Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

Gort Public Realm

Minogue Environmental Consultants Ltd.

October 2024

Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

This report has been prepared by Minogue Environmental Consulting Ltd with all reasonable skill, care and diligence. Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

This report is prepared for Galway County Council and we accept no responsibility to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

Document Stage	Document Version	Prepared by
DRAFT Client review	1	R M Reviewed: PD

1 Table of Contents

1 Introduction

Minogue Environmental Consultants (DEC) Ltd. has been commissioned by Galway County Council. to prepare a Screening Report in support of an Appropriate Assessment (AA), under Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive, for the proposed **Gort Town Centre Public Realm, Gort town, Co Galway.** (see **Figure 1.1** for the location of project site with an aerial view of the project site).

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

1.1 Legislative Context

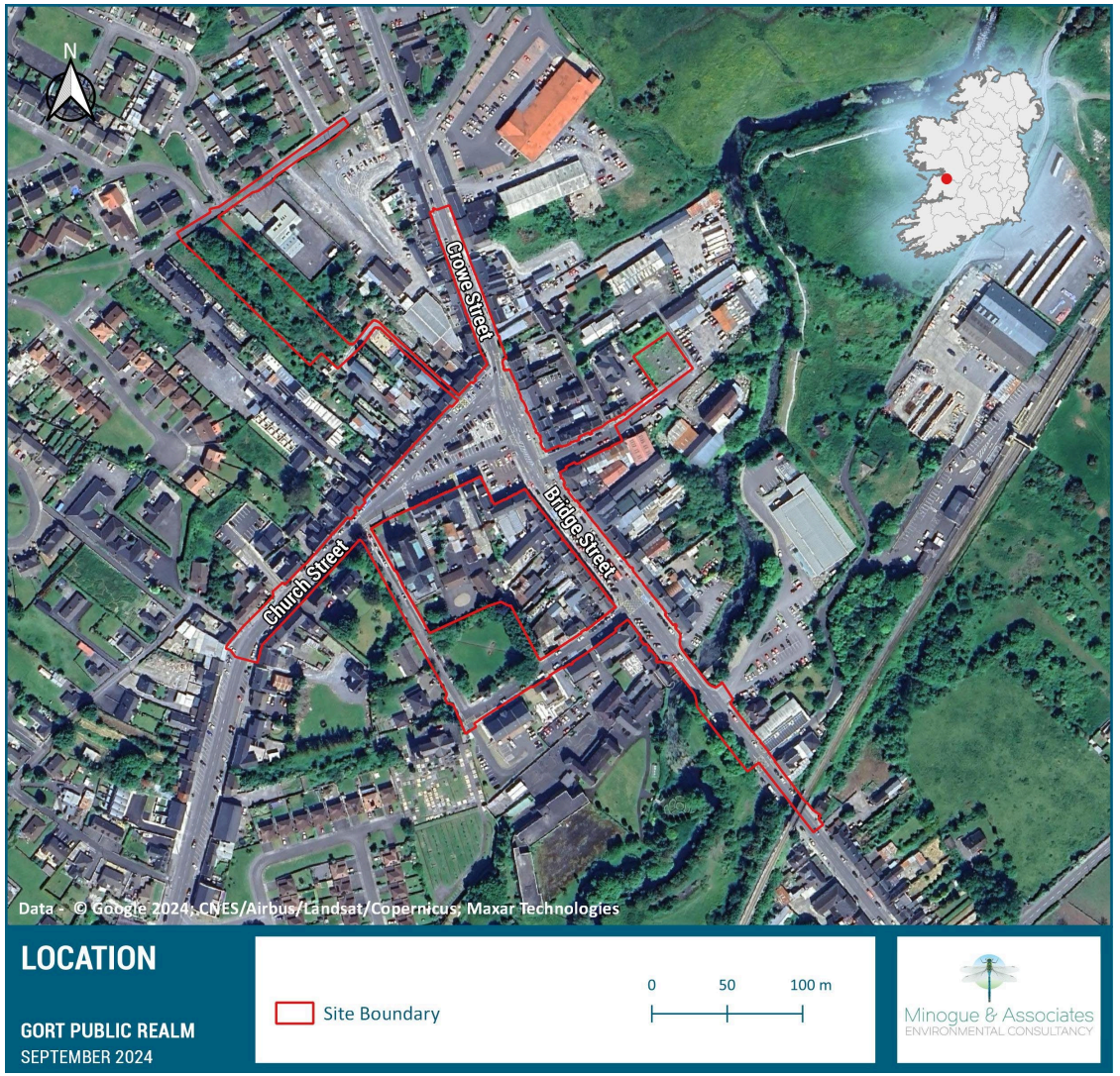
This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment is being prepared in order to enable the competent authority to comply with Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive). It is prepared to assess whether or not the project alone or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect on any European Site in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European Sites and specifically on the habitats and species for which the sites have been designated.

1.1.1 Requirement for an Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive

According to Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 – 2015, the competent authority has a duty to:

- Determine whether the proposed Project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of one of more European Sites; and, if not,
- Determine if the Project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the Eurpoean Site(s) in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of the site(s).

FIGURE 1-1 GORT PUBLIC REALM, LOCATION AND PLAN AREA BOUNDARY



This Report contains a Screening for Appropriate Assessment and is intended to assess and address all issues regarding the construction and operation of the Project and to inform and allow the competent authority to comply with the Habitats Directive. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive defines the requirements for assessment of projects and plans for which likely significant effects on European Sites may arise. The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, as amended (the Habitats Regulations) transpose into Irish law Directive 2009/147/EC (the Birds Directive) and Council Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive) lists habitats and species that are of international importance for conservation and require protection. The Habitats legislation requires competent authorities, to carry out a Screening for Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects that, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site's conservation objectives. This requirement is transposed into Irish Law by Part 5 of the Habitats Regulations and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

1.2 Screening Methodology

This Screening Report has been prepared in order to comply with the legislative requirements outlined in Section 1.1 above and aims to establish whether or not the proposed project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site's conservation objectives. In this context "likely" means a risk or possibility of effects occurring that cannot be ruled out based on objective information and "significant" means an effect that would undermine the conservation objectives of the European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects (Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR), 2021).

The nature of the likely interactions between the Plan and the Conservation Objectives of European Sites will depend upon the:

- the ecological characteristics of the species or habitat, including their structure, function, conservation status and sensitivity to change; *and/or*
- the character, magnitude, duration, consequences and probability of the impacts arising from land use activities associated with the plan, in combination with other plans and projects.

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken with reference to respective National and European guidance documents: Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG 2010) and *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC; Office of the Planning Regulator – OPR Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management,* and recent European and National case law. The guidance document Managing Natura 2000 Sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European commission (2018) was also of relevance during the preparation of this Screening Report:

The EC (2021) guidelines outline the stages involved in undertaking a Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment for projects. The methodology adopted during the preparation of this Screening Report is informed by these guidelines and was undertaken in the following stages:

1. Describe the project and determine whether it is necessary for the conservation management of European Sites;
2. Identify European Sites that could be influenced by the project;

3. Where European Sites are identified as occurring within the zone of influence of the project identify potential effects arising from the project and screen the potential for such effects to negatively affect European Sites identified under Point 2 above; and
4. Identify other plans or projects that, in combination with the project, have the potential to affect European Sites.

1.2.1 Statement of authority

Ruth Minogue, MCIEEM prepared this AA Screening Report (AASR). Ruth is an environmental consultant with over 25 years of experience in completing ecological impact assessments, environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessment. She has assisted in the writing of Appropriate Assessment screening reports and Natura Impact Statements for a range of landuse activities and types including residential, public realm, recreation and renewable energy.
This AASR has been reviewed by Mr. Pat Doherty BSc., MSc, MCIEEM, of DEC Ltd. Mr. Doherty is a consultant ecologist with over 20 years' experience in completing ecological impact assessments and environmental impact assessments. Pat has been involved in the completion of assessment reports for proposed developments and land use activities under the EIA Directive and Article 6 of the Habitats Directive since 2003 and 2006 respectively. He has extensive experience completing such reporting for projects located in a variety of environments and has a thorough understanding to the biodiversity issues that may arise from proposed land use activities. Pat was responsible for completing one of the first Appropriate Assessment reports for large scale infrastructure developments in Ireland when he prepared the Appropriate Assessment for the N25 New Ross Bypass in 2006/07. Since then Pat has completed multiple examinations of both plans and projects in Ireland. He has completed Natura Impact Statements for national scale plans such as Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan and National Seafood Development Plan and regional and county scale plans including County Development Plans, Local Area Plans, Tourism Strategies and Climate Action Plans. Pat has completed multiple Natura Impact Statements for a range of development types that include large scale infrastructure developments in sectors such as transport and energy as well as industrial, commercial and residential developments.

1.2.1.1 Scientific Investigations

A range of scientific site investigations have been completed for the project and these are relied upon in this AASR. A detailed description of methods to undertake these scientific investigations are set out in the Bat Surveys completed by EireEcology[1] over 2023-2024 and Sustainable Urban[2]Drainage Strategy are provided in full under separate cover with the planning application.
Site visits to ground truth habitats were undertaken in July 2024.

[1] Bat Survey Report Gort Streetscape, Eire Ecology 2024

[2] SuDS Assessment Gort Town Centre Public Realm, Co. Galway September 2024 Mc Cloy Consulting

2 Project description

The project proposals provide for the re-imagination of the heart of Gort's public realm in the town centre including the Market Square, Bridge Street, Crowe Street, Barrack Street, Queen Street and Canon Quinn Park. Figure 2.1 overleaf presents the principal scheme areas and elements.

The development will consist of the following:

Gort Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project on Market Square, Bridge Street, George Street, Crowe Street, Barrack Street, Queen Street, Church Street, and Canon Quinn Park to include:

1. Redesigned paved areas along Market Square, Bridge Street, George Street, Crowe Street, Barrack Street, Queen Street and Church Street including new surface materials, installation of a new lighting scheme, hard and soft landscaping and street furniture (The proposed works are located within the Architectural Conservation Area, and in the vicinity of Recorded Protected Structures RPS No 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 3445, 3451, 3452, 3453, 3459, 3464, 3467, 3468, 3469, 3471, 3472.

2. Provision of an upgraded and expanded pedestrianised civic/public space in the Market Square.

3. Provision of new pedestrian crossings.

4. Installation of new road alignments including reduction in carriageway widths and traffic calming measures.

5. Installation of new street furniture and cycle parking.

6. Rationalised on-street car parking throughout the application area including the provision of new disabled and age friendly parking provision.

7. The provision of 2No. new public off-street car parks and Crowe Street and Barrack Street.

8. Installation of new landscaping including street trees and planting.

9. Upgrade works to the existing Canon Quinn Park including the installation of play equipment, seating, lighting and ancillary infrastructure.

10. Installation of a new signage and way-finding scheme.

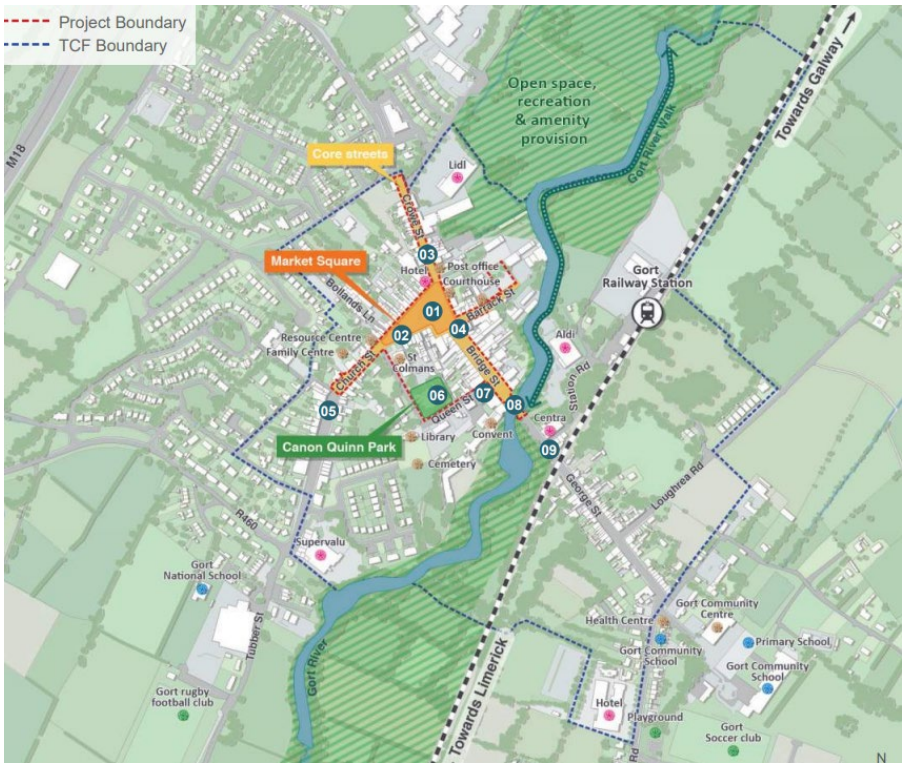
11. Undergrounding of overhead cables and the removal of redundant overhead cabling.

12. Installation of upgraded surface water drainage infrastructure including provision of nature-based, sustainable urban drainage solutions.

13. The relocating of existing public bus-stop to Bridge Street/George Street and provision 1No. new coach drop off area on Market Square.

14. All other associated site and ancillary works at Market Square, Bridge Street, George Street, Crowe Street, Barrack Street, Queen Street, Church Street, and Canon Quinn Park.

FIGURE 2-1 OVERVIEW OF GORT PUBLIC REALM



2.1 Surface Water management

Currently within the project area there are four surface water drains which discharge into the Cunnahowna/ Gort river (hereafter referred to as the Gort River). A 450mm diameter concrete pipe runs along the northern edge of the Market Square (shown in blue on the attached drawing) in a westerly direction towards the river, the second drain is a 375mm concrete pipe which runs southwards down Main Street entering the river on the western side of the Gort River bridge, the third and fourth are 375mm diameter concrete pipes which run parallel to each other northwards down Bridge Street entering the river on the eastern and western side of the bridge. The surface water runoff is untreated. The water is collected in roadside gulleys along the carriageway and is directed into the river.

2.1.1 Proposed Surface Water Management

A detailed Suds assessment has been prepared by McCloy Consulting [3] and is presented here. The drainage and SuDS strategy is a robust and multitiered approach to reduce the rate in which surface water is discharged into the below ground surface water network. The proposed strategy takes into consideration the existing site topography and falls to create a system that captures the rain fall at multiple points across the public realm.

The purpose of the SuDS Assessment is quantitatively evaluate the SuDS features proposed as part of the Gort Town Centre Public Realm project. The assessment considers both the hydraulic and treatment performance of the proposed SuDS components. This assessment considered the areas that incorporate SuDS and areas that contribute to a proposed SuDS features (i.e., contributing

[3] M02191-03 SuDS Assessment Gort Town Centre Public Realm, Co. Galway 9 September 2024

subcatchments) which is estimated to approximate to c. 80% of the Gort Town Centre Public Realm scheme.

The proposed surface water management design presented in Figure 2.2 comprises three types of SuDS components:

- Permeable pavement
- Bioretention rain gardens
- SuDS tree pits

FIGURE 2-2 SUDS PROPOSALS (MCCLOY CONSULTANTS)

Flow rates are in accordance with the requirements of GDSDS and Galway CC for restriction of post development runoff to greenfield rates . Greenfield rates were calculated using the Flood Studies Supplementary Report (FSSR) and Institute of Hydrology Report no. 124 (IoH124) methodologies with catchment-specific characteristics.

Notwithstanding, flows from individual (or hydraulically linked) SuDS features will be controlled to a minimum of 1 litre/second, which will apply to a number of smaller subcatchments identified within the scheme area. SuDS components will include overflows and consider exceedance routes as part of detailed design. It is noted that based on best available geological / soil data, infiltration is unlikely to be a feasible method of discharge from the site.

SuDS components provide significant quantity and quality benefits compared to the existing pre-development scenario. The hydraulic benefit will vary depending on the available storage at each SuDS component (or hydraulically linked SuDS component). It is noted that this assessment provides an early indication and outcomes (particularly around the hydraulic assessment) may be influenced through the development of the design. Storage provision may be reduced due to presence of utilities for example or increased through allocation of additional storage as part of the design process

All SuDS measures and calculations are described in full in the McCloy SuDS Assessment report, provided under separate cover with the planning application documentation.

2.1.2 Foul Water Drainage and Water services

No foul water provision or water supply is associated with this public realm plan, and no changes are proposed from the existing current baseline.

2.2 Landscaping

The Landscape public real plan has been developed with a strong emphasis enhancing the biodiversity of the urban centre that is dominated by built land and artificial surfaces. Within these character areas, there are three plant palettes that respond to the specific requirements for Gort Public Realm. These palettes are grouped under the following headings:

- Rain Garden Palette
- General Planting Mix
- Roadside Mix

In addition to the above, Canon Quinn Park has its own unique planting palette to respond to the existing trees and soil conditions. Planting beds with a strong variety of species helps provide added biodiversity to Gort Public Realm. Although the species selected are of low demand in terms of rate of growth and natural form, maintenance will be needed for the future success and establishment. The following suggestions apply to the above palettes:

• Shrubs: Annual prune where necessary in early spring.

• Ornamental Deciduous Grasses: Annual cut back to the base in early spring. Retain for structural interest over winter.

• Evergreen Grasses: Annual tidy in early spring to remove dead material.

• Herbaceous perennials: annual tidy and cut back in autumn, leaving some with structural interest/seed heads over winter to be cut back early spring.

2.3 Lighting

Lighting must provide a safe environment for visitors to Gort Town Centre. This includes providing code-compliant light levels and high-quality and robust fittings. Lighting must always promote accessibility: highlighting level changes and designing with DDA requirements in mind are key. Light should encourage social interaction which ultimately benefits the night-time economy. We aim to create a memorable place for people.

The functional lighting scheme for Gort is designed to achieve illuminance levels on all roads, lanes and spaces to allow safe pedestrian and vehicular movement at all times. An emphasis is put in the lighting strategy on Market Square, as it will contribute to creating a welcoming and vibrant space at the heart of Gort, which celebrates the centre of the local community. The landmarks on Market Square are a key feature within central Gort and offer up a fantastic opportunity for feature lighting. The new off street car parks are essential for the town's infrastructure and should be illuminated appropriately as functional spaces.

Artificial lighting in Canon Quinn park is not recommended as part of this scheme. This space will not be used at nighttime and there is no pedestrian route through we want to encourage. Keeping the light levels to a minimum will also ensure optimum conditions for the local nocturnal wildlife.

A review of the lighting strategy has been undertaken by EireEcology and revisions made to lighting proposals over the course of the plan design process.

2.4 construction phase

2.4.1 Construction Phasing and compounds

The work programme could extend upto 24 months and will be phased to incur as little disruption to the local economy and school traffic.

Ancillary car parks would be completed first, Market Square and Cannon Quinn Park would be followed. One side of Main Street and Bridge Street would be completed and then the opposite side of the same streets.

The proposed car park on Barrack Street and Crowe Street would be used as site compounds with the works sequenced such that the works compound could be relocated when one car park has been completed, to allow for completion of the other.

Machinery for construction would be standard machinery and materials associated with traffic construction works.

3 Description of the Site location

The scheme area currently comprises c. 2.8 ha of primarily developed / urban land across Gort town centre including environs and access roads. The plan area comprises the following streets and squares and are centrally located in the town of Gort.

3.1 Review of historical Maps

A review of historical mapping (6-inch colour map 1829 to 1842; 6 inch Cassini, 1830's) and the 25 inch map, 1888 to 1913) for the plan area shows the presence of the Market Square, Georges Street, Bridge Street, Crowe Lane (not Crowe Street) are present. The Barracks complex is present but no street is named as such, nor is Queen Street marked on the 1st Edition 6" colour map.

A review of the 6" Cassini map shows the presence of the above streets and market as well as Queen Street is now mapped. The lands associated identified for off street parking off Crowe Street are laid out in long gardens associated with existing buildings off the market square.

The 1995 satellite imagery for the plan area shows the existing landuses of build land and artificial surface in the plan area; with some wider infill development and the continued presence of grassland and the presence of a treeline at the Crowe Street off street car parking lands.

The 2001 – 2005 imagery shows the continued landuse and layout in the plan area as above.

3.2 Geology Overview

The bedrock underlying the plan area comprises various families of limestone with Visean shelf limestone to the west of the plan area and Waulsortian limestones to the east of town of Gort. Karst features are common in the vicinity of, but not located within the public realm plan boundary.

The plan area is located the -Caherglassaun Turlough groundwater body (GWB). The GWB occupies the area between Kinvara-Gort lowlands. The land surface is low lying and relatively flat, with elevations ranging from sea level to 30 mAOD. The GWB is bounded by the coastline at Kinvara. The boundary to the east is with the poor aquifer lithologies of the Derrybrien GWB. To the north and south, surface water divides act as the boundaries. The groundwater body is 256km^2.

Groundwater vulnerability underlying the project lands ranges from extreme to rock at surface. Two no. karst features are identified by the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) to the south of the project area. These relate to the Gort Kinvara karst system and are the Coole Garryland complex, a very large complex of turloughs, risings and sinks in the Gort lowlands, located c 0.79km north and west of the project areas. The second includes the Beagh Sink - Pollduagh System, a sequence of linked karstic features along the course of the Beagh River located c .1.8km south east of the plan area. A springwell is mapped to the east of the Convent, c 105m east of the Gort River and 334m from the nearest plan area at the Bridge Street crossing of the above river.

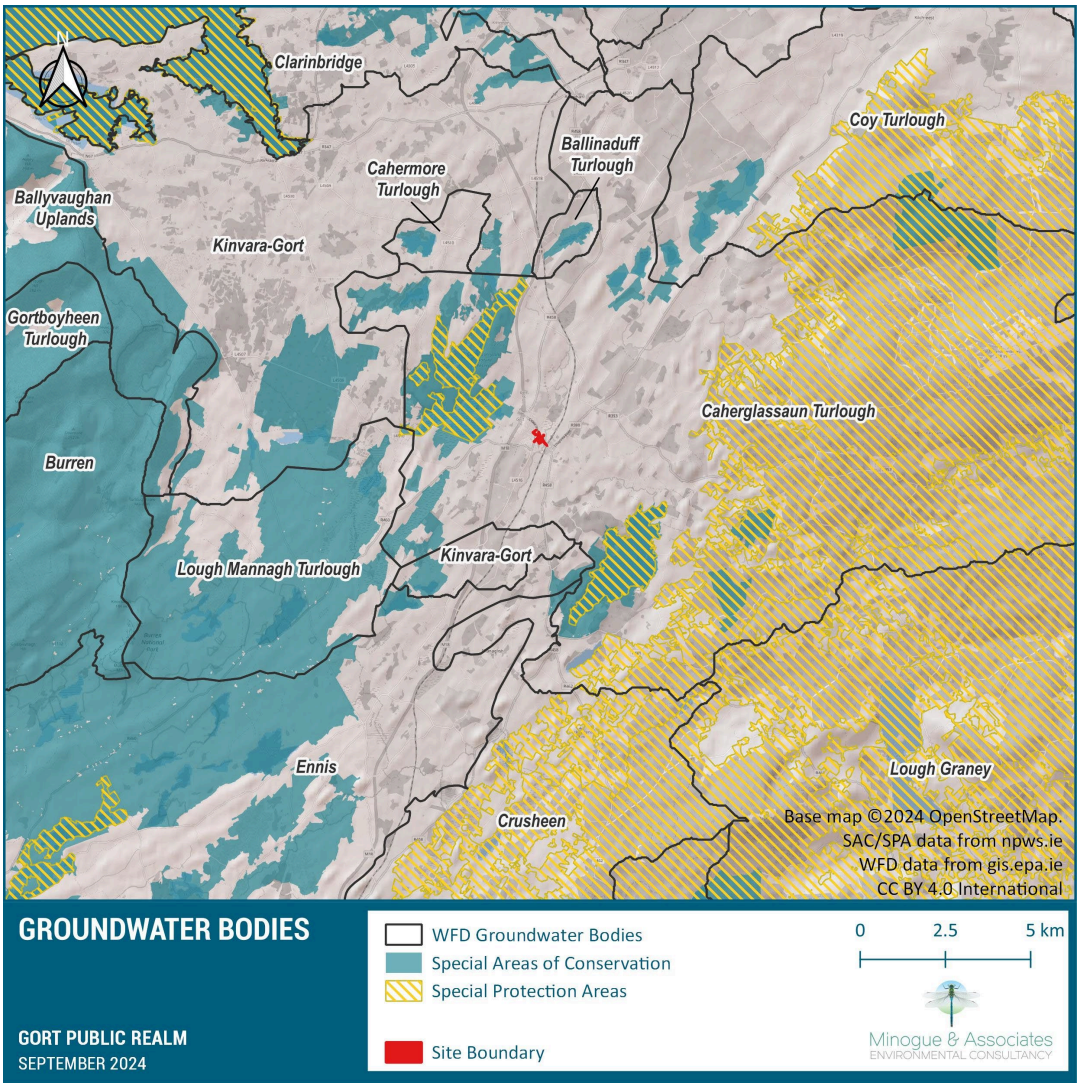
The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) note in their first draft Gort Kinvara Groundwater Body Description[4] that a large number of karst features occur, including turloughs, caves, dolines, swallow

[4] Transmissivity and well yields are variable. Rapid groundwater flow velocities have been recorded through groundwater tracing. With Recharge occurs via losing streams, point and diffuse mechanisms. • In general, the degree of interconnection in karstic systems is high and they support regional scale flow systems. Flow paths are up to 10 kilometres in length. • Surface water catchments are often bypassed by groundwater flowing beneath surface water channels and across surface water catchment divides. A proportion of groundwater from the Burren Uplands is considered to discharge to Kinvara. • Some areas are of extreme vulnerability due to the thin nature of the subsoil, as well as the frequency of karst features, allowing point recharge. Storativity is low and the potential for contaminant attenuation in such aquifers

holes and springs. It notes the GWB is composed primarily of high transmissivity karstified limestone. There is a high degree of interaction between surface water and groundwater. In the eastern area water frequently sinks and rises before being transmitted underground mostly to Kinvara.

As such it is likely that surface waters draining to ground at the plan area are likely to discharge to the Gort River which runs adjacent to the southeastern part of the project area at Bridge Street. Given the plan area is within the Caharglassaun Turlough groundwater body, groundwater pathways represent a functional pathway to groundwater dependant habitats within this groundwater body. Groundwater within the plan area and groundwater body is classified as being at risk of not meeting the Water Framework Directive objectives for good status by 2027. Figure 3.1 presents the project area with groundwater bodies and European Sites.

FIGURE 3-1 GROUNDWATER BODIES, PLAN AREA AND EUROPEAN SITES



is limited. • • The groundwater has a calcium bicarbonate signature. The water is saline up to several kilometers inland. Microsoft Word - Kinvara-Gort.doc (geodata.gov.ie) accessed 28/09.24

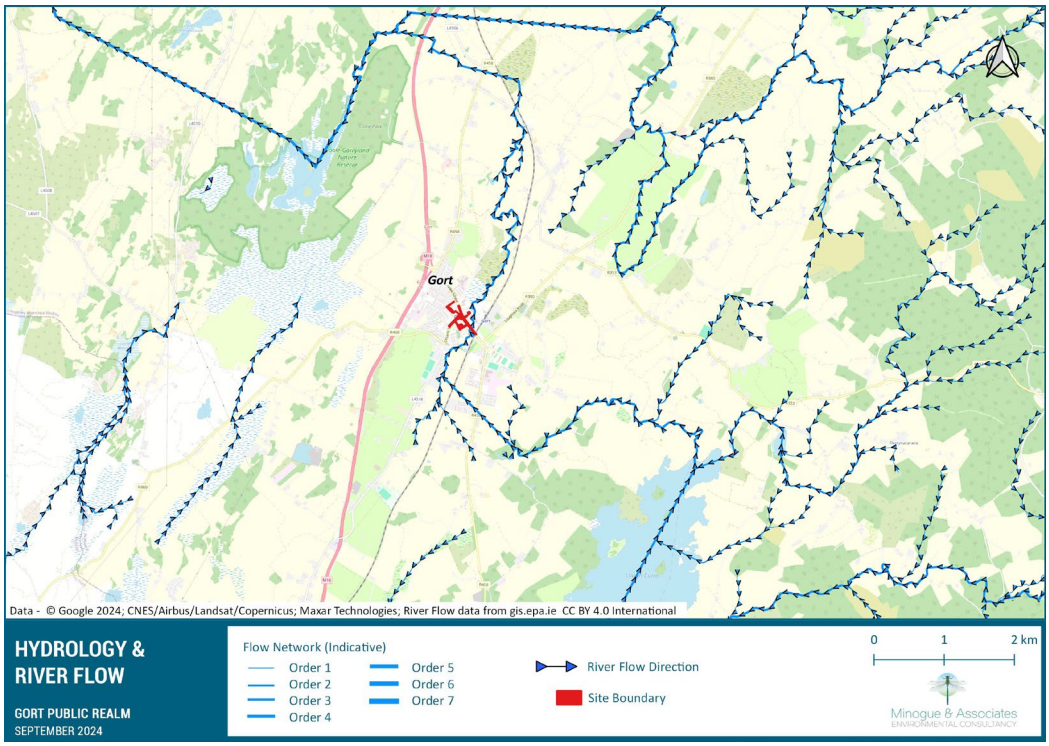
3.3 Hydrology

The plan area is located within the Galway Bay South East Water Framework Directive catchment (code 29) and Cannahowna_SC_010 sub-catchment. The Gort River runs immediately adjacent to the plan area at Bridge Street. The site is located within Hydrometric Area . HYDRO Catchments29_676.

Water quality is monitored downstream at the bridge over the Gort River (site RS29C010100) and downstream of the wastewater treatment plant (site RSC010200) and the most recent data available (2021) states Q value of 3-4 and the river overall is classified as moderate quality under the Water Framework Directive. This waterbody is at risk of not meeting the Water Framework Directive objectives by 2027.

Currently surface water drains into the existing drainage system, within the project area there are four surface water drains which discharge into the Gort river. The surface water runoff is untreated. The water is collected in roadside gulleys along the carriageway and is directed into the river. Figure 3.2 presents the plan area and indicative surface water flows.

FIGURE 3-2 PLAN AREA AND INDICATIVE SURFACE WATER FLOWS



3.4 Designated conservation area

No European Sites occur at in the project site. The nearest European Sites to the project site are the Coole Garryland Complex (Site Code: 00252), approximately 0.79km to the north and west of the plan area. The Coole-Garryland SPA (004107)SPA is the nearest SPA at 1.19km north and west of the site.

The nearest proposed Natural Heritage Area (p NHA) to the project site is the Coole Garryland pNHA located 0.79km north and west of the project area. The next pNHA is the Polldullagh Cave pNHA located approximately 1.72 south of the plan area. Please see Figures 3.3 showing Special Areas of Conservation and Figure 3.4 showing Special Protection Areas within 5, 10 and 15km of the plan area.

FIGURE 3-3 SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION

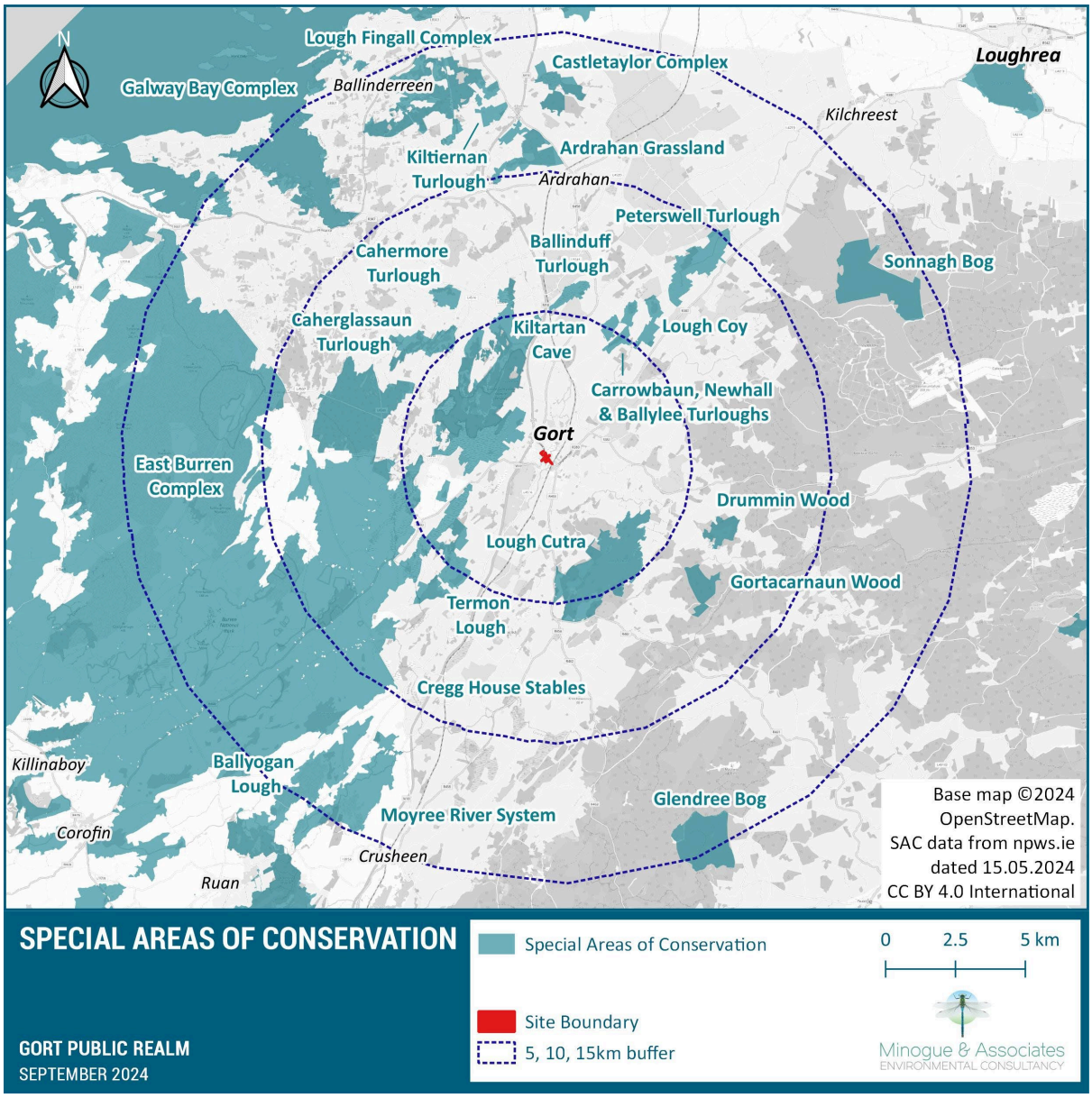
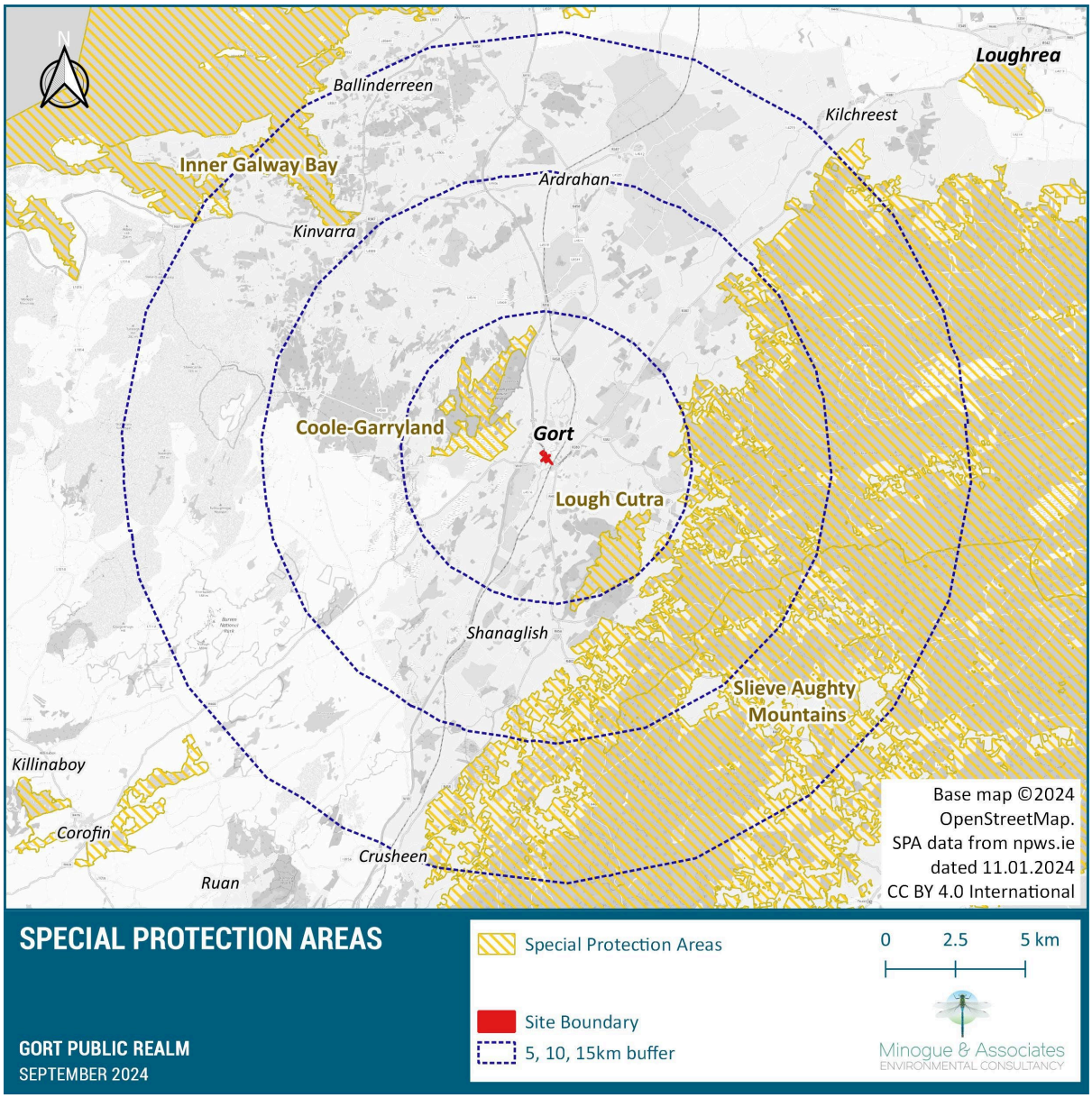


FIGURE 3-4 SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS



3.5 Land cover & Habitats

The current land cover within the project site is characterised by built lands and artificial surfaces with the parkland and amenity planting present at Canon Quin Park. A description of land cover and habitats in presented below in Table 3.1

TABLE 3-1 LANDCOVER AND HABITATS

Market Square	Comprises built land and artificial surfaces no woodland habitats are present such as trees or ornamental planting.
Canon Quinn Park	Comprises amenity grassland with trees of various sizes and species, a large row of Leylandii are present on the eastern boundary of the park.
Bridge Street	Comprises built land and artificial surfaces, with the bridge crossing the Gort River that flows north east through the town. The Gort River is crossed by Bridge Street.
Crowe Street	Comprises built land and artificial surfaces including the street and housing/built development
Georges Street	Comprises built land and artificial surfaces including the street and housing/built development
Barrack Street	This comprises bare ground, built land and artificial surfaces, with a stone wall. A ditch where the Gort river was previously diverted around the old Barracks provides a hydrological connect to the Gort River
Queen Street	Comprises built land and artificial surfaces including the street and housing/built development. The stone walls support some ivy growth along parts of Queen Street..
Church Street	Comprises built land and artificial surfaces including the street and housing/built development
Off street parking (Lowry Lane)	this comprises spoil, bare ground, recolonising bare ground with grass. with some woodland habitat in the form of semi mature trees. A review of aerial photography (see Section 3.1) indicated the presence of these trees from 1995 aerial imagery.

3.6 Fauna

3.6.1 Non-volant mammals

No evidence indicating the presence of protected non-volant mammals, such as badgers, has been recorded within the project site during site visit in July 2024...A search of the National Biodiversity Centre database based on a polygon search of the plan area returned the following records of protected species.

TABLE 3-2 NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY CENTRE DATABASE

Species	Count	Data of record	Status
Common Frog (Rana temporaria)	1	31/12/1979	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive || Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex V || Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
European Otter (Lutra lutra)	2	11/10/2010	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive || Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex II || Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV || Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros)	10	26/01/2015	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive || Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex II || Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV || Protected Species: Wildlife Acts

A further search of the NBDC database returned a record of evidence of otter activity in 2005, with one otter spraint observed on flat ledges downstream of the bridge, approximately 250m downstream, just beyond the Aldi shop.

3.6.2 Bats

Bat surveys were undertaken by EireEcology[5] over 2024 and the full report is provided under separate cover. In summary, the surveys revealed the presence of seven bat species as follows:

- Common pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pipistrellus)
- Soprano pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pygmaeus)
- Leisler's bat (Nyctalus leisleri)
- Brown Long- eared bat (Plecotus auratus)
- Natterer's Ba (Myotis nattereri)

[5] Bat Survey Report, Eire Ecology, September 2024

- Daubentons bat (Myotis daubentonii), and
- Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros)

The project site is not situated within a core zone of influence for SAC designated Lesser Horseshoe Bat roosts, the site is located between the Coole Garryland Complex SAC (code: 000252), 0.79km north west. Lough Cutra SAC (code:000299) is located 2.9km to the south east. Furthermore, several smaller Lesser Horseshoe Bat roosts are found surrounding the project site. The Eire Ecology report also identifies LSH bat roosts based on Bat Conservation Ireland's database as shown below.

TABLE 3-3 BAT CONSERVATION IRELAND DATABASE – LESSER HORSESHOE ROOSTS

Species name	Distance of record from site	Last record	Details	Designation	Potential connectivity with subject site (for roost records)
Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*)	1.19km	2000	Souterrain. Droppings found in 2000	EU Habitats Directive Annex II &	Within the 2.5km Core Sustenance Zone (CSZ) for this species (BCT, 2020) for this roost. Connectivity via hedges although R458 separates site
	1.8km	2010	Cave winter roost to 22 bats in 2001 and 12 bats in 2010		Potential connectivity along treelines and hedgerows. Within the 2.5km CSZ for this roost.
	1.9km	2006	Cave winter roost to 50 bats in 1996 (summer) and 2 bats in 2006.		Within the 2.5km CSZ for this roost. Connectivity via hedgerows.
	2.1km		Souterrain. Winter roost		Within the 2.5km CSZ. Connectivity via Gort River although town in-between

The same report recorded 80.903 registrations over the course of 21 nights from 5 static bat detectors placed in key locations throughout the plan area. Locations along the Gort river were of highest value to bats, alongside the adjoining railway. Lesser Horseshoe bat recordings were confined to the river… Lowest activity was recorded at Cannon- Quinn Park. The proposed off street car park had activity dominated by pipistrelle and leisler bats. A detector attached to a tree close to the railway bridge where land has not yet been developed showed very high activity levels of 118 bat passes/hour. Highest activity was noted along the river to the north east and south west.

The literature review carried out as part of the bat survey, shows the presence of Lesser Horseshoe Bat roosts along a potential commuting corridor that follows the course of the river. It is considered likely that these are satellite roosts for the larger SAC protected roosts located to the south east and north west of Gort. Night time surveys show that the existing lighting regime along the Gort Rive, especially to the north east of the Gort Bridge create a barrier for low flying bats such as Lesser Horseshoe and Daubenton bats creating a barrier to commuting route. Figure 3.5 presents the total activity recorded by EireEcology and Figure 3.6 presents the Lesser Horseshoe Bat commuting routes identified by EireEcology. Figure 3.7 presents potential foraging habitat for Lesser Horseshoe Bat based on core sustenance zone and woodland habitat.

FIGURE 3-5 TOTAL ACTIVITY (EIREECOLOGY 2024)

Figure 3-3: Combined Bat Activity. Size of circle represents activity level (Bp/Hr)

FIGURE 3-6 LESSER HORSESHOE COMMUTING ROUTES (EIREECOLOGY 2024)

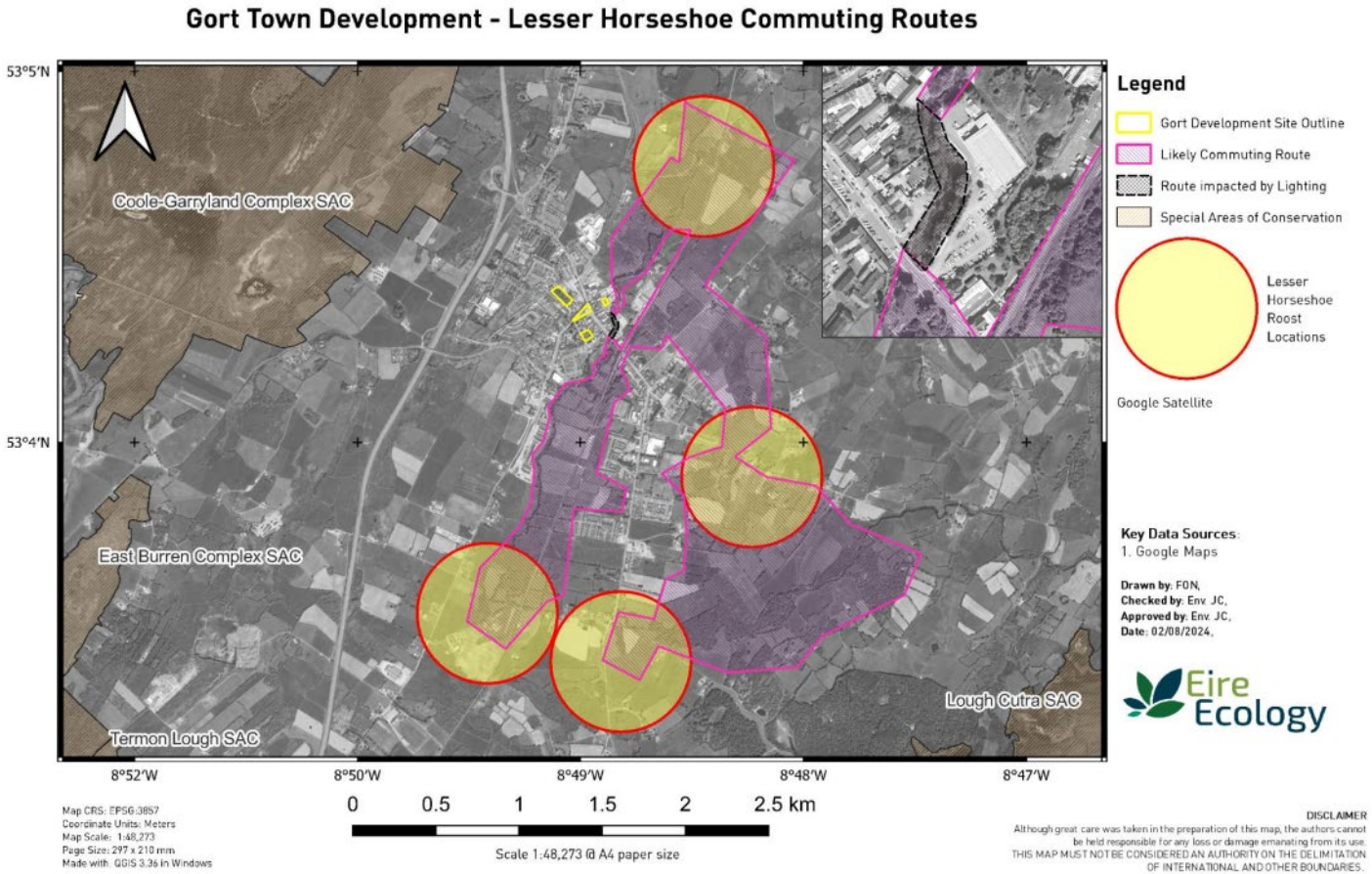
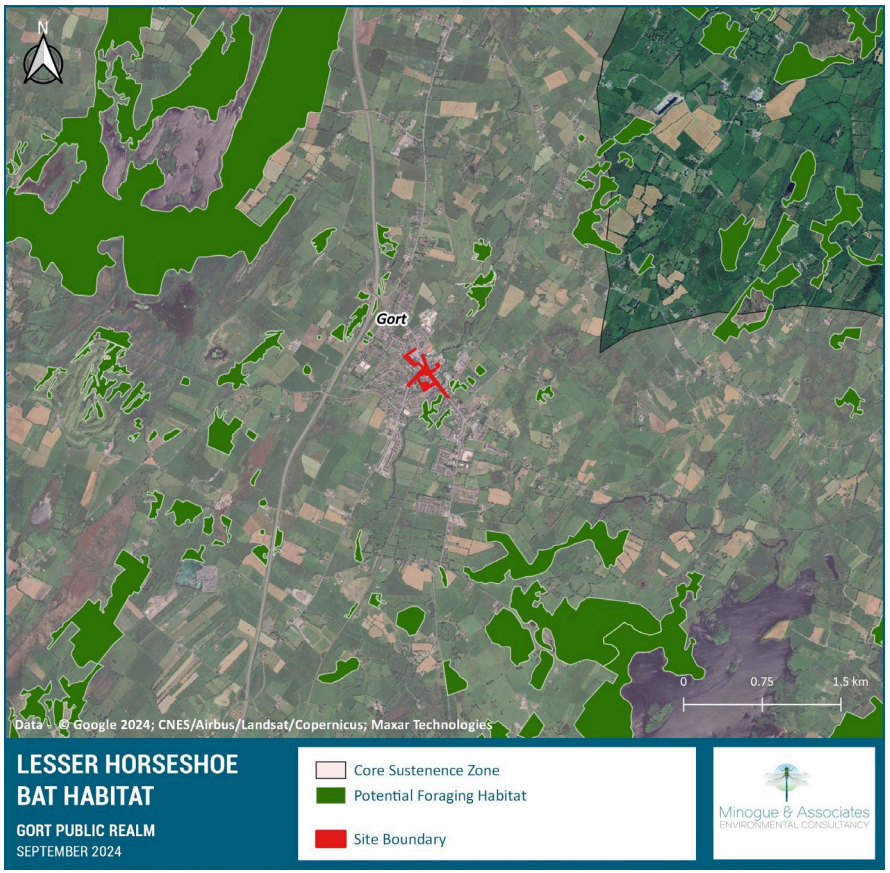


Figure 4-1: Lesser Horseshoe roosts surrounding the site alongside possible commuting corridors with SAC's designated for this species.

FIGURE 3-7 POTENTIAL FORAGING HABITAT FOR LESSER HORSESHOE BATS WITHIN CORE SUSTENANCE ZONE OF LESSER HORSESHOE BAT ROOSTS.



3.6.3 Birds

The site does not support habitats that are suitable for wetland and waterbirds. Low numbers of birds were observed during site visit in July and include blue tit, pigeon, and blackbird.

The impact to these species is considered to be low and insignificant.

3.7 Flora

3.7.1 Rare & Protected Flora

A polygon search of the plan area using the National Biodiversity Centre database did not return any records of rare and protected flora within the plan area.

3.7.2 Non-native invasive plant species

No high impact non-native invasive plant species have been recorded at the project site during baseline surveys in Julye 2024. A review of the NBDC database based on the plan area polygon returned the following records; these include high impact invasive species including Cherry Laural.

Canada Goose (Branta canadensis)	1	31/12/2011	Invasive Species: Invasive Species || Invasive Species: Invasive Species >> High Impact Invasive Species || Invasive Species: Invasive Species >> Regulation S.I. 477 (Ireland) || Protected Species: Wildlife Acts || Protected Species: EU Birds Directive || Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species
Cherry Laurel (Prunus laurocerasus)	1	31/12/2010	Invasive Species: Invasive Species || Invasive Species: Invasive Species >> High Impact Invasive Species
Himalayan Honeysuckle (Leycesteria formosa)	1	10/06/2021	Invasive Species: Invasive Species || Invasive Species: Invasive Species >> Medium Impact Invasive Species
Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus)	1	31/12/2010	Invasive Species: Invasive Species || Invasive Species: Invasive Species >> Medium Impact Invasive Species
Budapest Slug (Tandonia budapestensis)	1	07/08/1970	Invasive Species: Invasive Species || Invasive Species: Invasive Species >> Medium Impact Invasive Species
Common Garden Snail (Cornu aspersum)	3	07/08/1970	Invasive Species: Invasive Species || Invasive Species: Invasive Species >> Medium Impact Invasive Species
Jenkins' Spire Snail (Potamopyrgus antipodarum)	2	07/08/1970	Invasive Species: Invasive Species || Invasive Species: Invasive Species >> Medium Impact Invasive Species
Keeled Slug (Tandonia sowerbyi)	2	07/08/1970	Invasive Species: Invasive Species || Invasive Species: Invasive Species >> Medium Impact Invasive Species
Wrinkled Snail (Candidula intersecta)	1	31/12/1940	Invasive Species: Invasive Species || Invasive Species: Invasive Species >> Medium Impact Invasive Species
Fallow Deer (Dama dama)	2	31/12/2008	Invasive Species: Invasive Species || Invasive Species: Invasive Species >> High Impact Invasive Species || Invasive Species: Invasive Species >> Regulation S.I. 477 (Ireland) || Protected Species: Wildlife Acts

4 IS the project Necessary for the conservation Management of European Sites

The project has been described in Section 2 of this Screening Report and it is clear from the description provided that the project is not directly connected with or necessary for the future conservation management of any European Sites.

5 European Sites

5.1 Within/Adjoining European Sites

Current guidance (OPR, 2021) informing the approach to screening for Appropriate Assessment defines the zone of influence of a proposed development as the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. It is recommended that this is established on a case-by-case basis. In order to identify European Sites that could potentially be located within the zone of influence of the project, the current digital mapping (shapefile) of European Sites in Ireland[6], as published by the NPWS, was reviewed to identify the European Sites that could conceivably be connected to the project site via pathways. The OPR guidelines recommend that for projects that are located within or immediately adjacent to European Sites, the relevant European Site should be automatically selected for consideration in the screening exercise. Given that no element of the project occurs within or adjoining a European Sites, the automatic selection of European Sites for further consideration is not triggered. In view of this, this screening exercise will turn its attention to identifying the European Sites that fall within the zone of influence of the project by virtue of pathway connections between the project and European Sites. A Source-Pathway-Receptor model is used to identify the European Sites within the zone of influence of the project.

5.2 Source-pathway-Receptor Model

The OPR Guidelines recommend that the zone of influence is established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor (SPR) model. All European Sites in the wider area surrounding the project site are shown on Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 above.

Under the SPR model the project, the works associated with the construction and the operation of the project represent the source of potential impacts. Pathways are represented by vectors that could potentially convey impacts from the project site to European Sites and qualifying features of interest. The receptors are European Sites and their qualifying features of interest. The type of pathways that could represent vectors for the conveyance of impacts are considered in Section 5.2.1 below.

5.2.1 SPR Model Pathways

Pathways that can arise as a result of development projects and lead to offsite/downstream impacts are listed below and an appraisal of the potential for these pathways to connect the project to European Sites and their qualifying features of interest are also listed below and each are examined for their potential to function as pathways connecting the project to European Sites.

5.2.1.1 Emissions to Surface water

As detailed in Section 3.3 surface waters in the form of Gort Rivers, bound the project site. There is potential for the project to result in the emission of surface water runoff from areas of public realm works to receiving surface waterbodies of the Gort Rivers, which in turn drain to European Sites downstream. As such a surface water pathway connects the project to European Sites in the wider surrounding area. The Gort River flows northwest and flows through the Coole Garryland European sites and Caherglassan Turlough SAC before entering Galway Bay SAC and SPA at Kinvara, some 16km along the river course, northwest of the project site.

[6] Current SAC shapefile layers dated April 2022; current SPA shapefile layer dated October 2021. Lough Coy SAC shapefile layer dated January 2024.

The following European Sites are screened in on the above basis of a functional pathway with the surface water of Currahowan/Gort River flowing through these sites.

- Coole Garryland Complex SAC
- Caherglassaun Turlough SAC

Whilst it is acknowledged that Galway Bay SAC and SPA are connected via a surface water hydrological pathway where the Gort River enters Galway Bay at Kinvara, given the distance downstream of over 16km; the presence of numerous lakes between the project site and this SAC which will function as natural depositing environments; the wider catchment area draining to the Gort Rivers, which will provide substantial capacity for dispersion, dilution, attenuaton and assimilation further downstream, the pathway connecting the project site to this SAC is not identified as a functional pathway.

The only SPA within 5km that has a hydrological pathway to the project is Coole Garryland SPA, by virtue of the Gort River. The special conservation interest (SCI) for this Whooper Swan. This species forage on the grassland habitat surrounding the turlough of Coole Garryland. This species is not considered to be particularly sensitive to surface water quality given that it is a terrestrial feeder. As such the hydrological pathway connecting the project to this SPA is not considered to be a functional impact pathway.

5.2.1.2 Emissions to Groundwater

As set out in Section 3.2 above the project site is underlain by limestone bedrock with karst geology occurring under and surrounding the project site. As noted in Section 3.2, the karstic system occurring at and surrounding the project site leads to rapid interchanges of water between surface and underground. Swallow holes and caves receive surface water, and groundwater is discharged to surface as springs or as baseflow to rivers crossing the groundwater body. As such it is likely that any surface waters draining to ground at the project site are likely to discharge to the Gort River or the, to the Coole Garrylands complex to the north and west of the plan area.

As a precautionary measure and given the complex groundwater regime, functional groundwater pathways are assumed to connect the project to all SACs with groundwater dependant qualifying features of interest that occur within the same groundwater body as the project. These are:

- Coole Garryland Complex SAC
- Caherglassaun Turlough SAC
- Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC
- Lough Coy SAC
- East Burren Complex SAC

5.2.1.3 Noise & Vibration Emissions

Noise and vibration emissions are considered to have the potential to result in negative impacts to biodiversity up to a 300m distance from the emission source. This distance is based on the maximum noise disturbance zone of 300m for wetland bird species, as specified by Cutts et al. (2013)[7]. Noise

[7] It is noted Nature Scotland (2022) published disturbances zones for bird species at a greater distance than 300m. However, unlike Cutt et al. (2013) who specifically examined disturbance effects generated by noise stimuli, the potential disturbance stimuli set out in the Nature Scotland publication are not concerned specifically with noise stimuli. As such the Cutts et al. (2013) publication and maximum noise disturbance distance is relied upon.

and vibration effects for other qualifying species as well as qualifying habitats of European Sites are less than 300m. For mammal species listed as qualifying features of interest for SACs in the surrounding area this distance is set at 150m, as per the NRA (2009). For qualifying aquatic species, a potential noise and vibration impact pathway will only arise where works such as piling or blasting are proposed at instream or bankside locations within adjoining SACs. No such proposals form part of the project. No European Sites occur within such distances of the project and the potential for works associated with the project to result in disturbance to qualifying features of interest of European Sites as a result of noise or vibration emission will not arise. In view of this a noise and vibration pathway is screened out.

5.2.1.4 Emissions to Air

Air emissions identified as having the potential to arise from the project relate to the generation of dust emissions during the construction phase. Dust emissions can have the potential to result in negative impacts to biodiversity up to 50m from the source of the emission. This is supported by the guidance outlined by Holman *et al.* (2020), which provides a risk assessment for ecological impacts arising from dust deposition. European Sites are ranked as highly sensitive sites and the risk to high sensitive sites ranges from high (at less than 20m from source) and medium (at less than 50m from source), while low risks, representative of insignificant and de-minimis effects, arise at distances greater than 50m from source. No European Sites occur within such distances of the project and the potential for works associated with the project to result in disturbance to qualifying features of interest of European Sites as a result of air emission will not arise. In view of this an air emission pathway is screened out.

5.2.1.5 Light Emissions

The project will include for the provision of lighting within the plan area. Given the results of the bat survey (Eire Ecology 2024) which identified 7 species of bats using the plan area, including Lesser Horseshoe Bats, an Annex II species, that is very sensitive to artificial lighting. The project will have the potential to result in light emissions to lesser horseshoe bats using the Gort River as commuting and foraging to European Sites listed as qualifying features interests (QFIs) for this species. This pathway overlaps with the mobile species pathway which is considered further below in Section 5.2.17.

5.2.1.6 Visual Emissions

Certain species are known to have sensitivity to structural changes in the landscape and alteration of the visual environment. Species most sensitive to such changes are wetland birds, particularly wildfowl such as Geese, and whooper swans. Given the distance between the project site and SPAs where species sensitive to changes in the landscape there will be no potential for the project to result in changes that could result in likely significant effects to this species. As such, no visual emission pathway is identified as part of this Screening exercise.

5.2.1.7 Mobile Species Pathways

Development projects that are located outside of European Sites can also result in impacts to mobile qualifying species of European Sites in the event that such species rely on habitats occurring within the proposed development site. For the purposes of including such a scenario in the consideration of potential pathways, this screening report refers to the reliance of mobile qualifying species of European Sites on the project site as a “mobile species pathway”.

For special conservation interest bird species: the maximum disturbance distance for special conservation interest bird species of SPAs in the surrounding area is considered to be 300m, in line with the Cutts et al. (2013) toolkit. Given that no SPAs occur within 300m of the project site, no

mobile species pathway is established by special conservation interest bird species between the project site and SPAs.

Lesser Horseshoe Bats have been recorded within areas of the project during baseline surveys and as such SACs that are designated for their role in supporting lesser horseshoe bats have been screened in where the core sustenance zone of the SAC's lesser horseshoe bats population is located within within 2.5km of the project area. Given their proximity to the project area and the identification of lesser horseshoe bats using the Gort River and roosts within 2.5km of the plan area, the following area also screened in, although outside the core sustenance zone of 2.5km, at distance of 2.61 (East Burren Complex SAC) and Lough Cutra SAC(2.87km).

- Coole Garryland Complex SAC
- East Burren SAC
- Lough Cutra SAC

A review of the National Biodiversity database for protected non volant mammals identified one record of otter (2005) downstream of the Bridge, at the Gort River, adjacent to Aldi shop c 250m downstream of the Aldi shop. Given the historical record of otters along the river and suitable habitat provided along the Gort River for otters, it is considered that otters use this watercourse.

Given the presence of otters along the Gort River and the fact that otters are known to forage wide distances and move across catchments. The National Otter Survey of Ireland 2010/12 (Reid et al, 2013) reports that the territory of female otters in mesotrophic rivers is approximately 7.5 +/- 1.5km in length and the territory of male otters in mesotrophic and oligotrophic rivers is approximately 13.2k+/-5.3km in length with a high degree of variability as territorial males respond quickly to social perturbation. Given the SAC designed for otter occurs within this maximum foraging distance, otters are considered to occur within the zone of influence of the project. As such East Burren Complex SAC pathway is identified as part of this Screening exercise is screened in for these Annex 2 species, the otter.

5.2.2 Summary of Pathways

Following the above consideration of pathways that could conceivably connect the project site to European Sites in the wider surrounding area it has been found that the only pathways with such potential are:

- Surface water pathway with potential to connect the plan to the Coole Garryland Complex SAC and Caherglassaun Turlough SAC, and via mobile Annex II species Otter, the East Burren Complex
- Groundwater pathway with potential to connect the project to the Coole Garryland complex SAC, Caherglassaun Turlough SAC, Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC, Lough Coy SAC and East Burren Complex SAC
- Light emissions pathway with potential to connect the plan to the mobile species Lesser Horseshoe Bats
- Mobile species pathway for Lesser Horseshoe Bats and Otters.

6 Identification of likely significant effects

The potential environmental effects generated by the project will be potential emissions to surface and groundwaters from the project site during the construction phase and/or operation phase. During construction the project will have the potential to result in impacts to water quality of the European Sites.

Surface water generated during the construction phase will ultimately be discharged to ground and underlying groundwaters associated with the local karst systems. Potentially contaminating materials, such as hydrocarbons, cement-base materials, other construction-related solutions and silt will occur on site during the construction phase and will have the potential to become entrained in and pollute groundwaters in the event of untreated and unimpeded contact with karst systems. This water will be discharged via groundwater pathways to intercepting watercourses, namely the Gort River. During the operation phase surface water will be generated from areas of hard standing that will accommodate the hardstanding area of the proposed development. In the event of fuel leaks or accidental spill the potential will exist for the generation of contaminated surface waters on site. In the event that untreated and unimpeded pathways connect surface drainage waters to the underlying karst systems, then a pollution pathway between the project site and the Gort Rivers will arise.

While it is acknowledged that the volume of surface drainage waters discharging from the project site to the receiving groundwater body- the Caherglassaune Turlough GWB, the Gort River and downstream to the Coole Garryland European Sites, Caherglassaun Turlough SAC, Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC, Lough Coy SAC and East Burren Complex SAC will be miniscule in the context of the overall waters draining from the surrounding catchment, in the absence of appropriate safeguards the potential will exist for the discharge of pollutants that could perturb water quality.

Potential emissions to mobile species the lesser Horsehoe Bat are identified as a potential effect associated with the proposed lighting strategy and implementation of the project. In particular where lighting is proposed close to the Gort River at Bridge Street. Additional artificial lighting could increase the barrier effect already noted the Eire Ecology bat report or additional light spill on the river corridor could result in bats including the Lesser Horseshoe bat avoiding the river corridor.

6.1 In-Combination Effects

The potential exists for the project to overlap with other land use plans applicable to the lands occurring at and in the vicinity of the project site as well as other projects within the vicinity of the project site.

The potential for cumulative impacts could arise where, for example, the construction phase of the project overlaps with the construction phase of other project sites adjacent to the Gort River or within the Caherglassaun groundwater body. Negative impacts to the water quality of this river and conveyance downstream to the Coole Garryland SAC and Caherglassaune Turlough SAC will exist. Construction projects within this catchment will have the potential to generate contaminated surface water runoff and any discharge of such runoff from the footprint of the project's construction site and other such sites within the sub-catchments could result in negative impacts to water quality downstream at groundwater dependant habitats at Coole Garryland Complex SAC, Caherglassaun Turlough SAC, Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC, Lough Coy SAC and East Burren Complex SAC

Qualifying features of interest of the East Burren Complex SAC, annex II species the otter may be adversely affected by changes in water quality. Finally, additional lighting or increased light spill associated with developments occurring close to foraging and commuting grounds of the Lesser Horseshoe Bat including Gort river would combine to adversely affect commuting and foraging behaviour of this species.

7 Screening Conclusion

The proposed project has been screened for its potential to result in likely significant effects to surrounding European Sites. As this project site is located approximately 0.79km from the nearest European Site, a Source-Pathway-Receiver model was used to identify potential impact pathways linking the project site to European Sites. The potential impact pathways identified were restricted to a surface water, groundwater pathway and aerial emissions via light to Lesser Horseshoe Bats.

The following 6 European Sites,

1. Coole Garryland Complex SAC,
2. Caherglassaun Turlough SAC,
3. Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC,
4. Lough Coy SAC and
5. East Burren Complex SAC and
6. Termon Lough SAC.

The reason for identifying these European Sites as being within the zone of influence of the project was due to the presence of a potential surface water and groundwater pathways linking the project site to them. In addition, the potential emissions from lighting to mobile species the lesser horseshoe bat of the Coole Garryland Complex SAC, East Burren Complex SAC and Lough Cutra SAC was identified as a pathway.

In the absence of further detailed examinations and appropriate safeguards, the project has been identified as having the potential to result in the discharge of pollutants during construction to receiving surface water and groundwater. The project has been identified, to result in light emissions with potential adverse effects on qualifying interests of Coole Garryland SAC, East Burren Complex SAC and Lough Cutra SAC the lesser horseshoe bat.

Qualifying features of interest of East Burren Complex SAC, annex II species the otter may be adversely affected by changes in water quality. Finally, additional lighting or increased light spill associated with developments occ

It has been found during this Screening, which has been completed with a high degree of conservatism and precaution, that the potential for the release of pollutants to surface water and groundwaters during the construction phase to result in significant negative effects to the conservation objectives of the Coole Garryland SAC, Caherglassaun SAC Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC, Lough Coy SAC.

East Burren Complex SAC and Termon Lough SACs as partly within the same groundwater body as the plan are included as they cannot be ruled out at the screening stage.

For the reasons outlined above it is the considered view of the authors of this Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment that the potential for likely significant effects to European Sites cannot be ruled out at the Screening stage and that an Appropriate Assessment of the project is required. Based on this conclusion a NIS will be prepared to inform the competent authority during its Appropriate Assessment of the project and its potential to result in adverse effects to the integrity of the European Sites, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

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NPWS (2018) Conservation Objectives: Lough Cutra SAC 000299. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Appendix 1: European Site qualifying features of interest

TABLE A1.0-1: LIST OF QUALIFYING FEATURES OF INTEREST OF EUROPEAN SITE OCCURRING IN THE WIDER SURROUNDING AREA

Sitecode	Site Name	Distance (km)	URL	Qualifying Interests
000252	Coole-Garryland Complex	0.79	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000252	Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150] Turloughs [3180] Rivers with muddy banks with Chenopodion rubri p.p. and Bidention p.p. vegetation [3270] Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Limestone pavements [8240] Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles [91J0] Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]
001926	East Burren Complex	2.61	http://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/001926	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140] Turloughs [3180] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae [6130] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis) [6510] Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Caves not open to the public [8310] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] Euphydryas aurinia (Marsh Fritillary) [1065] Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]

Sitecode	Site Name	Distance (km)	URL	Qualifying Interests
000299	Lough Cutra	2.87	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000299	Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]
000286	Kiltartan Cave (Coole)	3.26	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000286	Caves not open to the public [8310] Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]
001321	Termon Lough	3.58	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/001321	Turloughs [3180]
002293	Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs	4.14	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002293	Turloughs [3180]
000238	Caherglassaun Turlough	4.82	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000238	Turloughs [3180] Rivers with muddy banks with Chenopodion rubri p.p. and Bidention p.p. vegetation [3270] Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]
002117	Lough Coy	4.94	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002117	Turloughs [3180]
002295	Ballinduff Turlough	4.98	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002295	Turloughs [3180]
002181	Drummin Wood	5.90	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002181	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]
002294	Cahermore Turlough	5.98	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002294	Turloughs [3180]
002180	Gortacarnaun Wood	6.00	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002180	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]
000318	Peterswell Turlough	6.98	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000318	Turloughs [3180] Rivers with muddy banks with Chenopodion rubri p.p. and Bidention p.p. vegetation [3270]
002317	Cregg House Stables, Crusheen	8.72	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002317	Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]
002244	Ardrahan Grassland	9.70	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002244	Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Limestone pavements [8240]

Sitecode	Site Name	Distance (km)	URL	Qualifying Interests
000268	Galway Bay Complex	10.68	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000268	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410] Turloughs [3180] Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] Phoca vitulina (Harbour Seal) [1365]
000019	Ballyogan Lough	10.94	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000019	Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210] Limestone pavements [8240]
000057	Moyree River System	11.06	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000057	Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Caves not open to the public [8310] Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]
000606	Lough Fingall Complex	11.43	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000606	Turloughs [3180] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210] Limestone pavements [8240] Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]
001913	Sonnagh Bog	11.65	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/001913	Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]

Sitecode	Site Name	Distance (km)	URL	Qualifying Interests
001285	Kiltiernan Turlough	11.77	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/001285	Turloughs [3180]
000242	Castletaylor Complex	11.98	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000242	Turloughs [3180] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Limestone pavements [8240]
001912	Glendree Bog	13.42	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/001912	Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]
Sitecode	Site Name	Distance (km)	URL	Qualifying Interests
004107	Coole-Garryland SPA	1.19	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004107	Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038]
004056	Lough Cutra SPA	3.03	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004056	Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017]
004168	Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA	4.16	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004168	Hen Harrier (Circus cyaneus) [A082] Merlin (Falco columbarius) [A098]
004031	Inner Galway Bay	10.69	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004031	Black-throated Diver (Gavia arctica) [A002] Great Northern Diver (Gavia immer) [A003] Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017] Grey Heron (Ardea cinerea) [A028] Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050] Teal (Anas crecca) [A052] Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator) [A069] Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula) [A137] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140] Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142] Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157] Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160] Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) [A169] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A1 Common Gull (Larus canus) [A182] Sandwich Tern (Sterna sandvicensis) [A191] Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]