that an AA based on their 'published conservation objectives will remain valid even if the conservation objective targets are subsequently updated, providing they were the most-recent objectives available when the assessment as carried out'. The NPWS advise that to assist in that regard, it is essential that the date and version are included when objectives are cited.

1.2.2 Appropriate Assessment

1.2.2.1 European Context

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on or to adversely affect the integrity of European Sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA:

'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject

to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public'.

Article 6(4) states:

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

1.2.2.2 National Context

In the context of the Proposed Project, the requirement (to screen) for AA under the Habitats Directive is transposed by the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended; 'the Planning Act', and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

Under Section 177U (4) of the Planning Act, *'the competent authority determine that an appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or a proposed development, as the case may be, is required if it cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information, that the draft Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European Site'*.

1.3 Stages of Appropriate Assessment

Stage 1: Screening/Test of Significance

This process identifies whether the proposed plan or project is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site(s) and whether the proposed plan or project is likely to have significant effects upon a European Site(s), either alone or in combination with other projects or plans.

The output from this stage (i.e., the subject of this report) is a determination for each European Site(s) of not significant, significant, potentially significant, or uncertain effects. The latter three determinations will cause that European Site to be brought forward to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

This stage considers the effect of the proposed plan or project on the integrity of a European Site(s), either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to: (i) the European Site's conservation objectives; and (ii) the European Site's structure, function, and its overall integrity. Additionally, where there are adverse effects, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those effects is undertaken.

The output from this stage is a Natura Impact Statement (NIS). This document must include sufficient information for the competent authority to carry out the AA. If the assessment is negative, i.e., adverse effects on the integrity of a European Site cannot be excluded, then the process must consider alternatives (Stage 3) or proceed to Stage 4.

Stage 3: Assessment of Alternatives

This process examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the proposed plan or project that avoid adverse effects on the integrity of the European Site. This assessment may be carried out concurrently with Stage 2 in order to find the most appropriate solution. If no alternatives exist or all alternatives would result in negative effects on the integrity of the European Sites, then the process either moves to Stage 4 or the proposed plan or project is abandoned.

Stage 4: Assessment Where Adverse Impacts Remain

This stage includes the identification of compensatory measures where, in the context of Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the proposed plan or project should proceed.

2 THE PROPOSED PROJECT

2.1 Site Location

The Proposed Project, incorporating areas within and between Moneymore and Castle Manor housing estates, and land from Boyne Rugby Football Club, is located approx. 1.5 km north of Drogheda Town Centre, Co. Louth.

The location of the Proposed Project is shown in **Figure 2-1** and **Figure 2-2**, below.

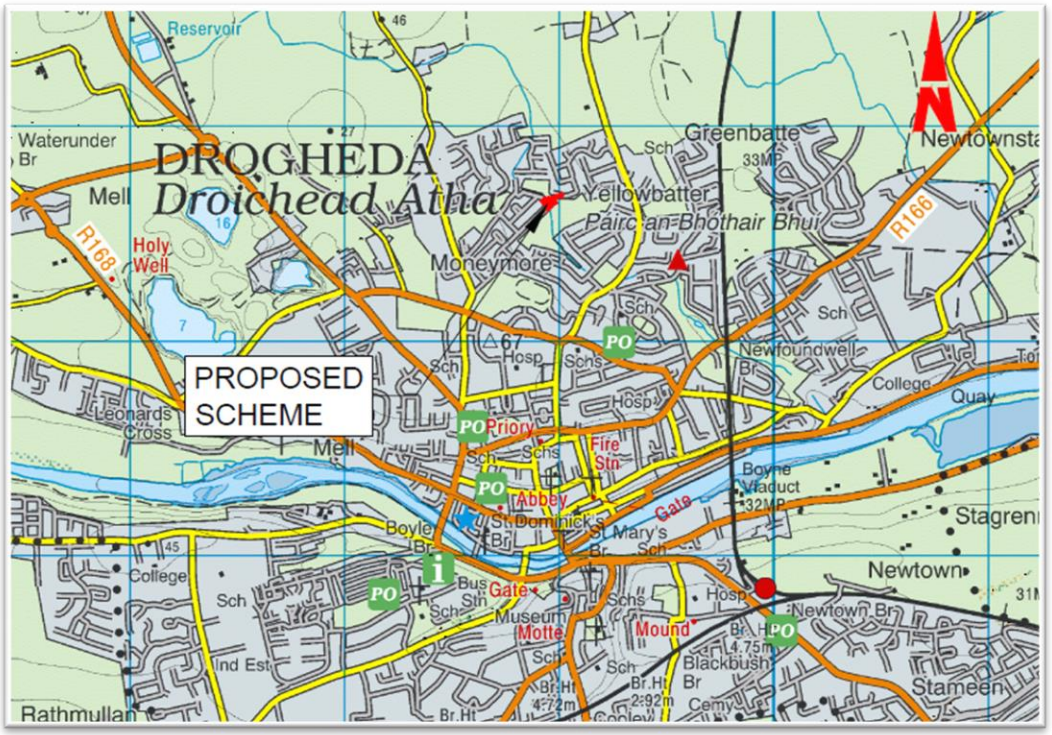


Figure 2-1: Proposed Project Location (Relative to Drogheda, Co. Louth).

Figure 2-2: Proposed Project Location.

2.2 Objective of the Proposed Project

The primary objective of the Proposed Project is to upgrade an existing informal pedestrian route linking the housing estates at Moneymore and Castle Manor to a formal, permanent footpath, to facilitate access to and from schools along Ballymakenny Road and the wider area. The general arrangement for the Proposed Project is illustrated in **Figure 2-3**.

2.3 Description of the Proposed Project

2.3.1 Proposed Path

The proposed path and road cross-section will consist of a typical, 2 m-wide concrete footpath of approx. 69 m in length, with a chicane system to discourage motorbikes using the path. Road crossing points are to be provided on both ends of the footpath.

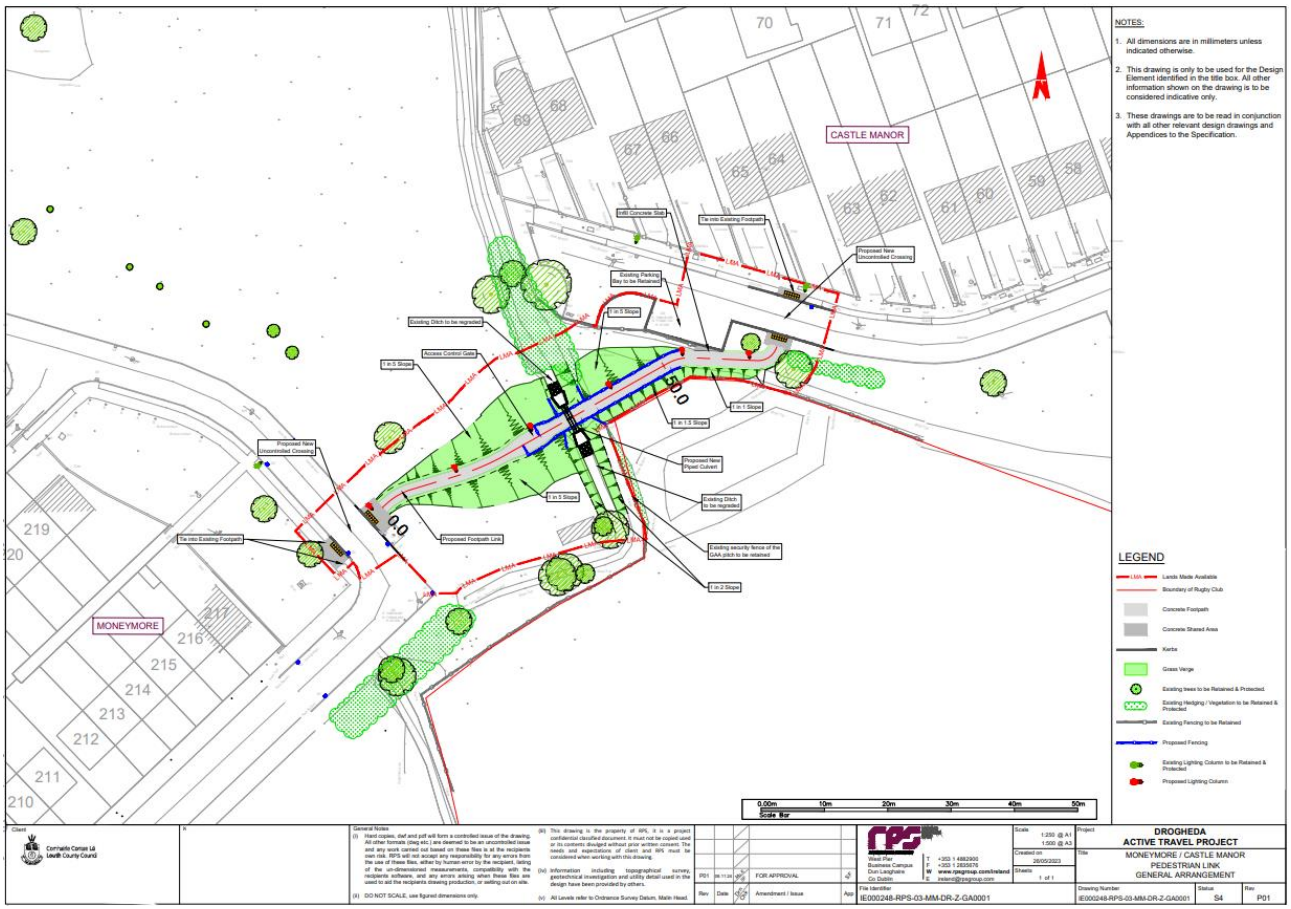


Figure 2-3: Proposed Project General Arrangement.

2.3.2 Land Take

Land take is required for the following two affected landowners:

- Boyne Rugby Football Club; and
- Castle Manor Housing Estate

This land will be acquired through a formal Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO).

2.3.3 Site Clearance

All existing trees within the Proposed Project area will be retained. An area of approx. 193.86 m^2 of low shrubs and overgrown vegetation will be removed. Vegetation will be removed by operators using handheld machinery (e.g., chainsaws, hedge trimmers, mowers, etc.).

2.3.4 Fencing

A chicane access control gate is proposed at the approx. centre of the proposed pedestrian linkage to limit access to motorbikes and fast-moving bicycles travelling along the path at high speeds, to increase pedestrian safety and limit anti-social behaviour. The chicane access control fence will connect into a heavy-duty parkland estate railing parallel to either side of the concrete footpath. The existing palisade fence along the boundaries of the Boyne Rugby Football Club grounds is to be retained.

2.3.5 Earthworks

The proposed footpath will be constructed atop the new embankment, featuring standard side slopes of 1-in-5 gradient. Where site extents are restricted, a 1-in-1 side slope will be required, which will have fencing provided along the top of the embankment, for safety purposes.

2.3.6 Drainage

A new 750 mm diameter piped culvert is proposed to traverse the existing substandard crossing, connecting to the culverted Tullyeskar River to the immediate south of the Proposed Project area. A 300 mm deep grassed swale will be placed along the northern toe of the new embankment and outfall to the existing ditch to compensate fluvial flooding. The existing ditch will also be regraded and reprofiled to ensure the functionality of the new culvert. All existing gullies along existing roads are to be retained.

2.3.7 Utilities

All existing utility infrastructure will be retained and protected along the Proposed Project.

2.3.8 Kerbs and Paved Areas

The new concrete footpath will be laid for the new footpath link. New tactile paving and precast dropped kerbs will be provided at proposed crossing points and transition back to the existing kerb upstands.

2.3.9 Lighting

Four new 6 m lighting columns will be installed along the footpath, with existing lighting retained and protected adjacent to crossing points at either end of the Proposed Project. New chambers and ducting will be installed and connected to existing lighting infrastructure. One lantern, on an existing lighting column within Castle Manor housing estate, is to be replaced with the new LED type.

2.3.10 Landscaping

New grass verges are to be provided along the verge and on the embankment slopes.

2.3.11 Timing of the Proposed Works

It is envisaged that the overall programme for the proposed works will be circa. 3 months and will proceed during the summer. No night works are envisaged.

2.3.12 Compound Location

Given the scale of the proposed works being small in nature, it is envisaged that all compound and site storage requirements will be limited and can be facilitated within the grassed areas of the site extents on the Moneymore housing estate side, with no impact to hedgerows, trees, or any other vegetation as a result of the site compound. Any grassed areas affected by the site compound will be fully reinstated. The compound will also be located ≥ 10 m away from any existing drainage ditches, to minimise the risk of hydrocarbons or other pollutants entering any connected watercourses (CIRIA, 2006).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Appropriate Assessment Guidance

Both EU and national guidance exists in relation to Member States fulfilling their requirements under the EU Habitats Directive, with particular reference to Article 6(3) and 6(4) of that Directive. The methodology followed in relation to this assessment has had regard to the following guidance:

- Balmer, D.E., Gillings, S., Caffrey, B.J., Swann, R.L., Downie, I.S. & Fuller, R.J. (2013) *Bird Atlas 2007–11: The Breeding and Wintering Birds of Britain and Ireland*. BTO Books, Thetford;
- CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Version 1.2, last Updated April 2023;
- DoEHLG (2009, rev. 2010) *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government;
- EC (2000) *Communication from the Commission on the Precautionary Principle*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg;
- EC (2013) *Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats*. Version EUR 28. European Communities, Luxembourg;
- EC (2018) *Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg;
- EC (2021a) (Amended) *Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg;
- EC (2021b) (Amended) *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg;
- NPWS (2013g) *Ireland's Summary Report for the period 2008 – 2012 under Article 12 of the Birds Directive*. National Parks and Wildlife Services. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dublin, Ireland;
- NPWS (2019a) *The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland.* Volume 1: Summary Overview. Unpublished Report, National Parks and Wildlife Services. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dublin, Ireland;
- NPWS (2019b) *The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Habitat Assessments* Volume 2. Version 1.0. Unpublished Report, National Parks and Wildlife Services. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dublin, Ireland;
- NPWS (2019c) *The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Species Assessments* Volume 3, Version 1.0. Unpublished Report, National Parks and Wildlife Services. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dublin, Ireland; and
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021) *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*. Office of the Planning Regulator.

There have been significant changes to AA practice since both the EC (2001, 2021b) and the DoEHLG (2009, rev. 2010) guidance, arising from practice and rulings in UK, European, and Irish courts. These changes have been addressed in the preparation of this report.

3.2 Screening For Appropriate Assessment Process

The Screening for AA (Stage 1) will incorporate the following steps:

- Describing the project or plan;
- Identifying the European Sites potentially affected by the project or plan;

- Determining whether a project or plan is directly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of any European Sites;
- Identifying and describing any potential effects of the project or plan on European Sites, alone, in-combination, and cumulatively with other plans/projects; and
- Assessing the likelihood of significant effects on European Sites.

3.3 Identifying Relevant European Sites

The identification of relevant European Sites to be included in this report was based on the identification of the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the Proposed Project, a Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) model of effects, and the likely significance of any identified effects. The ZoI of the Proposed Project has been identified using the S-P-R model.

3.3.1 Source-Pathway-Receptor Model

The likely effects of the Proposed Project on any European Site have been assessed using a S-P-R model, where:

- A 'source' is defined as the individual element of the Proposed Project that has the potential to impact on a European Site, its qualifying features, and its conservation objectives;
- A 'pathway' is defined as the means or route by which a source can affect the ecological receptor; and
- A 'receptor' is defined as the Qualifying Interests (QIs) of SACs or the Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of SPAs for which conservation objectives have been set for the European Sites being screened in addition to any relevant supporting habitat within or outside of the European site.

A S-P-R model is a standard tool used in environmental assessment. In order for an effect to be likely, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism results in no likelihood for the effect to occur. The S-P-R model was used to identify European Sites and their QIs/SCIs with potential links to the Proposed Project. These are termed as 'relevant' European Sites/QIs/SCIs throughout this report.

3.3.2 Zone of Influence

The proximity of the Proposed Project to European Sites and, more importantly, QIs/SCIs of the European Sites, is of importance when identifying potentially likely significant effects. A conservative approach has been used, which minimises the risk of overlooking distant or obscure effect pathways, while also avoiding reliance on buffer zones (e.g., 15 km), within which all European Sites should be considered. This approach assesses the complete list of all QIs/SCIs of European Sites in Ireland (i.e., potential receptors), instead of listing European Sites within buffer zones. This follows Irish departmental guidance on AA:

"For projects, the distance could be much less than 15 km, and in some cases less than 100m, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects" (DoEHLG, 2009; p.32, para 1).

"The zone of influence of a proposed development is 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. This should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km)." (OPR, 2021; p.8).

Following the guidance set out by the OPR (2021), the Proposed Project has been evaluated based on an identified ZoI with regard to the potential impact pathways to both mobile and static ecological features. The ZoI of the Proposed Project for mobile species (e.g., birds, mammals, and fish), and static species and habitats (e.g., saltmarshes, woodlands, and flora) is considered differently. Mobile species have 'range' outside of the European Site in which they are QI/SCI. The range of mobile QI/SCI species varies considerably, from several metres (e.g., in the case of whorl snails *Vertigo* spp.), to hundreds of kilometres (in the case of migratory wetland birds). Whilst static species and habitats are likely to have ZoIs within close proximity of the Proposed Project, they can be significantly affected at considerable distances from an effect

source; for example, where an aquatic QI habitat or plant is located many kilometres downstream from a pollution source.

Hydrological linkages between the Proposed Project and a European Site (and their QIs/SCIs) can occur over significant distances; however, any effect will be site specific depending on the receiving water environment and nature of the potential effect. As a precautionary measure, a reasonable worst-case ZoI for water pollution from the Proposed Project area is considered to be the surface water catchment. In this report, the surface water catchment is defined at the scale of Catchment Management Unit (CMU), as adopted in the Water Action Plan 2024: A River Basin Management Plan (DHLGH, 2024). The ZoI then extends into the first coastal water body.

Hydrogeological linkages can be highly variable depending on the characteristics of the groundwater body. As a precautionary measure, a reasonable worst-case ZoI for groundwater pollution from the Proposed Project area is considered to capture the entirety of each groundwater body the Proposed Project area overlies.

The initial ZoI is, therefore, combined to capture the Boyne surface water catchment, in which the Proposed Project area is located, the Boyne Estuary Plume Zone coastal waterbody (CWB), a 500 m radius from the position of any proposed excavations and, with respect to the significant distances certain SCI species may travel inland to forage, a precautionary 20 km radius from the proposed works area.

3.3.3 Scoping of European Sites

Following the identification of European Sites within the initial ZoI, a secondary scoping was carried out before European Sites were taken forward to the assessment stage. Disturbance buffers, hydrological, and hydrogeological linkages extending from the Proposed Project area were assessed to determine if disturbance or pollution sources arising from the Proposed Project area, during the construction and operation of the Proposed Project, could come into contact with QI/SCI habitats and species. The result of this secondary scoping was a refinement and reduction in the initial ZoI, reflective of the application of the source-pathway-receptor model to the Proposed Project.

Where it was deemed that there is potential for at least one QI or SCI habitat/species from a European Site within the ZoI to come into contact with a disturbance or pollution source, the entire European Site was brought into the assessment stage.

3.3.4 Identification of Likely Significant Effects

The Commission's Notice (EC, 2018) advises that the Appropriate Assessment procedure under Article 6(3) is triggered not by the certainty but by the likelihood of significant effects, arising from plans or projects, regardless of their location inside or outside of a protected site. Such likelihood exists if significant effects on the European Site cannot be excluded. The significance of effects should be determined in relation to the specific features and environmental conditions of the European Site concerned by the plan or project, taking particular account of the European Site's conservation objectives and ecological characteristics.

The threshold for a LSE is treated in the screening exercise as being above a de minimis level[1]. The opinion of the Advocate General in CJEU case C-258/11 outlines:

"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."

[1] Sweetman v. An Bord Pleanála (Court of Justice of the EU, case C-285/11). A de minimis effect is a level of risk that is too small to be concerned with when considering ecological requirements of an Annex I habitat or a population of Annex II species present on a European Site necessary to ensure their favourable conservation condition. If low level effects on habitats or individuals of species are judged to be in this order of magnitude and that judgment has been made in the absence of reasonable scientific doubt, then those effects are not considered to be likely significant effects.

In this report, therefore, 'relevant' European Sites are those with potential links to the Proposed Project, Project, where LSE pathways to and potential effects on European Sites were identified through the source-pathway-receptor model.

A likely significant effect is triggered when:

- There is a probability or a risk of a plan or project having a significant effect on a European Site;
- The plan is likely to undermine the European Site's conservation objectives;
- A significant effect cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information; and
- Measures to prevent or offset risk [mitigation measures] would be required.

3.4 Desk Study

A desk study was completed to assess the potential for all QIs and SCIs of European Sites to occur, given their ecological requirements identified by Balmer *et al*. (2013) for SCIs, and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) for QIs (NPWS, 2019a, b, c).

SCI birds and mobile QI species can travel many kilometres from their core areas, and desktop surveys assessed the potential presence of such species beyond the European Sites for which they are QIs/SCIs.

The desktop study had particular regard for the following sources:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) online interactive mapping tools (https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps) and (https://www.catchments.ie/maps/) for water quality data including surface and ground water quality status, and river catchment boundaries;
- Tabulated lists of SCIs and QIs for all European Sites in the Republic of Ireland;
- Information on ranges of mobile QI populations in Volume 1 of NPWS' Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (NPWS, 2019a), and associated digital shapefiles obtained from the NPWS Research Branch;
- Information on ranges of mobile SCIs bird populations from Bird Atlas 2007–11 (Balmer *et al*., 2013), excluding birds of prey whose ranges were determined with reference to Hardey *et al*. (2013);
- Mapping of European Site boundaries and Conservation Objectives for relevant sites in County Louth and beyond, as relevant, available online from the NPWS;
- Information on wetland sites using BirdWatch Ireland's mapping website for the Irish Wetlands Bird Survey (I-WeBS)[2];
- Any local surveys of flora, fauna, and habitat available using the Heritage Councils mapping website (https://heritagemaps.ie/WebApps/HeritageMaps/index.html);
- Distribution records for QI and SCI species of European Sites held online by the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC)[3];
- Information on groundwater aquifers, recharge, and vulnerability available from the online database of Geological Survey Ireland (GSI)[4]; and
- Boundaries for catchments with confirmed or potential freshwater pearl mussel (FPM) *Margaritifera* populations in GIS format available online from the NPWS.

[2] (https://bwi.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=1043ba01fcb74c78bc75e306eda48d3a) Accessed November 2024.

[3] Assessing records up to 10 years old (from date of search), for an area of 5 km from the Proposed Project site. Available online at: https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Map Accessed November 2024.

[4] Available online at https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aaac3c228. Accessed November 2024.

3.5 Field Survey

In consideration of the small scale, nature, and limited duration of the proposed works, information collated during the desk study, including that relating to the application of the source-pathway-receptor and analysis of available satellite and street imagery, no field survey was completed or deemed necessary to inform this assessment.

3.6 Limitations

Sources of desk-study information are neither exhaustive nor necessarily easily available, and a reasoned effort was made to obtain ecological data in the public domain to inform the description of the receiving environment and its assessment. Additional information, not in the public domain, is likely to exist. This limitation is acknowledged and incorporated into the assessment.

4 RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

This section details the results of the desk study and considers information provided by the Client in order to describe the receiving environment of the Proposed Project. The relevant receiving environment relates to anything that may be directly or indirectly related to the QIs/SCIs of the relevant European Sites.

4.1 Habitats

With reference to available satellite and street imagery, the Proposed Project area (as shown in **Figure 4-1** and **Figure 4-2**) consists predominantly of *Amenity Grassland (Improved) GA2*, *Dry Meadows and Grassy Verges GS2*, *Buildings and Artificial Surfaces BL3*, *Hedgerows WL1*, and *Drainage Ditches FW4* habitat. Though Dry Meadows and Grassy Verges GS2 can correspond to Annex I Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*) (6510) habitat, it is not considered that this is the case for the habitat present within the Proposed Project area. None of the other aforementioned habitats correspond with any Annex I habitat (as listed on the EU Habitats Directive). The Amenity Grassland (Improved) GA2 adjacent to and in the vicinity of the Proposed Project area (such as that associated with Boyne Rugby Football Club) is considered as representing potential, if limited, *ex-situ* foraging habitat for SCI birds.

Figure 4-1: View of the Proposed Project area from Castle Manor Housing Estate Towards Moneymore Housing Estate.

Figure 4-2: View of the Existing *Hedgerows WL1* Habitat Within the Proposed Project Area From Moneymore Housing Estate.

Figure 4-3: View of Littered, Flow-Restricted *Drainage Ditch FW4* Located Within the Proposed Project Area.

4.2 Hydrological Connectivity

The Proposed Project area is located within the following WFD Catchment:

- **Boyne (Catchment ID: 07)** – This catchment includes the area drained by the River Boyne and by all streams entering tidal water between The Haven and Mornington Point, Co. Meath, draining a total area of 2,694 km². The largest urban centre in the catchment is Drogheda. The other main urban centres are Navan, Trim, Kells, Virginia, Bailieborough, Athboy, Kinnegad, Edenderry and Enfield. The total population of the catchment is approximately 196,400 with a population density of 73 people per km². This catchment is characterised by an undulating landscape in the south which changes to a more hummocky, drumlin topography (steep-sided, lenticular hills) in the north. The catchment is underlain by metamorphic rocks in the north and limestone bedrock in the centre and south of the catchment. There are extensive sand and gravel areas in this catchment, particularly along the upper reaches of the Boyne.

Results of the desktop study indicate that the Tullyeskar River (WFD River Waterbody (RWB) Code: IE_EA_07T270880; EPA Code: 07T27) is culverted beneath the Proposed Project area, predominantly towards its western boundary, and flows in a southerly direction. An existing drainage ditch, which is to be culverted beneath the pedestrian link as part of the proposed works, is present within the Proposed Project area. This proposed culvert will then outfall to a further existing ditch to compensate fluvial flooding prior to feeding into the culverted Tullyeskar River to the immediate south of the Proposed Project area.

From the point where the Tullyeskar River exits the Proposed Project area, it continues flowing in a south-easterly direction before merging into the River Boyne and the Boyne Estuary, forming hydrological connectivity with the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC, approx. 2 km downstream of the Proposed

Project area. From here, the River Boyne continues flowing in an easterly direction, forming hydrological connectivity with the River Boyne Estuary SPA and Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC, approx. 3.3 km and 3.5 km downstream of the Proposed Project area, respectively, before ultimately discharging into the Irish Sea at Drogheda.

The WFD River Waterbody (RWB) status of the TULLYESKAR_010 RWB, which captures the Tullyeskar River, for the 2016-2021 period, has been classified as 'Moderate' and the risk of this RWB failing to achieve its WFD objectives (based on WFD risk for the 3rd Cycle of the WFD) is currently 'Under Review'. As per the 2nd Cycle of the WFD, significant pressures on the TULLYESKAR_010 RWB included those arising from agriculture and urban runoff.

The WFD Transitional Waterbody (TWB) status of the Boyne Estuary TWB, into which the River Boyne flows and into which the Tullyeskar River flows, for the 2016-2021 period, has been classified as 'Moderate' and is considered to be 'At Risk' of failing to achieve its WFD objectives (based on WFD risk for the 3rd Cycle of the WFD).

The WFD Coastal Waterbody (CWB) status for the Boyne Estuary Plume Zone CWB, into which the River Boyne ultimately discharges, for the 2016-2021 period, has been classified as 'Moderate' and is considered to be 'At Risk' of failing to achieve its WFD objectives (based on WFD risk for the 3rd Cycle of the WFD).

4.3 Hydrogeological Connectivity

The Proposed Project lies within the Drogheda Groundwater Body (GWB) (WFD GWB Code: IE_EA_G_025). The main discharge mechanism is from the aquifer directly to the coast and, also, where the water table is above river stage, to rivers in the area, as baseflow or as springs in the vicinity of rivers (GSI, 2024).

The WFD GWB status of the Drogheda GWB, for the 2016-2021 period, has been classified as 'Good', though the GWB is considered to be 'At Risk' of failing to achieve its WFD objectives (based on WFD risk for the 3rd Cycle of the WFD).

Groundwater vulnerability describes the natural ground characteristics that determine the ease with which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities. Irish bedrock aquifers are protected by the subsoil and, therefore, the type and thickness of the subsoil will determine the aquifers vulnerability. The GSI groundwater vulnerability, as relevant to the Proposed Project area, is displayed in **Table 4-2**, below.

Table 4-2: GSI Groundwater Vulnerability at the Proposed Project Area.

Location	GSI Groundwater Vulnerability
Approx. Centre Point (53.728408, -6.3496109)	Low

4.4 European Sites

In order to determine the potential for LSEs, it is necessary to identify the ZoI of the Proposed Project and the European Sites therein. European Sites identified within the ZoI of the Proposed Project, their respective QIs or SCIs and their Conservation Objectives, and a measure of the distance and direction of the European Site from the Proposed Project area are detailed in **Table 4-2**, below. The ZoI of the Proposed Project refers to the geographical area over which the Proposed Project could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have LSEs, either directly or indirectly, on European Site(s). The ZoI is established using the Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) model (see **Section 3.2.1**) which is a standard tool used in environmental assessment.

Table 4-2: European Sites Located Within the ZoI of the Proposed Project.

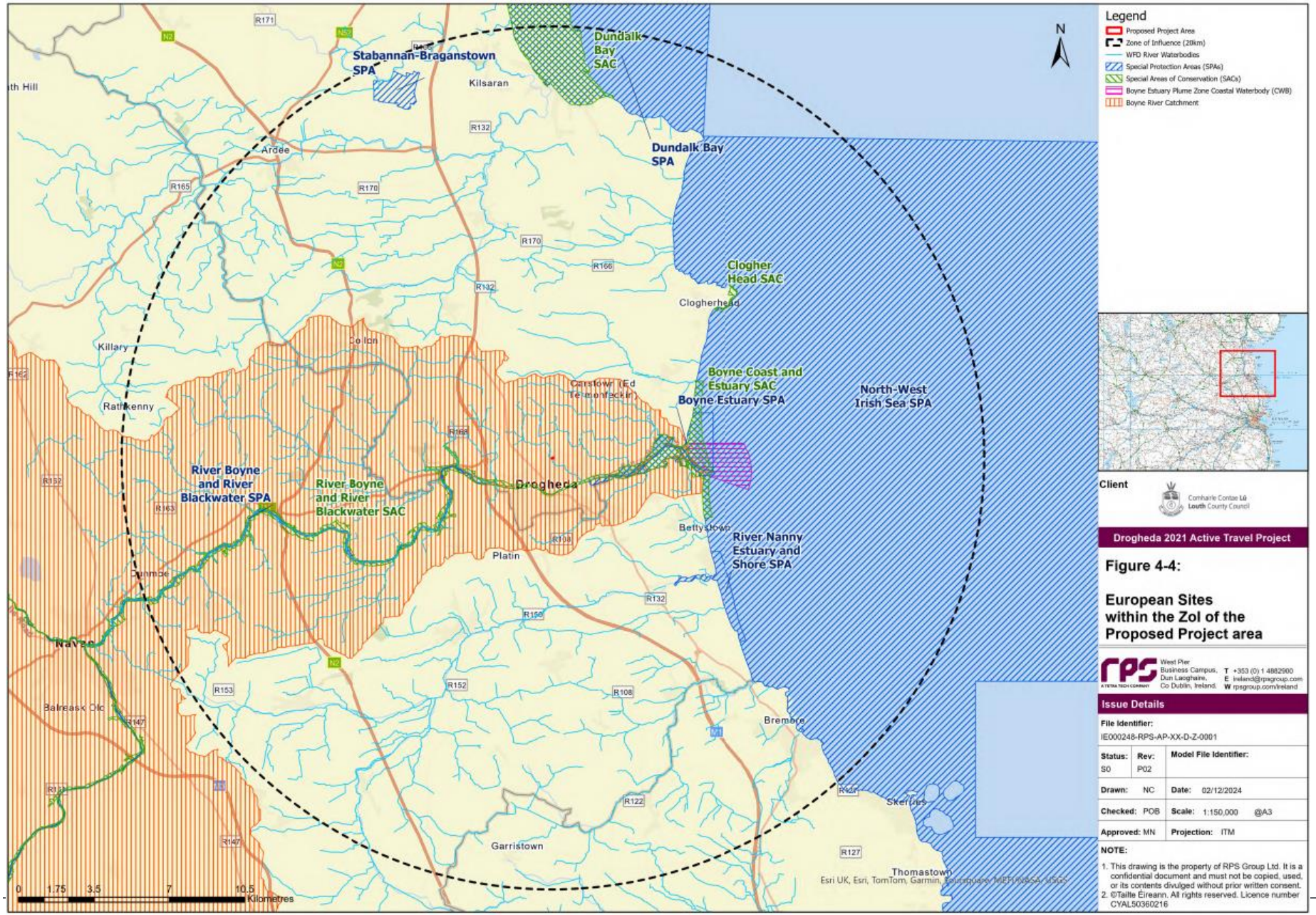
European Site (Code)	Qualifying Interest(s) (*Priority Habitat) and Special Conservation Interest(s)	Conservation Objective(s)	Distance and Direction From Proposed Project[5]
River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299) (NPWS, 2021 – Version 1)	[1099] River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) [1106] Salmon (*Salmo salar*) [1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*) [7230] Alkaline fens [91E0] Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*)*	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the species and habitats listed as Qualifying Interests for this SAC.	**Hydrological Connectivity:** potential hydrological connectivity approx. 2 km downstream via the Tullyeskar River and River Boyne; **Hydrogeological Connectivity:** potential hydrogeological connectivity via the Drogheda GWB; **Straight-Line Distance:** approx. 1.5 km (S)
Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957) (NPWS, 2012 – Version 1)	[1130] Estuaries [1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1210] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1310] *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [2110] Embryonic shifting dunes [2120] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) [2130] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)*	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the habitats listed as Qualifying Interests for this SAC.	**Hydrological Connectivity:** potential hydrological connectivity approx. 3.5 km downstream via the Tullyeskar River and River Boyne; **Hydrogeological Connectivity:** potential hydrogeological connectivity via the Drogheda GWB; **Straight-Line Distance:** approx. 2.9 km (SE)
Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) (NPWS, 2013 – Version 1)	[A048] Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [A130] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A140] Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A141] Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A142] Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [A143] Knot (*Calidris canutus*) [A144] Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) [A156] Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) [A162] Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and their supporting habitat listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.	**Hydrological Connectivity:** potential hydrological connectivity approx. 3.3 km downstream via the Tullyeskar River and River Boyne; **Hydrogeological Connectivity:** potential hydrogeological connectivity via the Drogheda GWB; **Straight-Line Distance:** approx. 2 km (SE)

[5] Note: N= North; South =South; E = East; W = West; NE = Northeast; NW = Northwest; SE = Southeast; SW = Southwest.

European Site (Code)	Qualifying Interest(s) (*Priority Habitat) and Special Conservation Interest(s)	Conservation Objective(s)	Distance and Direction From Proposed Project[5]
	[A169] Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) [A195] Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*) [A999] Wetlands		
River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232) (NPWS, 2024 – Version 1)	[A229] Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species listed as a Special Conservation Interest for this SPA.	**Hydrological Connectivity:** no hydrological connectivity; **Hydrogeological Connectivity:** potential hydrogeological connectivity via the Drogheda GWB; **Straight-Line Distance:** approx. 3.3 km (W)
North-west Irish Sea SPA (004236) (NPWS, 2023 – Version 1)	[A001] Red-throated Diver (*Gavia stellata*) [A003] Great Northern Diver (*Gavia immer*) [A009] Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*) [A013] Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*) [A017] Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) [A018] Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*) [A065] Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) [A177] Little Gull (*Larus minutus*) [A179] Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A182] Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A183] Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) [A184] Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) [A187] Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) [A188] Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) [A192] Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) [A193] Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A194] Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) [A195] Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*) [A199] Guillemot (*Uria aalge*) [A200] Razorbill (*Alca torda*) [A204] Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*)	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.	**Hydrological Connectivity:** no hydrological connectivity; **Hydrogeological Connectivity:** no hydrogeological connectivity; **Straight-Line Distance:** approx. 6.8 km (E)

European Site (Code)	Qualifying Interest(s) (*Priority Habitat) and Special Conservation Interest(s)	Conservation Objective(s)	Distance and Direction From Proposed Project[5]
River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA (004158) (NPWS, 2012 – Version 1)	[A130] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A137] Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) [A140] Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A143] Knot (*Calidris canutus*) [A144] Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) [A184] Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) [A999] Wetlands	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and their supporting habitat listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.	**Hydrological Connectivity:** no hydrological connectivity; **Hydrogeological Connectivity:** no hydrogeological connectivity; **Straight-Line Distance:** approx. 8 km (S)
Dundalk Bay SPA (004026) (NPWS, 2011 – Version 1)	[A005] Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) [A043] Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*) [A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) [A048] Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [A052] Teal (*Anas crecca*) [A053] Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) [A054] Pintail (*Anas acuta*) [A065] Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) [A069] Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) [A130] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A137] Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) [A140] Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A141] Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A142] Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [A143] Knot (*Calidris canutus*) [A149] Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A156] Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A160] Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) [A162] Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and their supporting habitat listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.	**Hydrological Connectivity:** no hydrological connectivity; **Hydrogeological Connectivity:** no hydrogeological connectivity; **Straight-Line Distance:** approx. 16.3 km (N)

European Site (Code)	Qualifying Interest(s) (*Priority Habitat) and Special Conservation Interest(s)	Conservation Objective(s)	Distance and Direction From Proposed Project[5]
	[A179] Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A182] Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A184] Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) [A999] Wetlands		
Stabannan-Braganstown SPA (004091) (NPWS, 2022 – Version 1)	[A043] Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)	To restore the favourable conservation condition of the species listed as a Special Conservation Interest for this SPA.	**Hydrological Connectivity:** no hydrological connectivity; **Hydrogeological Connectivity:** no hydrogeological connectivity; **Straight-Line Distance:** approx. 17.5 km (N)


Legend
Proposed Project Area
Zone of Influence (20km)
WFD River Waterbodies
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
Boyne Estuary Plume Zone Coastal Waterbody (CWB)
Boyne River Catchment
N
Stabannan-Braganstown SPA
Dundalk Bay SAC
Dundalk Bay SPA
Clogher Head SAC
Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC
Boyne Estuary SPA
North-West Irish Sea SPA
River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA
River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC
River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA
Drogheda
Kilsaran
Ardee
Clogherhead
Killary
Ratoath
Platin
Navan
Bremore
Garristown
Thomastown
Skerries
0 1.75 3.5 7 10.5 Kilometres
Client
Comhairle Contae Lú Louth County Council
Drogheda 2021 Active Travel Project
Figure 4-4:
European Sites within the ZoI of the Proposed Project area
RPS
West Pier Business Campus, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin, Ireland.
T +353 (0) 1 4882900
E Ireland@rpsgroup.com
W rpsgroup.com/Ireland
Issue Details
File Identifier:
IE000248-RPS-AP-XX-D-Z-0001
Status: S0
Rev: P02
Model File Identifier:
Drawn: NC
Date: 02/12/2024
Checked: POB
Scale: 1:150,000 @A3
Approved: MN
Projection: ITM
NOTE:
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4.5 Species

4.5.1 Qualifying Interests (QIs)

The desk study returned two records of QI species from the preceding ten years within the 10 km grid square (O07) in which the Proposed Project area is located (see **Table 4-3)**.

Table 4-3: Qualifying Interests (QIs) Returned From the NBDC Search.

Common Name *Scientific Name*	Record Count	Date of Last Record	Preferred Habitat
[1349] Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)	3	24/04/2021	Marine water bodies
[1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*)	17	16/09/2018	Lakes and ponds, watercourses, riparian woodland, estuaries, sea inlets and bays, salt marshes, swamps, riparian

There are no habitats offering breeding or foraging sites for Bottlenose Dolphin or Otter within the footprint of the Proposed Project area.

4.5.2 Special Conservation Interests (SCIs)

A search of the NBDC database returned 13 records for SCI bird species from the preceding ten years within the 10 km grid square (O07) in which the Proposed Project area is located (see **Table 4-4**). Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) is located approx. 2 km from the Proposed Project area, with which it also shares hydrological connectivity via the Tullyeskar River, approx. 3.3 km downstream.

Table 4-4: Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) Returned From the NBDC Search.

Common Name *Scientific Name*	Record Count	Date of Last Record	Preferred Habitat
[A125] Coot (*Fulica atra*)	12	03/03/2023	Large lakes and reservoirs with grassy banks
[A229] Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)	18	21/09/2017	Shallow rivers, lakes, salt marsh, creeks, and flooded pits
[A059] Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)	5	22/06/2022	Lakes and wetland areas with good vegetation
[A193] Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)	1	10/07/2016	Inshore waters, sandy beaches, and lakes
[A160] Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)	11	13/02/2023	Prefers upland moors, pastures, bogs, and coastal fields
[A050] Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)	4	21/06/2022	Lakes surrounded by bogs or grassland, also floodlands
[A187] Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)	6	22/05/2018	Breeds on rocky coasts and larger inland lakes
[A017] Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)	21	13/02/2023	Large lakes, reservoirs, estuaries, and open coast
[A184] Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)	14	03/03/2019	Coasts, islands, larger lakes, and forages in urban areas
[A053] Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)	47	15/05/2023	Breeds on most freshwater habitat types
[A142] Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)	13	13/02/2023	Open grassy pastures, upland sheep areas, and ploughed fields
[A061] Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)	12	16/03/2023	Lakes and ponds with shore vegetation

Common Name *Scientific Name*	Record Count	Date of Last Record	Preferred Habitat
[A038] Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)	12	13/02/203	Feed in fields. Roost in lakes, estuaries, and floodplains

A small area of *GA2 Amenity grassland* and limited *WL1 Hedgerows*, utilisable for foraging by several SCIs of Boyne Estuary SPA, River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA, North-west Irish Sea SPA, River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA, Dundalk Bay SPA, and Stabannan-Braganstown SPA are located within the Proposed Project footprint.

4.6 Invasive Alien Plants and Animals

Four invasive alien species and three invasive alien animal species, listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011), were returned for the 10 km grid square (O07) in which the Proposed Project area is located, within the last ten years (see **Table 4-4**).

No records of any invasive alien plant or animal species were returned for the area within the Proposed Project boundary. The nearest record for Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) was located approx. 1.2 km south of the Proposed Project area.

Table 4-4: Third Schedule Invasive Alien Plant and Animal Species Returned From the NBDC Search.

Common Name *Scientific Name*	Record Count	Date of Last Record	Preferred Habitat
Plants			
Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) (3.4 km E)	4	30/07/2015	Mires, bogs & fens; Grasslands and landscapes dominated by forbs, mosses or lichens; Woodland, forest and other wooded land; Constructed, industrial or other artificial habitats; Regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural or domestic habitat
Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) (2.6 km SW)	16	24/06/2024	Mires, bogs & fens; Heath, scrubland & tundra; Woodland, forest and other wooded land; Regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural or domestic habitat
Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) (1.2 km S)	16	26/04/2022	Mires, bogs & fens; Heath, scrubland & tundra; Woodland, forest and other wooded land; Regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural or domestic habitat; Inland unvegetated or sparsely vegetated habitats; Constructed, industrial or other artificial habitats; Miscellaneous
Three-cornered Garlic (*Allium triquetrum*)	5	03/04/2024	Regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural or domestic habitat; Constructed, industrial or other artificial habitats; Miscellaneous
Animals			
Harlequin Ladybird (*Harmonia axyridis*)	2	01/06/2022	Constructed, industrial or other artificial habitats; Regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural or domestic habitat; Grasslands and landscapes dominated by forbs, mosses or lichens
American Mink (*Mustela vison*)	3	01/03/2015	Coastal, Inland surface waters; Mires, bogs & fens; Heath, scrubland & tundra; Woodland, forest and other wooded land; Estuaries
Eastern Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) (2.3 km NW)	10	01/03/2015	Woodland, forest and other wooded land; Constructed, industrial or other artificial habitats; Regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural or domestic habitat; Miscellaneous

5 SCREENING ASSESSMENT

5.1 Management of European Sites

AA screening is not required where a proposed project is connected with, or necessary to the management of any European Site. In this case, the Proposed Project is not directly connected with, or necessary to the management of any European Site.

5.2 Summary of Information Required

The screening assessment for AA follows the methodologies set out in **Section 3** and analysis of the following information:

- Zone of Influence of the Proposed Project; and
- Distribution of QIs and SCIs in relation to the Zone of Influence.

5.3 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects Alone

5.3.1 Source-Pathway-Receptor Model

As described in the methodology (**Section 3**), the screening for AA report assessment adopts a comprehensive and precautionary approach for which the starting point is an initial ZoI scoping, followed by the identification of potential impacts/effects, and an assessment stage on the relevant European Sites and their QIs/SCIs (source-pathway-receptor model). The potential impacts that could arise from the Proposed Project were identified as follows:

- Habitat loss, destruction, fragmentation, or deterioration;
- Noise, vibration, lighting, and human-presence related disturbance;
- Surface water run-off carrying suspended silt or contaminants into watercourses;
- Changes of groundwater quality, yield, and/or flow paths;
- Air pollution from releasing dust and vehicle emissions; and
- Disturbance of invasive species during the construction of the Proposed Project.

In this context, **Table 5-1** outlines the specific source-pathway-receptor model for the Proposed Project. As the Proposed Project works will be restricted to the construction of a new footpath and associated infrastructure, the upgrading of existing drainage, and the provision of lighting and, as such, there will be no requirement for ongoing or future maintenance activities, a source-pathway-receptor link to European Sites has been primarily identified for the construction phase of the Proposed Project. However, this assessment also considers the potential for disturbance to SCI birds during the operational phase of the Proposed Project on the basis of potential suitable *ex-situ* habitat existing adjacent to and in the vicinity of the Proposed Project area. A description of each relevant source-pathway-receptor link and any potential impacts to European Sites is outlined in **Table 5-1**, below.

Table 5-1: Source-Pathway-Receptor Model for the Proposed Project.

Phase	Source of Potential Effect	Description of Effect Pathway	Potential Zone of Influence
Construction and Operation	Habitat loss, destruction, fragmentation, or deterioration	Land take for the construction of, or access to the Proposed Project area could result in direct or indirect impacts to the qualifying habitat of European Sites or supporting habitats of QI and SCI species, resulting in habitat loss and fragmentation.	As the Proposed Project does not intersect with any European Site(s), habitat loss, destruction, fragmentation, or deterioration due to the Proposed Project will not occur and no likely significant effects on any European Site(s) are predicted. In relation to the potential for *in-situ* or *ex-situ* effects on QI species or SCI birds, considering the small scale of the Proposed Project, the limited availability of suitable habitat for QI species or SCI birds within the Proposed Project area, and a vegetation clearance methodology which provides for the retention of all trees and the removal of only 193.86 m^2 of low shrubs and vegetation, no appreciable impact can be attributed in this regard. **This potential impact is, therefore, scoped out of further consideration.**
	Noise, vibration, lighting, and human presence during movements of vehicles and operation of machinery associated with construction activities	During construction, noise or other construction-related disturbance could reduce the ability of populations of QI/SCI species to forage, roost, or breed.	The pathways for disturbance effects relating to noise and/or construction-related disturbance are generally assessed within 300 m of the proposed project footprint for wintering birds in an urban setting (Cutts *et al*., 2009). However, this distance can be significantly lower (e.g., 150 m for otter underground sites (NRA, 2006) or higher (e.g., hen harriers may take flight when nesting up to 750 m from disturbance (Whitfield *et al*., 2008)). The playing pitches at Boyne Rugby Football Club, which could potentially represent suitable foraging habitat for wintering SCI birds, are located approx. 25 m south of the Proposed Project area. Additionally, areas of both public and private amenity grassland, of variable levels of management, and associated with residential developments in the vicinity of the Proposed Project also offer potentially suitable habitat. However, considering the scale, nature, and limited duration of the proposed works and the context of the surrounding habitats at large, it is unlikely that any disturbance to SCI birds will occur. Operational disturbance to SCI birds is not anticipated to be significant, considering that any use of the proposed pathway is to be limited to 'light-touch' pedestrian activity and, with respect to the urban setting in which the Proposed Project area is located, where any SCI birds are likely to be already accustomed to some level of anthropogenic disturbance. No habitat suitable for foraging by otter is present within the site of the Proposed Project. Considering this, the urbanised nature of the surrounding environment, the mobility of the species, and the relatively limited recent records (those recorded during the preceding ten years) of the species within the wider locale (see **Table 4-2**), any potential effects of noise and/or construction-related disturbance to otter are considered to be negligible. **This potential impact is, therefore, scoped out of further consideration.**

Phase	Source of Potential Effect	Description of Effect Pathway	Potential Zone of Influence
	Surface water run-off carrying suspended silt or contaminants into watercourses	Silt, hydrocarbons, and/or other contaminants (oils, fuels, etc.) may enter nearby watercourses through surface water run-off.	Hydrological linkages between the proposed works and European Sites (and their QIs/SCIs) can occur over significant distances. However, any effect will be site-specific depending on the receiving water environment, nature of the linkage, and consequent nature of the potential impact. The Tullyeskar River is culverted beneath the Proposed Project area, predominantly towards its western boundary, and flows in a southerly and then south-easterly direction before merging into the River Boyne and Boyne Estuary. The River Boyne then flows in an easterly direction and constitutes hydrological connectivity with the River Boyne and Blackwater SAC, River Boyne Estuary SPA, and Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC, approx. 2 km, 3.3 km, and 3.5 km downstream of the Proposed Project area, respectively, before ultimately discharging into the Irish Sea at Drogheda. As part of the Proposed Project works, the existing on-site drainage network, which is currently comprised of a densely vegetated and littered, flow-restricted drainage ditch, is to be functionally enhanced through the provision of a new culvert, which outfalls underground to the Tullyeskar River to the immediate south of the proposed works area. This introduces the potential for the increased conveyance of pollutants through the watercourses within and connected to the Proposed Project area. Therefore, it is acknowledged that as a result of the proposed works, it cannot be discounted that some sediment or pollutants may be transmitted from the site of the Proposed Project area to downstream European Sites. However, considering the scale, nature, and limited duration of the proposed works, and the provision of a designated site compound where hydrocarbons and other potentially pollutant materials are to be securely contained ≥ 10 m from any existing ditches, the risk of surface water runoff carrying suspended silt or contaminants into watercourses and causing significant effect to downstream European Sites is considered negligible. This is with respect to the QIs of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC, which include Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Salmon (*Salmo salar*), and River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*), whose respective ecologies make them less susceptible to significant effects from the levels of pollution potentially arising from the proposed project works. The aforementioned is with cognisance that urban runoff has been identified as a significant pressure on the TULLYESKAR_010 RWB. **his potential impact is, therefore, scoped out of further consideration.**
	Changes of groundwater quality, yield and/or flow paths associated with earthworks during construction	Construction activities (e.g., earthworks) could interfere with groundwater quality, yields and/or flow paths, potentially affecting the water quality or habitats	The potential Zone of Influence of effects from earthworks to groundwater quality, flow, and/or yield is difficult to accurately estimate as it will depend on factors including the depth and intrusion of excavations and time of year (related to water levels). As a precautionary measure, a reasonable worst-

Phase	Source of Potential Effect	Description of Effect Pathway	Potential Zone of Influence
		dependent on groundwater supply.	case spatial Zone of Influence is considered to be 500 m from the point of excavation, which is a precautionary doubling of the 250 m stated as the potential Zone of Influence from intrusive excavations to sensitive upland peatland sites (SEPA, 2014). There are no European Sites located within 500 m of the Proposed Project area. **This potential impact is, therefore, scoped out of further consideration.**
	Air pollution from releasing dust and vehicle emissions	Air pollution from construction activities may affect sensitive habitats/species in the vicinity of the works. Dust or particles falling onto plants can physically smother the leaves affecting photosynthesis, respiration and transpiration, or particles falling into water can result in fine silt/sediment becoming suspended in the water.	The potential distance for significant vegetation effects from the source on major construction sites is 25 m and 10 m from minor sites, and soiling can occur up to 100 m, 50 m , and 25 m from major, moderate, and minor construction sites, respectively (NRA, 2011). The principal pollutants of concern which originate from construction plant and road vehicles are nitrogen oxides (NOx), in terms of impact on sensitive ecosystems. NOx may have a positive or negative impact by acting as a fertiliser or a phytotoxicant. Effects are mainly on vegetation growth, photosynthesis, and nitrogen assimilation/metabolism. There are no European Sites located within 100 m of the Proposed Project area. **This potential impact is, therefore, scoped out of further consideration.**
	Disturbance of invasive species during the construction of the Proposed Project	Construction activities could lead to the dispersal of scheduled invasive species either via machinery, materials, clothing, or wild animals.	The Zone of Influence of effects for the spread of terrestrial invasive species is difficult to accurately estimate, as plant fragments may be spread on tyre treads to distant, unrelated sites. In relation to the water-borne spread of vegetation, the Zone of Influence is generally restricted to the surface water Catchment Management Unit. No recent records (those recorded during the preceding ten years) of invasive species have been recorded within the Proposed Project area and the nearest record of an invasive alien plant species, Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), was recorded approx. 1.2 km south of the Proposed Project area. **This potential impact is, therefore, scoped out of further consideration.**

5.3.2 European Sites Within the Zone of Influence

Based on the above Zone of Influence of effects, the S-P-R analysis (**Table 5-2**) did not identify any European Sites or their associated QIs or SCIs that could be significantly affected by the Proposed Project.

5.4 In-Combination Effects

Legislation, guidance, and case law (**Section 1.2**) requires that in-combination effects with other plans or projects are considered. On this basis, other plans and projects are considered in terms of their potential to have in-combination effects with the Proposed Project on relevant European Sites.

5.4.1 Plans

A search was conducted of national, regional, and local plans which were deemed relevant to the Proposed Project. This list is not exhaustive of all plans and programmes but instead focuses on plans which may result in in-combination effects with relevant European Sites. Relevant plans are discussed in **Table 5-2**.

Table 5-2: Planning Search Results - Plans and Programmes.

Plan	Conflicting Policies	Protective Policies	Potential For In-Combination Effects
Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2023-2030 (DoHLGH, 2024)	N/A	The NBAP 2023-2030 sets the national biodiversity agenda with the main aim to deliver the changes required to protect nature. The most-relevant targets of the NBAP objectives are: - Objective 1: Adopt a Whole of Government. Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity; - Objective 2: Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs; - Objective 3: Secure Nature's Contribution to People; - Objective 4: Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity; - Objective 5: Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives.	**No**. As the overall aim of the Plan is to protect biodiversity and to ensure shared responsibility for the conservation of biodiversity, in-combination effects with the NBAP are not predicted.
National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 (DoPER, 2021)	N/A	The NDP is a strategic, high-level outline of the Government's long-term vision and strategies for economic, social, and environmental development. It covers goals related to infrastructure, education, healthcare, poverty alleviation, job creation, and sustainable growth. Biodiversity is set as a priority, with €1.4 billion apportioned to, amongst others, supporting compliance with the EU's Habitats Directive.	**No**. Due to the strategic nature of the Plan and given the limited scale, location, and duration of the Proposed Project, it is considered highly unlikely that the effects of the Proposed Project will act in-combination with the NDP 2021-2030.
National Planning Framework Project Ireland 2040 (DHLGH, 2018)	N/A	The National Planning Framework is a long-term strategy for the next 20 years and it will focus on ensuring compatibility between future growth of cities/ towns within Ireland alongside environmental sustainability. It is intended that the National Planning Framework will both provide the focus to guide and inform future planning and set the framework for integrated investment decisions. It is intended that the national policy will be detailed through the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies to set out long term national, regional and local development frameworks from within which sectors will work together to ensure proper planning and sustainable development. Both the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies are subject to the AA process.	**No**. It is a policy of the National Planning Framework to ensure the resilience of our natural resources and cultural assets. Linkage to wider policies such as for European sites under the Birds and Habitats Directives and the WFD is recognised and the need to set high level planning policies in protecting and making responsible use of our natural environment. The plan has been subject to AA and includes clear policy on avoidance of impacts to European sites. Therefore, there is no potential for in-

Plan	Conflicting Policies	Protective Policies	Potential For In-Combination Effects
			combination effects with the Proposed Project.
EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and Water Action Plan 2024: A River Basin Management Plan (DHLGH, 2024)	N/A	The primary purpose of the WFD is to improve ecological status and includes achievements of objectives of the Habitats and Birds Directives through the implementation of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). This places binding obligations of Member States to achieve good status of surface waters. The WAP sets out the Programmes of Measures (PoM) to achieve the objectives of the WFD, with respect to the protection of Water Bodies: *"Ensure that new development and changes in existing land use or in activities that take place on land are appropriately assessed and appropriate mitigation measures are put in place, so that they do not adversely impact on water quality"* The Third Cycle Draft River Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 (DoHLGH, 2022) is currently being prepared.	**No**. As the overall aim of the WFD and WAP is to improve the ecological status and management of water quality, in-combination effects with the Proposed Project are not predicted.
Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (LCC, 2021)	N/A	The Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out the Council's overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Louth. It is a blueprint for development in County Louth and is the over-arching strategic framework for sustainable development in spatial, economic, social and environmental terms. Specific policies contained within the Plan and relating to the protection of European Sites include: **NGB 5**: To ensure that no plan, programme, or project giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan, either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes or projects; **NGB 6**: To ensure a screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) on all plans and/or projects and/or Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Report/ Natura Impact Assessment) where appropriate, is undertaken to make a determination. European Sites located outside of the County but within 15km of the proposed development site shall be included in such screenings as should those to which there are pathways, for example, hydrological links for potential effects; **NGB 10**: To ensure that development proposals, where relevant, improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 Network of European Sites and encourage the retention and management of landscape features as per Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.	**No**. As an overall aim of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 is to protect biodiversity and provide directly for the safeguarding of European Sites, in-combination effects with the Proposed Project are not anticipated. This Plan has also been subject to AA and SEA.
Local Biodiversity Action Plan for County Louth 2021-2026 (LCC, 2021)	N/A	The vision of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for County Louth 2021-2026 is for County Louth to have healthy people and wildlife, thriving in a healthy, natural environment. The county intends to move from a goal of "no net loss of biodiversity" to	**No**. As the overall aim of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for County Louth 2021-2026 is to protect biodiversity, in-

Plan	Conflicting Policies	Protective Policies	Potential For In-Combination Effects
		"net gain", that is active management and restoration of our life support systems. The Plan outlines seven core objectives to implement the actions set out in both Ireland's National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021 and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, which are: 1. Mainstream biodiversity into decision-making across all sectors; 2. Strengthen the knowledge base for conservation, management, and sustainable use of biodiversity; 3. Increase awareness and appreciation of biodiversity and ecosystem services; 4. Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside; 5. Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine environment; 6. Expand and improve management of protected areas and species; 7. Strengthen international governance for biodiversity and ecosystem services.	combination effects with the Proposed Project are not anticipated.

5.4.2 Projects

A search was conducted of planning applications (projects) using the online National Planning Application Map Viewer (NPAD) application and the Louth Planning Applications Map Viewer. The search was limited to the five-year period preceding the issue of this report and excluded retention applications (i.e., typically local-scale residential or commercial developments where an impact has already occurred), incomplete, withdrawn, and refused applications. Furthermore, a search of An Bord Pleanála's website was completed to identify any relevant applications, including Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID), Strategic Housing Development (SHD), and Part 8 applications in the past five years or in close proximity to the Proposed Project. Key applications are displayed in **Table 5-3** and their potential for in-combination impacts discussed.

Table 5-3: Planning Search Results – Projects.

Planning Application/Case Reference Number	Proposed Location	Brief Development Description	Application Status/Outcome	Approximate Distance From Proposed Project	Date Planning Application Granted	Potential for In-Combination Effects
Planning Applications						
2251	69 Castle Manor, Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda Co Louth	Permission for a one-bedroom single storey extension and associated site works to the side of existing two storey semi-detached dwelling. The extension will include a lean to tiled roof and a new front window with extended tiled roof canopy to the existing dwelling's front bay window and canopy and to match the existing tiled roofing of the dwelling, all external finishes to match existing and to be consistent with that of other similar type dwellings within the immediate area.	Granted	approx. 0.03 km	11/04/2022	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
21590	Con Glas, 157 Brookville, Drogheda Co Louth	Permission for a two-storey type dwelling house in the side garden, inclusive of a new vehicular entrance and all associated site development works. This development will also include the repositioning of the existing vehicular entrance which serves the dwelling house at 157 Brookville and the reconfiguration of the separating boundary walls between the two properties. *Significant Further Information received on 27/09/2021 which relates to alterations to the western façade of the house design inclusive of a new porch to the utility room, the positioning of the proposed vehicular entrance to the rear of the new dwelling house along the western site boundary, a new pedestrian entrance along the front of the proposed site and all associated site development works*.	Granted	approx. 0.17 km	15/11/2021	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
211212	Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda, Co Louth	Permission for amendments to part (approx. 2.79 HA) of a permitted mixed-use development previously approved	Granted	approx. 0.36 km	13/12/2021	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared

Planning Application/Case Reference Number	Proposed Location	Brief Development Description	Application Status/Outcome	Approximate Distance From Proposed Project	Date Planning Application Granted	Potential for In-Combination Effects
		under planning ref. 07/1399 (ABP Ref PL 15.228370), extended by planning ref. 18/668. This proposed development seeks to amend Clusters B & C of the approved scheme to include for the provision of a total of 74 residential units including 6 no. 4 bed houses; 42 no. 3 bed houses and 26 no. apartments (1-3 bed) in a single 3 & 4 storey block. The proposed amendments to the permitted scheme reduce the overall number of residential units proposed from 659 to 643 (a reduction of 16 residential units). The proposed alterations include for revised public open spaces and landscaping details, provision of ESB substation, revised roads and services layout, together with all associated site development works. The proposed development also seeks to amend the wording of condition 6 attached to planning ref. 071399 (ABP Ref PL 15228370).				between this development and the Proposed Project.
2360494	Moneymore and Yellowbatter, Drogheda, Co. Louth	Permission for development at this site (c. 3.76ha) at lands in the Townlands of Moneymore and Yellowbatter. The proposed development comprises 98no. residential units in a mix of houses, duplex and apartment buildings ranging in height from 2 to 4 storeys overall, including: 68no. 2 storey houses (66no. 3-bedroom and 2no. 4-bedroom houses); 26no. apartments (6no. 1-bedroom, 3no. 2-bedroom (3 person) and 17no. 2-bedroom (4 person) apartment units) in 1no. 3 to 4-storey building; and 4no. 2-bedroom duplex units. All associated and ancillary site development and infrastructural works, hard and soft	Granted	approx. 0.41 km	21/05/2024	**No**. A NIS was prepared in respect of the proposed development and accompanied the application, concluding that the proposed development would not give rise to any effect of the ecological integrity of any European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Planning Application/Case Reference Number	Proposed Location	Brief Development Description	Application Status/Outcome	Approximate Distance From Proposed Project	Date Planning Application Granted	Potential for In-Combination Effects
		landscaping and boundary treatment works, including public, private and communal open space; public lighting; 177no. surface car parking spaces; 152no. bicycle parking spaces; the demolition of pre-existing concrete strip foundations; 1no. ESB Substation; bin stores; foul drainage pumping station; new combined vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian access at Twenties Lane and associated junction upgrades extending from the existing road at the realigned Twenties Lane to the site of development permitted under Louth County Council Reg. Ref. 08/101. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared in respect of the proposed development and accompany this application.				
2360492	Moneymore and Yellowbatter, Drogheda, County Louth	Permission for development at this site (c. 2.69ha) at lands in the Townlands of Moneymore and Yellowbatter, Drogheda. The proposed development comprises 90no. apartments (42no. 1-bedroom, and 48no. 2- bedroom apartment units) and a childcare facility. This is accommodated in 2no. buildings ranging in height from 3 to 5-storeys, to include: - 16no. 1-bedroom, 4no. 2-bedroom (3 person), 18no. 2-bedroom (4 person) apartment units in Block A; 26no. 1-bedroom, 26no. 2-bedroom (4 person) apartment units in Block B; 1no. childcare facility (c. 584sqm) at ground floor level of Block A with associated external play area (c. 1,061 sqm). All associated and ancillary site development and infrastructural works, hard and soft landscaping and	Granted	approx. 0.41 km	21/05/2024	**No**. A NIS was prepared in respect of the proposed development and accompanied the application, concluding that the proposed development would not give rise to any effect of the ecological integrity of any European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Planning Application/Case Reference Number	Proposed Location	Brief Development Description	Application Status/Outcome	Approximate Distance From Proposed Project	Date Planning Application Granted	Potential for In-Combination Effects
		boundary treatment works, including public and communal open space; public lighting; 123no. surface car parking spaces, 198no. secure bicycle parking spaces; the demolition of pre-existing concrete strip foundations; 1no. ESB Substation; bin stores; foul drainage pumping station; new combined vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian access at Twenties Lane and associated junction upgrades extending from the existing road at the realigned Twenties Lane to the site of development permitted under Louth County Council Reg. Ref. 08/101. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared in respect of the proposed development and accompany this application.				
2436	Ballymkenny Road, Drogheda, Co Louth	Permission for the construction of 5 no. 2 storey 3 and 4 bed, detached and semi-detached houses with car parking and all associated site development works etc. on a site area of 0.12 ha, located within the 'Ellwood Park' residential development. Access to the proposed development will be via Ellwood Park, off Ballymakenny Road. The effect of the proposed development will be a modification to part of an extant permission under Ref. No. 21/1212, thus replacing 5 no. previously permitted houses, with 5 no. proposed alternative houses.	Granted	approx. 0.42 km	03/06/2024	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
21271	212 Brookville, Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda	Proposed development consisting of a single storey extension to the side of dwelling house.	Granted	approx. 0.42 km	31/05/2021	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.

Planning Application/Case Reference Number	Proposed Location	Brief Development Description	Application Status/Outcome	Approximate Distance From Proposed Project	Date Planning Application Granted	Potential for In-Combination Effects
2360493	Moneymore and Yellowbatter, Drogheda, County Louth	Permission for development at this site (c. 3.83ha) at lands in the Townlands of Moneymore and Yellowbatter. The proposed development comprises 82no. 2-storey houses (62no. 3-bedroom and 20no. 4-bedroom houses) and all associated and ancillary site development and infrastructural works, hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment works, including public and private open space; public lighting; 165no. surface car parking spaces; 100no. bicycle parking spaces; the demolition of pre-existing concrete strip foundations; 1no. ESB Substation; bin stores; foul drainage pumping station; new combined vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian access at Twenties Lane and associated junction upgrades extending from the existing road at the realigned Twenties Lane to the site of development permitted under Louth County Council Reg. Ref. 08/101. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the proposed development and accompany this application.	Granted	approx. 0.43 km	21/05/2024	**No**. A NIS was prepared in respect of the proposed development and accompanied the application, concluding that the proposed development would not give rise to any effect of the ecological integrity of any European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
22199	74 Brookville Park, Drogheda, Co Louth	permission for a single storey extension of the living room and porch area to the front.	Granted	approx. 0.45 km	31/05/2022	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
211024	54 Moneymore, Drogheda, Co Louth	Permission for development that will consist of the construction of a front porch and all associated site works *Further Information received on 05/05/2022*.	Granted	approx. 0.46 km	27/06/2022	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
21981	Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda, Co Louth	Permission for the change of use of part ground floor and first floor offices to child	Granted	approx. 0.46 km	04/04/2022	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared

Planning Application/Case Reference Number	Proposed Location	Brief Development Description	Application Status/Outcome	Approximate Distance From Proposed Project	Date Planning Application Granted	Potential for In-Combination Effects
		care facility and all associated site development works.				between this development and the Proposed Project.
21445	1 Brookville Park, Drogheda, Co Louth	Permission for the demolition of existing detached domestic garage and construction of proposed single storey extension to side of existing two storey dwelling.	Granted	approx. 0.47 km	12/07/2021	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
2460314	West of Ballymakenny Road, Townland of Yellowbatter, Drogheda County Louth	Permission for development, consisting of the construction of a 3-storey building accommodating 16-no. two and three bed apartments and duplex units, with on street car parking and all associated site development works etc. on a site measuring 0.33 ha, located within the "Ellwood Park" residential development, Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda, County Louth. Access to the proposed development will be via Ellwood Park, west of Ballymakenny Road.	Granted	approx. 0.48 km	28/10/2024	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
22517	Edenoir, 26 Forest Hills, Drogheda Co Louth	Permission for the replacement of the existing roof with a new dormer type roof construction to the dwelling house, a new front porch extension, alterations to the front, side and rear façades of the property, a single storey extension to the rear of the dwelling house and all associated site development works.	Granted	approx. 0.48 km	12/09/2022	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
21693	1 Forest Hill, Yellowbatter, Drogheda Co Louth	Permission for development that will consist of the construction of a three-storey detached house and detached single storey studio and associated site works.	Granted	approx. 0.49 km	11/10/2021	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
22632	Clever Clogs St Olivers National School, Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda Co Louth	Permission for an extension to existing single storey creche prefab unit with internal reconfigurations consisting of 4 no. ensuite classrooms total and store, office and wc for pre-school/after school	Granted	approx. 0.5 km	01/11/2022	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.

Planning Application/Case Reference Number	Proposed Location	Brief Development Description	Application Status/Outcome	Approximate Distance From Proposed Project	Date Planning Application Granted	Potential for In-Combination Effects
		use and minor elevational changes to existing building along with all associated site works.				
211134	67 Brookville, Drogheda, Co Louth	Permission for the demolition of an existing single storey commercial unit and the construction of two, two storey terraced houses and associated site works.	Granted	approx. 0.51 km	26/01/2022	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
2460138	Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Boyle O'Reilly Terrace/Windmill Road/The Twenties, Moneymore Drogheda, Co. Louth	Permission for redevelopment of lands located directly east of Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, and including lands within the Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) Campus, at Beechgrove/Boyle O'Reilly Terrace/Windmill Road, parking also at a site (proposed for car parking) at The Twenties, Moneymore, Drogheda. The site is located north of Our Lady of Lourdes Church (RC), which is a protected structure (RPS ref. DB-099). The development will consist of the construction of a new hospice development providing regional palliative care services in a part 3 and 4 storey building (over 1-2 level basement). A number of the existing MMM building structures on site will be incorporated and partly demolished/altered within the new building development including the existing 4-storey tower building and auditorium building. The proposed hospice will contain 36 no. in-patient bedrooms, day hospital treatment rooms, administration/research services, associated utility and clinical rooms, accommodation for families of patients, oratory, restaurant, kitchen, meeting rooms, winter gardens, terraces and loggia, coffee docks, staff and changing rooms, remains viewing room and all	Granted	approx. 0.51 km	05/08/2024	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.

Planning Application/Case Reference Number	Proposed Location	Brief Development Description	Application Status/Outcome	Approximate Distance From Proposed Project	Date Planning Application Granted	Potential for In-Combination Effects
		associated ancillary areas. The basement will be accessed via a vehicular ramp and new vehicular access from the Beechgrove/Boyle O'Reilly Terrace/Windmill Road and will include 37 no. car parking spaces and 42 no. bicycle spaces. The development will also include refuse store, plant, sprinkler tank, M&E services, part blue roof and all associated plant and servicing areas (including the relocation of an existing ESB substation to a new free-standing building and incorporating additional storage). The development includes an internal link to the existing hospital at ground floor level. The development includes for the provision of a landscaped courtyard, and associated landscaped areas, upgraded public footpath and lighting, laybys for deliveries/waste collection and set down area, boundary treatments and all associated site works and services provision (including drainage upgrade works along Windmill Road and Ballymakenny Road). The development will include the provision of an additional overflow car parking area of 50. no. spaces provided at Cross Lane, Moneymore with new access via The Twenties. This amounts to a combined total of 87no. car parking spaces.				
22481	10 Shamrock Villas, Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda Co Louth	Permission for the demolition of a single storey extension to the rear of the house, for the construction of a new single storey extension to the rear of the house, for the construction of a single storey detached domestic garage, for the change of use of the existing attached garage to domestic storage use, for alterations to the	Granted	approx. 0.52 km	05/09/2022	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.

Planning Application/Case Reference Number	Proposed Location	Brief Development Description	Application Status/Outcome	Approximate Distance From Proposed Project	Date Planning Application Granted	Potential for In-Combination Effects
		elevations of the house, for the installation of 16 no. PV solar panels and for associated siteworks.				
22440	Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda, Co Louth	Permission for development within the townland of Yellowbatter consisting of amendments to part of a permitted mixed-use development previously approved under planning ref. no. 07/1399 (ABP ref. PL15.228370), extended by planning ref. no. 18/668 and amended by planning ref. 21/1212. This proposed development seeks to amend an apartment building on the southwest corner of Cluster H of the approved scheme, part of which is currently under construction, to include revised floor plans and elevations. The proposed amendments to the permitted scheme will result in the provision of an additional 2 bed apartment and accordingly it will increase the overall number of residential units within the scheme from 643 (as per ref. no. 21/1212) to 644. The proposed amendments include minor revisions to the associated site development works.	Granted	approx. 0.53 km	22/08/2022	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
2460044	Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Cross Lane, Moneymore Drogheda	Permission for the construction of a new four-storey medical building at the existing greenfield area bounded by the existing Department of Psychiatry to the west, Mayfield Housing Estate to the south, Twenties Lane to the east, and Drogheda Institute of Further Education to the north, to provide: at ground floor level 8 no. outpatients consulting rooms and associated ancillary accommodation; at first floor level 6 no. outpatients consulting rooms and associated ancillary accommodation, at second floor level 6 no. outpatients consulting rooms and	Granted	approx. 0.53 km	15/04/2024	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.

Planning Application/Case Reference Number	Proposed Location	Brief Development Description	Application Status/Outcome	Approximate Distance From Proposed Project	Date Planning Application Granted	Potential for In-Combination Effects
		associated ancillary accommodation, at third floor an internal plant room and external plant enclosure and PV array; all totalling 1,372.1 sqm gross internal floor area. Externally the works comprise a new vehicular and pedestrian entrance along Twenties Lane, connecting to the existing internal roads and footpaths at OLOL Cross Lanes carpark, with 19 no. new car parking spaces and 6 no. new bicycle parking spaces, and an ancillary single-storey external store building, together with associated landscaping, site works and site services for all of the above.				
2360339	18 Shamrock Villas, Drogheda, Co. Louth	Permission for extensions and alterations to existing dwelling house, including; demolition of existing rear single-storey flat roof extension and existing chimney to the side elevation, construction of a single-storey rear extension, elevational alterations, enlarge existing vehicular entrance and all associated site works.	Granted	approx. 0.53 km	27/11/2023	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
19937	15 Broadmeadows , Drogheda, Co Louth	Permission to remove existing compromised roof and replace with a new roof at increased pitch of 40 degrees to contain habitable accommodation within the attic roof space. These works will also entail a change to the house façade and inclusion of a new entrance doorway.	Granted	approx. 0.53 km	10/02/2020	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
20406	Forest Park, Drogheda, Co Louth	Permission for 2 no. semi-detached dwellings located between existing dwelling no.s 40 & 125, provision of new pedestrian link to neighbouring residential development (planning reference no. 15641) currently under construction and all associated site development works.	Granted	approx. 0.55 km	31/08/2020	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.

Planning Application/Case Reference Number	Proposed Location	Brief Development Description	Application Status/Outcome	Approximate Distance From Proposed Project	Date Planning Application Granted	Potential for In-Combination Effects
20128	19 Shamrock Villas , Drogheda, Co Louth	Permission for the demolition of existing single storey side garage, tv room and rear kitchen extensions to allow for construction of single and two storey side and rear extension with attic storage space, totalling circa 140 square metres habitable floor area.	Granted	approx. 0.55 km	29/06/2020	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
191083	20 & 21 Shamrock Villas, Drogheda, Co Louth	Permission for the following: a) Works to widen existing vehicular entrance & driveway, which will include removing an existing pillar and section of existing boundary wall and building a new pillar to widen the vehicular entrance from circa 2m to 4m. New pillar will match existing pillar in size, height, appearance and finish. b) All ancillary site works relating to the development.	Granted	approx. 0.56 km	16/03/2020	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
22855	Twenties Lane , Moneymore, Drogheda Co Louth	Permission for a proposed dormer style dwelling house, connection to existing public foul sewer, new vehicular entrance onto public road and all associated site development works.	Granted	approx. 0.57 km	20/03/2023	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
2360285	No.3 Shamrock Villas , Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda Co. Louth.	Proposed enlargement and upgrading of existing vehicular entrance, enlarging and redesigning of on-site driveway/parking and all associated site development works.	Granted	approx. 0.58 km	06/11/2023	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
201084	Ballymakenny Road , Drogheda, Co Louth	Permission for development that will consist of the construction of 69 no. residential units on a site of c. 1.985 hectares. All units are provided with private amenity space in the form of gardens or balconies/terraces. The 69 no units consist of 49 no. terraced and end of terrace houses and 20 no. duplex units. The proposed houses are 2 to 3	Granted	approx. 0.58 km	19/07/2021	**No**. A NIS was prepared in respect of the proposed development and accompanied the application, concluding that the proposed development would not give rise to any effect of the ecological integrity of any European

Planning Application/Case Reference Number	Proposed Location	Brief Development Description	Application Status/Outcome	Approximate Distance From Proposed Project	Date Planning Application Granted	Potential for In-Combination Effects
		storeys in height while the duplex building are 3 storeys in height. The 49 no. houses consist of the following: 4no. 2-bedroom units, 39 no. 3 bedroom units and 6 no. 4 bedroom units. The 20 no. duplexes consist of the following: 4 no. 1 bedroom units, 6 no. 2 bedroom units, 10 no. 3 bedroom units. The proposal includes the provision of car parking and bicycle parking, public and communal open space with associated landscaping, boundary treatments, all associated internal access roads, footpaths and cycles facilities, bin stores, foul and surface water drainage, lighting and all associated and ancillary site works. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was submitted to the planning authority with the planning application. *Significant Further Information which includes an updated Natura Impact Statement was received on 27/04/2021*.				Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
2044	Drogheda Institute of Education, The Twenties, Drogheda	Permission for the construction of a standalone 2 storey sports building (574m2 approx.) consisting of 4 no. changing rooms, sanitary facilities, 1 no. multipurpose room, servery, storage and associated circulation. Works to include all required service connections, new car parking, new access road and all associated site works.	Granted	approx. 0.58 km	05/04/2021	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
An Bord Pleanála Cases						
312697	Crushrod Avenue, Drogheda, Co Louth A92 V20V	Protected Structure: Demolition of store building to gable end of cottage and replacement with extension to cottage. demolition of sheds and outbuildings to facilitate; change of use from cottage to	Granted	approx. 0.62 km	09/01/2023	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.

Planning Application/Case Reference Number	Proposed Location	Brief Development Description	Application Status/Outcome	Approximate Distance From Proposed Project	Date Planning Application Granted	Potential for In-Combination Effects
		cafe, 2 retail units, 47 apartments and 9 houses. Associated site works.				
312305	80 Pearse Park, Drogheda, Co Louth.	Construction of four off road car parking spaces to front of house.	Granted	approx. 0.86 km	04/05/2022	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
312205	Yellowbatter & Moneymore, Drogheda, Co. Louth	Amendments to mixed use development resulting reduction from 522 residential units to 517 units. Alterations for revised open public spaces, roads, and services layout.	Granted	approx. 0.92 km	30/08/2022	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.
313100	51-55 Hardman's Gardens, Drogheda, Co Louth	Demolition of 5 cottages. Construction of 42 houses, 2 storey commercial building for cafe/ pharmacy/medical centre /outdoor gym/car parking and associate site works.	Granted	approx. 0.93 km	17/08/2023	**No**. No pathway to any European Site(s) is shared between this development and the Proposed Project.

5.4.3 In-Combination Conclusion

Having regard for the above (**Section 5.4.1** and **Section 5.4.2**), no pathways have been identified by which any plan or project could have a likely significant in-combination effect on any European Site(s). It is concluded that there is no potential for in-combination effects.

6 SCREENING CONCLUSION AND STATEMENT

RPS has prepared this report to inform screening for AA to assess whether the Proposed Project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, and in view of best-scientific knowledge, is likely to have a significant effect on any European Site(s).

The screening exercise was completed with cognisance of the relevant European Commission guidance, national guidance, and current case law. The potential impacts of the Proposed Project have been considered in the context of the European Sites potentially affected, their Qualifying Interests (QIs) and/or Special Conservation Interests (SCIs), and their conservation objectives.

Through an assessment of the source-pathway-receptor model, which identified the Zone of Influence of effects from the Proposed Project and the potential in-combination effects with other plans or projects, the following findings are reported:

- The Proposed Project is not predicted to result in any Likely Significant Effects on any European Site(s) within the Zone of Influence of the Proposed Project.

As per Article 42(7) of the EU Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011-2015:

"Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project is not required …if it can be excluded on the basis of objective scientific information following screening under this Regulation, that the plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European Site".

In conclusion, it is the opinion of RPS that AA ('Stage 2') is not required.

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