



OCSC

O'CONNOR · SUTTON · CRONIN
MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONSULTING ENGINEERS

W383: SOUTH-NORTH ACCESS ROAD

AA SCREENING REPORT

For
Kilkenny County Council

9 September 2024

NOTICE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	PROJECT CONTRACTUAL BASIS AND PARTIES INVOLVED	1
1.2	LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT	1
1.3	METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH	3
1.4	SCOPE OF WORKS	3
1.5	LIMITATIONS	4
2	DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT	5
2.1	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	5
2.2	SITE SETTING AND LOCATION	6
2.3	SURROUNDING LAND USE	7
2.4	HYDROLOGY	8
3	SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT	11
3.1	SCREENING PROCESS	11
3.2	IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES	12
3.3	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	19
3.3.1	EXCLUSION FROM APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT	19
3.3.2	ELEMENTS OF THE WORKS WITH THE POTENTIAL TO GIVE EFFECTS	19
3.3.3	IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS AND SCREENING OF SITES	19
3.4	ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS	20
3.4.1	LAND TAKE/HABITAT LOSS	21
3.4.2	RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS	21
3.4.3	DURATION OF WORKS	21
3.4.4	EMISSIONS (DISPOSAL TO LAND, WATER OR AIR)	22
3.4.5	EXCAVATION REQUIREMENTS/EROSION/SEDIMENTATION	23
3.4.6	TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS	23
3.4.7	DURATION OF CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION, DECOMMISSIONING	24
3.4.8	HABITAT REDUCTION	24
3.4.9	SPECIES DISTURBANCE	24
3.4.10	HABITAT OR SPECIES FRAGMENTATION	24
3.4.11	CHANGES IN KEY INDICATORS OF CONSERVATION VALUE	24
3.4.12	CLIMATE CHANGE	25
3.4.13	COMBINATION EFFECTS WITH OTHER PROJECTS	25
4	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	29
4.1	SUMMARY	29
4.2	CONCLUSION	30

5

VERIFICATION

31

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Regional Site Location (Source: OCSC, 2024) 6

Figure 2.2: Study Area (Source: OCSC, 2024) 7

Figure 2.3: River and Transitional Waterbody WFD Status (Source: OCSC, 2024) 9

Figure 2.4: River and Transitional Waterbodies Risk (Source: OCSC, 2024)..... 10

Figure 3.1: NPWS Designated Sites (Source: OCSC, 2024)..... 14

Figure 3.2: European Sites and EPA Rivers near the Study Area (Source: OCSC, 2024)..... 15

Figure 3.3: Site Drainage to the Ferrybank Stream (Source: OCSC, 2024) 23

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Adjacent Land Uses 8

Table 2.2: WFD Summary Information 10

Table 3.1: European Sites Within 15 km of the Proposed Works 16

Table 3.2: Screening assessment of the potential effects arising from the proposed works. 26

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT CONTRACTUAL BASIS AND PARTIES INVOLVED

This report has been prepared by O'Connor Sutton Cronin & Associates Ltd. (OCSC) at the request of their Client, Kilkenny County Council, for the proposed new link road between the Clover Meadows and Abbeygate housing developments and a car park in Ferrybank, County Kilkenny. Proposed works include the construction of a carriageway with footpaths, a cycle lane, a verge, a car park and an associated drainage system.

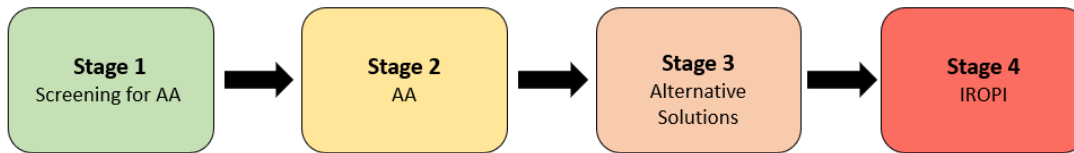
1.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the “favourable conservation status” of habitats and species of European Community Interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives (Habitats Directive as above and Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds) with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as European Sites. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect such sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA. These requirements are implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning Development Act 2000 (as amended).

This AA screening is based on the best scientific knowledge and has utilised ecological and hydrological expertise. In addition, a detailed online review of published scientific literature and ‘grey’ literature was conducted. This included a detailed review of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) website, including mapping and available reports for relevant sites and, in particular, sensitive qualifying interests/special conservation interests and their conservation objectives. The EPA EnVision map viewer (EPA 2023) and available reports were also reviewed, as was the NPWS (2019) publication “The Status of Protected EU Habitats and Species in Ireland”.

The ecological desktop study completed for the AA screening of the proposed development is comprised of the following elements:

- Identification of European sites within 15 km of the proposed project boundary with identification of potential pathway links for specific sites (if relevant) greater than 15 km from the proposed project boundary;
- Review of the NPWS site synopses and conservation objectives for European sites within 15 km and for which potential pathways from the proposed site have been identified; and
- Examination of available information on protected species.



IROPI: imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI)

Stage One: Screening

The process identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment

The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European site of the project, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, concerning the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment is made of the potential mitigation of those impacts. If adequate mitigation is proposed to ensure no significant adverse impacts on European sites, then the process may end at this stage. However, if the likelihood of significant impacts remains, then the process must proceed to Stage Three.

Stage Three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

The process examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoids adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site.

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain

An assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project should proceed.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation, and compensatory measures. This approach aims to avoid any impacts on European sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan or project-making process and avoiding such impacts. Secondly, the approach involves the application of mitigation measures, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If potential impacts on European sites remain and no further practicable mitigation is possible, the approach requires the consideration of alternative solutions. If no alternative solutions are identified and the plan or project is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effects.

Ecological impact assessment of potential effects on European sites is conducted following a standard source-pathway-receptor model where all three elements of this mechanism must be in place for an effect to be established. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect is not of any relevance or significance. The elements of this model consist of the following:

- Source(s) – e.g. pollutant run-off from proposed works;

- Pathway(s) – e.g. groundwater connecting to nearby qualifying wetland habitats; and
- Receptor(s) – qualifying aquatic habitats and species of European sites.

In relation to this report, receptors are the ecological features that are known to be utilised by the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of a European site. A source is any identifiable element of the proposed development that is known to interact with ecological processes. The pathways are any connections or links between the source and the receptor. This report provides information on whether direct, indirect, and/or cumulative adverse effects could arise from the proposed development.

1.3 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The AA Screening has been prepared taking into account the aforementioned and following legislation and guidance:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009; 11 February 2010 revision.
- Commission Notice: Managing Natura 2000 sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2018.
- 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. European Commission Environment DG, 2002.
- Managing Natura 2000 sites: the Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2000.
- Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. Office of the Planning Regulator, March 2021.

The above documents have been used to carry out a desktop AA Screening based on the best available guidance and operating within the applicable legislation.

1.4 SCOPE OF WORKS

To meet the project objectives, the following scope of works was completed:

- Present a discussion of the proposed development and its potential effects on its receiving environment;
- Present a discussion of the current site status and key environmental influences around the site;
- Undertake and present a review of European sites in the region of the proposed development;
- Conduct and present a discussion on the screening of the identified European sites in relation to the potential effects arising from the project; and
- Provide a conclusion as to whether the proposed development is likely to, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, have a significant effect on any European site.

1.5 LIMITATIONS

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared for the sole use of Kilkenny County Council (“the Client”). No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report or any other services provided by OCSC.

This assessment is based on a review of available historical information, environmental records, consultations, relevant guidance information, and reports from third parties. All information received has been taken in good faith as being true and representative.

This report has been prepared in line with the best industry standards. The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by OCSC in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The assessment completed by OCSC and described was undertaken in June 2023, revised in March 2024 and revised again in July 2024, is based on the information available during that period. The scope of this report and the services are accordingly factually limited by these circumstances.

OCSC disclaim any undertaking or obligation to advise any person of any change in any matter affecting the Report which may come or be brought to OCSC’s attention after the date of the Report.

The conclusions presented in this report represent OCSC’s best professional judgement based on a review of the relevant information available at the time of writing. The opinions and conclusions presented are valid only to the extent that the information provided was accurate and complete.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

2.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report has been prepared for the proposed road works that will complete the South-North Access Road (Abbey Road to Belmont Road), Ferrybank, County Kilkenny. The site location is shown in Figure 2.1. The principal features of the proposed development will consist of:

- Construction of a new road, the South – North Access Road, approximately 940m in length, from the end of the existing access road serving the Clover Meadows Housing Estate to the end of the existing access road serving the Abbeygate Housing estate/Abbeygate Shopping Centre. This to create a continuous road link between the existing Belmont Road Roundabout on the Belmont Road (R711) to the existing Abbeygate Roundabout on the Abbey Road (LP3412);
- Provision of a traffic signal-controlled crossroads junction on the access road approximately 270m north-east of the existing Abbeygate Roundabout on the Abbey Road (LP3412);
- Provision of a traffic signal-controlled crossroads junction on the access road approximately 430m south-east of the Belmont Roundabout on the Belmont Road (R711);
- Provision of a new road overbridge over the existing greenway;
- Minor upgrades to the existing Clover Meadows and Abbeygate access roads being tied into to provide improved pedestrian and cycle facilities and provide additional fencing where required;
- Provision of cyclist and pedestrian facilities along the new access road;
- Provision for 2 No. future bus-stops to both sides of the new road;
- Provision of a new carpark for the greenway accommodating c.172 no. parking spaces and 2 no. coach parking spaces along with toilets (with water supply and wastewater treatment), bicycle parking, accessible car parking spaces (10No.) and car parking spaces of which 20% are provided for e-cars with associated charging facilities;
- Provision of a link from the South-North Access Road footpath to the existing greenway via a ramped shared surface (pedestrians and cyclists) with stepped access also provided;
- Public lighting along the full length of the South - North Access Road and to the greenway carpark;
- The installation of road markings and signage throughout;
- Provision of a surface water drainage system to include Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), attenuation storage both above and below ground and flow restrictors to maintain discharge of surface water to greenfield runoff rates. This also includes an outfall along the adjacent greenway; and
- Hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments throughout.

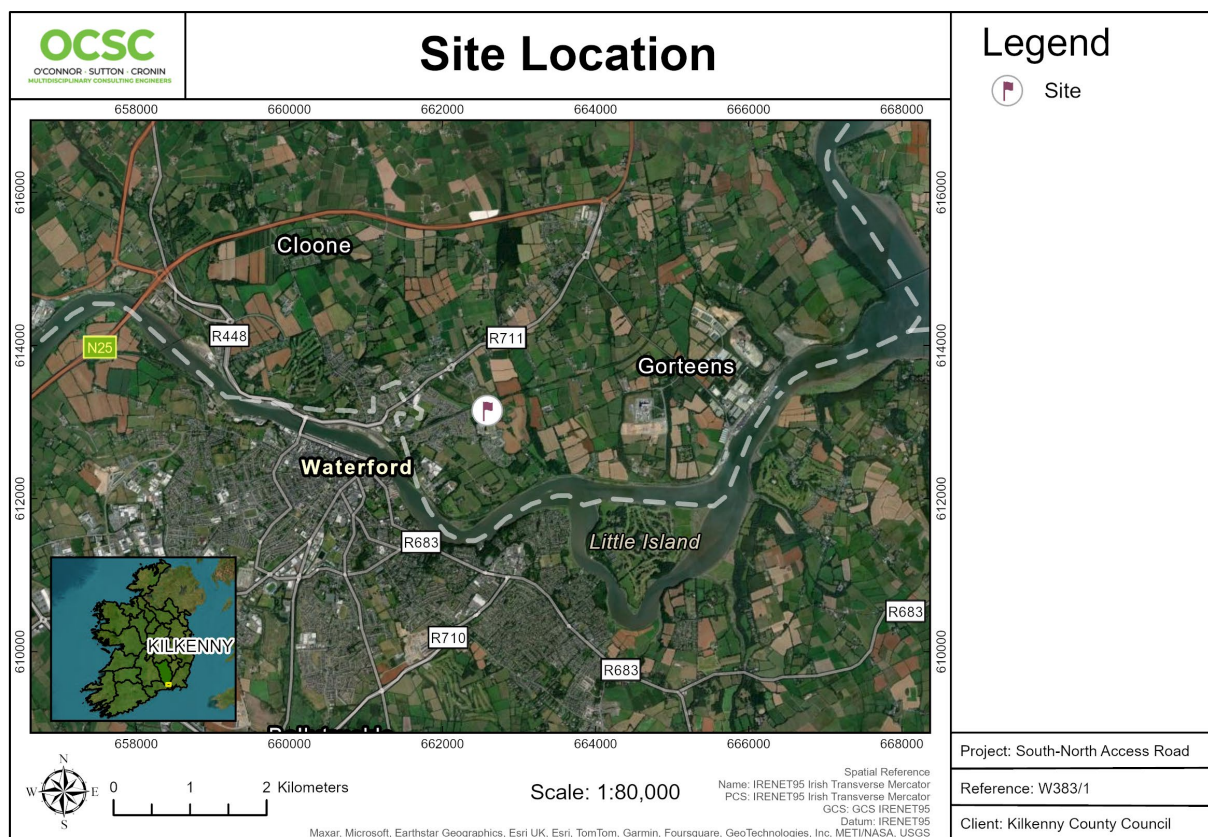


Figure 2.1: Regional Site Location (Source: OCSC, 2024)

2.2 SITE SETTING AND LOCATION

The site is located at Rathculliheen, Co. Kilkenny, just north of the border with Co. Waterford. The road is designed to connect the northern and southern outer suburbs of Ferrybank and the car park is designed to cater for greenway users. The study area is shown in Figure 2.2.

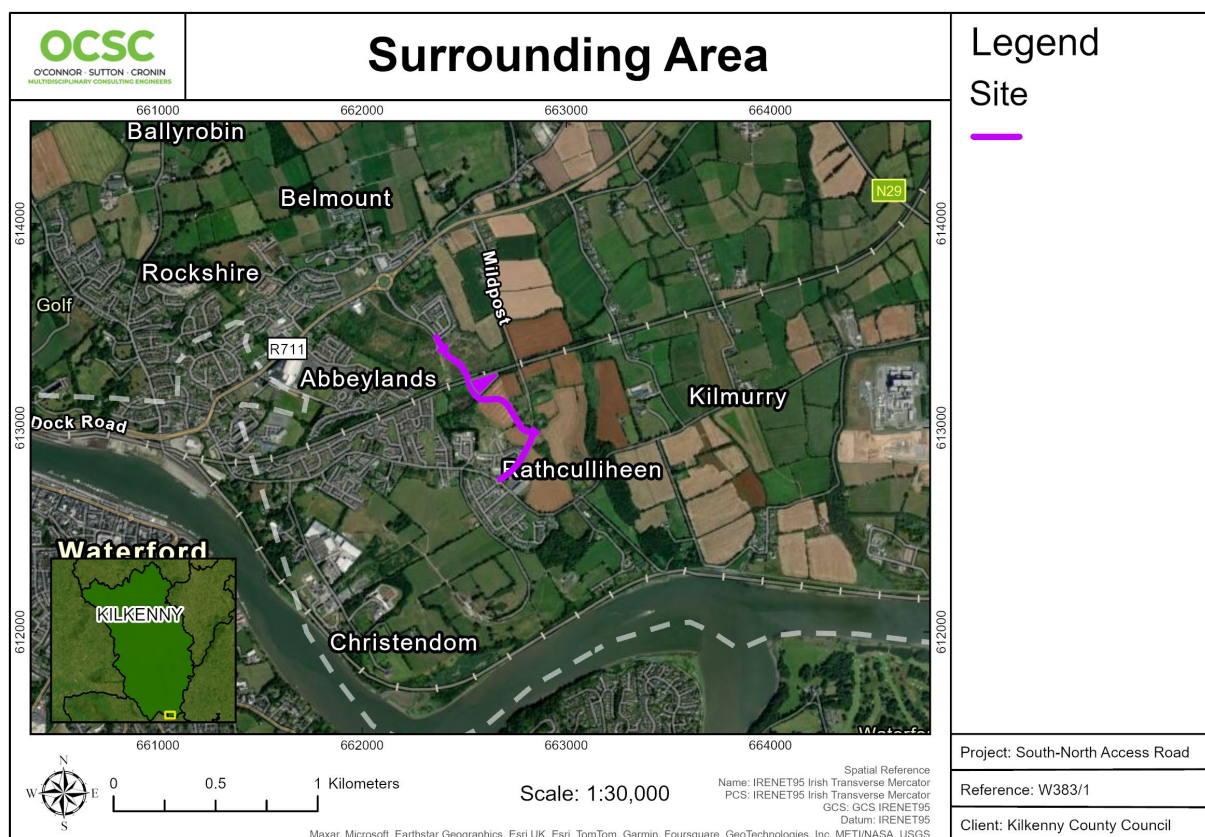


Figure 2.2: Study Area (Source: OCSC, 2024)

2.3 SURROUNDING LAND USE

The area surrounding the site consists of vacant land in scrub, agricultural, residential, retail, commercial and industrial land uses and a disused rail line as shown in Figure 2.2. The site is bounded by agricultural land and vacant land in scrub to the east and west. Clover Meadow housing estate borders the site to the north and Abbeygate housing estate borders the site to the west. Bordering Abbeygate housing estate is Abbeylands Business Park, south/west of the site and an auto repair shop, retail units and a sports facility, south of the site. Further north of the site are scattered residences, agricultural and scrub lands and a petrol station. The disused railway bisects the northern portion of the site. West of the site is a pond located in a low-lying area. The size of this pond has increased over the past 10-15 years due to leakage from failed water main infrastructure. The pond encompassed a wide area but has shrunk since the leak has been addressed. However, the pond still receives surface water runoff from surrounding areas of higher elevation. Further west are residential dwellings, several commercial buildings along the R7100 and Ferrybank. Further east of the site are small areas of woodland and a light industrial facility. Further south is the River Suir. See Table 2.1 for adjacent land uses.

Table 2.1 Adjacent Land Uses

Boundary	Land Use
North	Clover Meadow housing estate, scattered residences, agricultural and scrubland, and a supermarket and petrol station along the R711.
South	Abbey Park Road, scattered residences, agricultural an auto repair shop, retail units and a sports facility, and the River Suir.
East	Disused railway, agricultural land, scattered residences, woodlands and an engineering works
West	Abbeygate housing estate, Abbeygate Business Park, Several housing estates, Ferrybank,.

2.4 HYDROLOGY

There are no EPA-designated surface water features within the site boundary. There is an undesignated pond approximately 20m west of the site. The nearest EPA-designated surface water feature is the Ferrybank Stream (Luffany _010 - IE_SE_16L680750), which is located approximately 259m east of the site. The Ferrybank Stream flows in a southerly direction and discharges to the River Suir (IE_SE_100_0500) approximately 830m downstream of the closest point of the site and the Ferrybank Stream (259m). The River Suir is designated as an estuary by the EPA in this area and flows in a southeasterly direction, eventually entering Waterford Harbour and then the Eastern Celtic Sea. During the operational phase the project, surface water will discharge to the Ferrybank Stream, an allowable rate equal to or lesser than the green field discharge rate, from the development along the existing greenway at a minimum distance of 550m. See section 3.4.4 below for more information regarding surface water discharge to the nearby stream.

The next nearest surface water feature, Abbeylands Stream (Luffany _020 – IE_SE_16L680750), is located approximately 705m east of the site and enters the River Suir downgradient of the discharge point for Ferrybank Stream. See Figure 2.3 for waterbody locations.

Based on the most recent water quality information (2016-2021), the Ferrybank Stream has an overall Water Framework Directive (WFD) status of 'Moderate' as has the Lower Suir Estuary as shown in Figure 2.3.

The EPA spatial dataset indicates that the risk of the Ferrybank Stream failing to meet its WFD objectives by 2027 is under review (EPA 2023) while the Lower Suir Estuary is at risk of not meeting its WFD objectives by 2027. See Figure 2.4. WFD summary information for these water bodies is summarised in Table 2.2

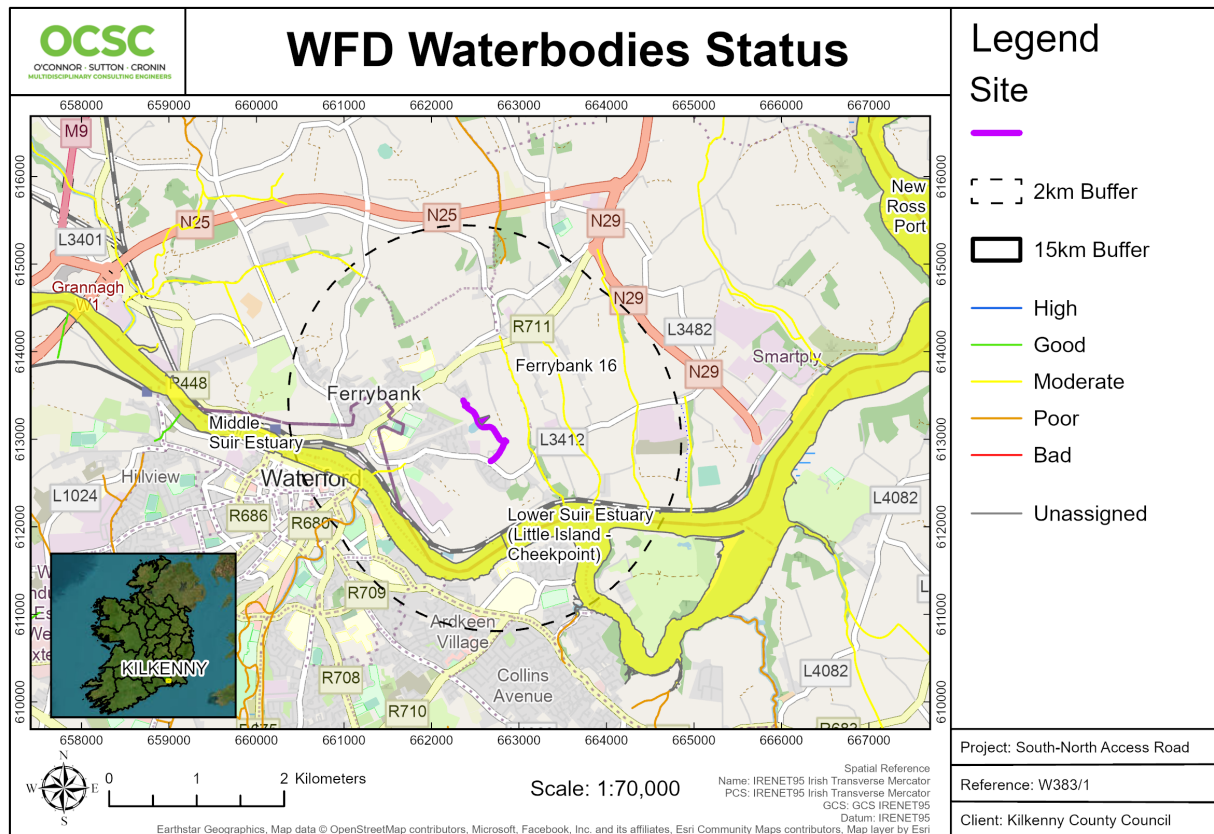


Figure 2.3: River and Transitional Waterbody WFD Status (Source: OCSC, 2024)

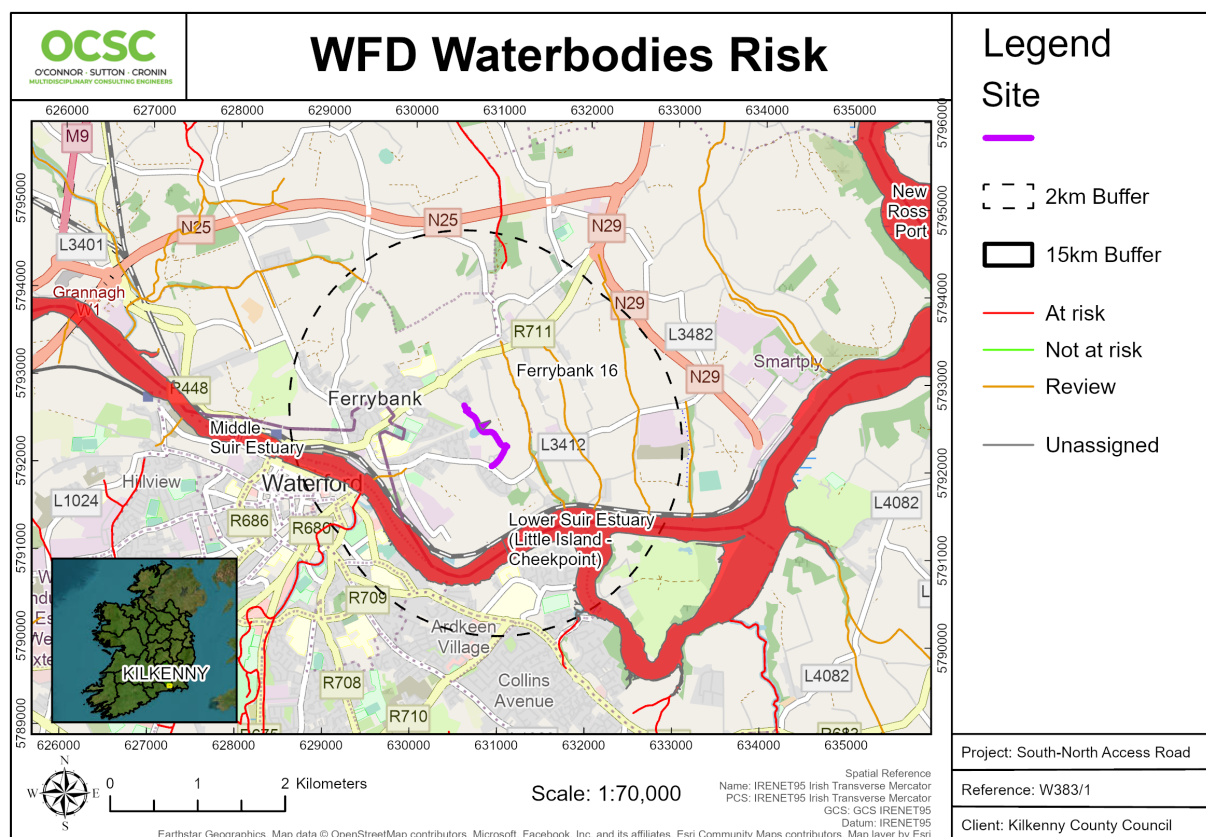


Figure 2.4: River and Transitional Waterbodies Risk (Source: OCSC, 2024)

Table 2.2: WFD Summary Information

WFD Summary Information		
Name	Ferrybank Stream	Lower Suir Estuary
Waterbody Code	IE_SE_16L680750	IE_SE_100_0500
Waterbody Name	Luffany _010	Lower Suir Estuary (Little Island - Cheekpoint)
Waterbody Type	River	Transitional Waterbody
Iteration	SW 2016-2021	SW 2016-2021
Status	Moderate	Moderate
Risk	Under Review	At Risk

3 SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.1 SCREENING PROCESS

This stage of the process identifies any likely significant effects on European sites from a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. The screening phase was progressed in stages during which a series of questions were asked to determine:

- Whether a plan or project can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site.
- Whether the project will have a potentially significant effect on a European Site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, in view of the site's conservation objectives or if residual uncertainty exists regarding potential impacts.

An important element of the AA process is the identification of the “conservation objectives”, “Qualifying Interests” (QIs), and/ or “Special Conservation Interests” (SCIs) of European sites requiring assessment. QIs are the habitat features and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive for which each European Site has been designated and afforded protection. SCIs are wetland habitats and bird species listed within Annexes I and II of the Birds Directive. It is also vital that the threats to the ecological/environmental conditions that are required to support QIs and SCIs are considered as part of the assessment.

Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) have been designed to define favourable conservation status for a particular habitat or species at that site. Paragraph 4.6(3) of the European Commission interpretation document ‘Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC’ states:

“The significant effects on any European Site, in view of the site’s conservation objectives, involves its ecological functions. The decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on and be limited to the site’s conservation objectives.”

Favourable conservation status of habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range, and the area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing;
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future; and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future; and

- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

3.2 IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES

This section of the screening process describes the European sites located within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) of the site. The Department of the Environment (2010 revised) Guidance on AA recommends a 15 km buffer zone to be considered for Natura 2000 sites, but projects are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. A review of all sites within the ZOI has allowed a determination to be made that, in the absence of significant hydrological links, the characteristics of the proposed works will not impose effects beyond the 15 km ZOI. Natura sites located within 15km of the site are shown in Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2.

To determine the potential for effects from the proposed works, information on the qualifying features, known vulnerabilities, and potential impacts which are likely to have significant effects on any European Site, in view of the site's conservation objectives, were reviewed. Background information on threats to individual sites and vulnerability of habitats and species that were used during this assessment included the following:

- Ireland's Article 17 Report to the European Commission "Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland" (NPWS, 2021);
- Site Synopses (NPWS 2019a); and
- NATURA 2000 Standard Data Forms (NPWS 2019b).

The assessment takes consideration of the SSCOs of each of the sites within the ZOI. Since the conservation objectives for the European sites focus on maintaining the favourable conservation condition of the QIs/SCIs of each site, the screening process focused on assessing the potential effects of the proposed works against the QIs/SCIs of each site. The conservation objectives for each site were consulted throughout the assessment process. QIs/SCIs for Natura sites within 15km of the site are detailed in Table 3.1.

Conservation objectives that have been considered by this assessment are included in the following NPWS documents:

- NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Lower River Suir SAC 002137. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.
- NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: River Barrow and River Nore SAC 002162. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Tramore Dunes and Backstrand SAC 000671. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Tramore Back Strand SPA 004027. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Mid-Waterford Coast SPA [004193]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

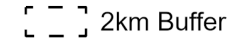
- NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Seas off Wexford SPA 004237. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

NPWS Designated Sites

Legend



Site



2km Buffer



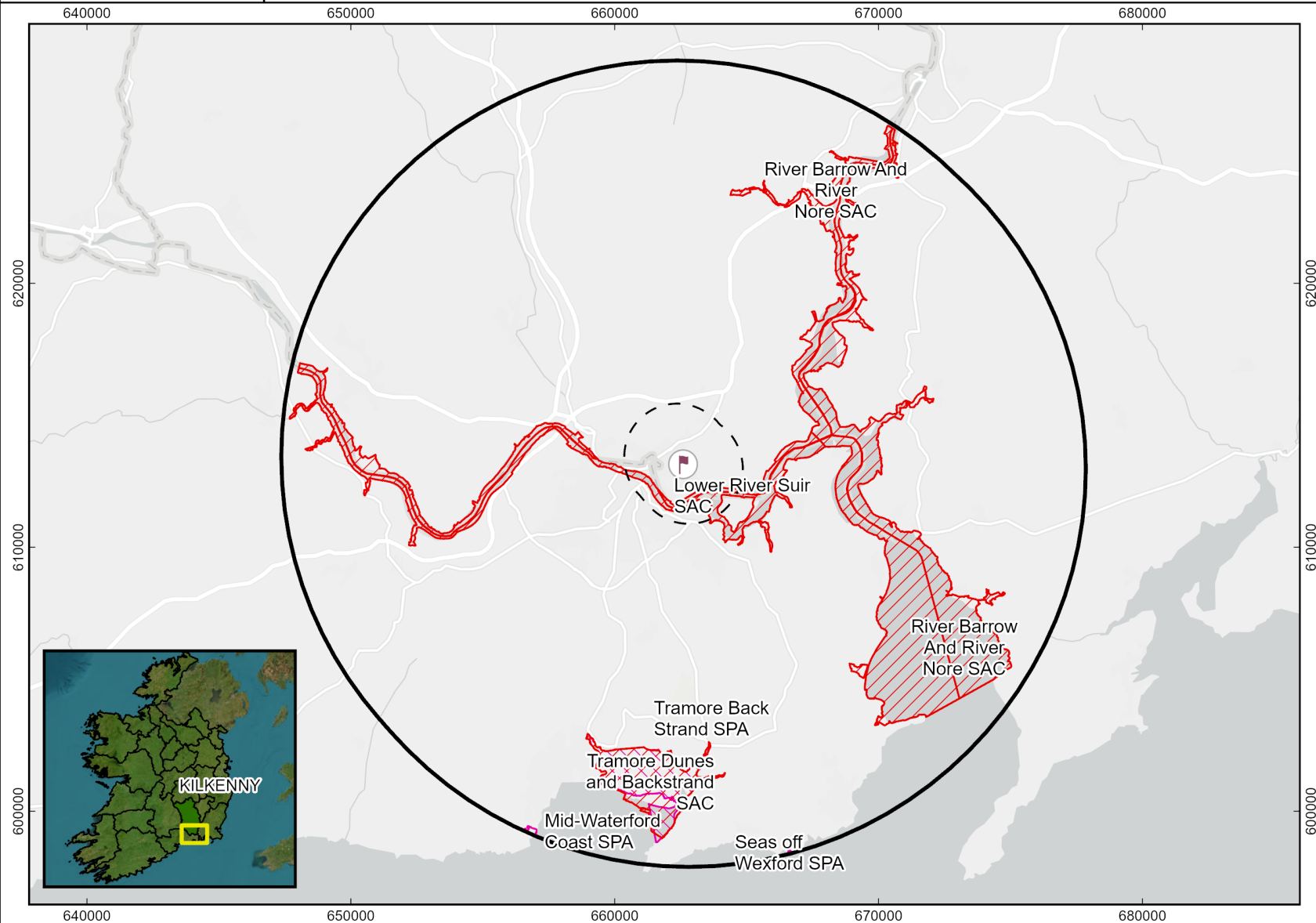
15km Buffer



SAC



SPA



0 2.5 5 10 Kilometers

Scale: 1:220,000

Spatial Reference
Name: IREN95 Irish Transverse Mercator
PCS: IREN95 Irish Transverse Mercator
GCS: GCS IREN95
Datum: IREN95
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Earthstar Geographics, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, METI/NASA, USGS

Project: South-North Access Road

Reference: W383/1

Client: Kilkenny County Council

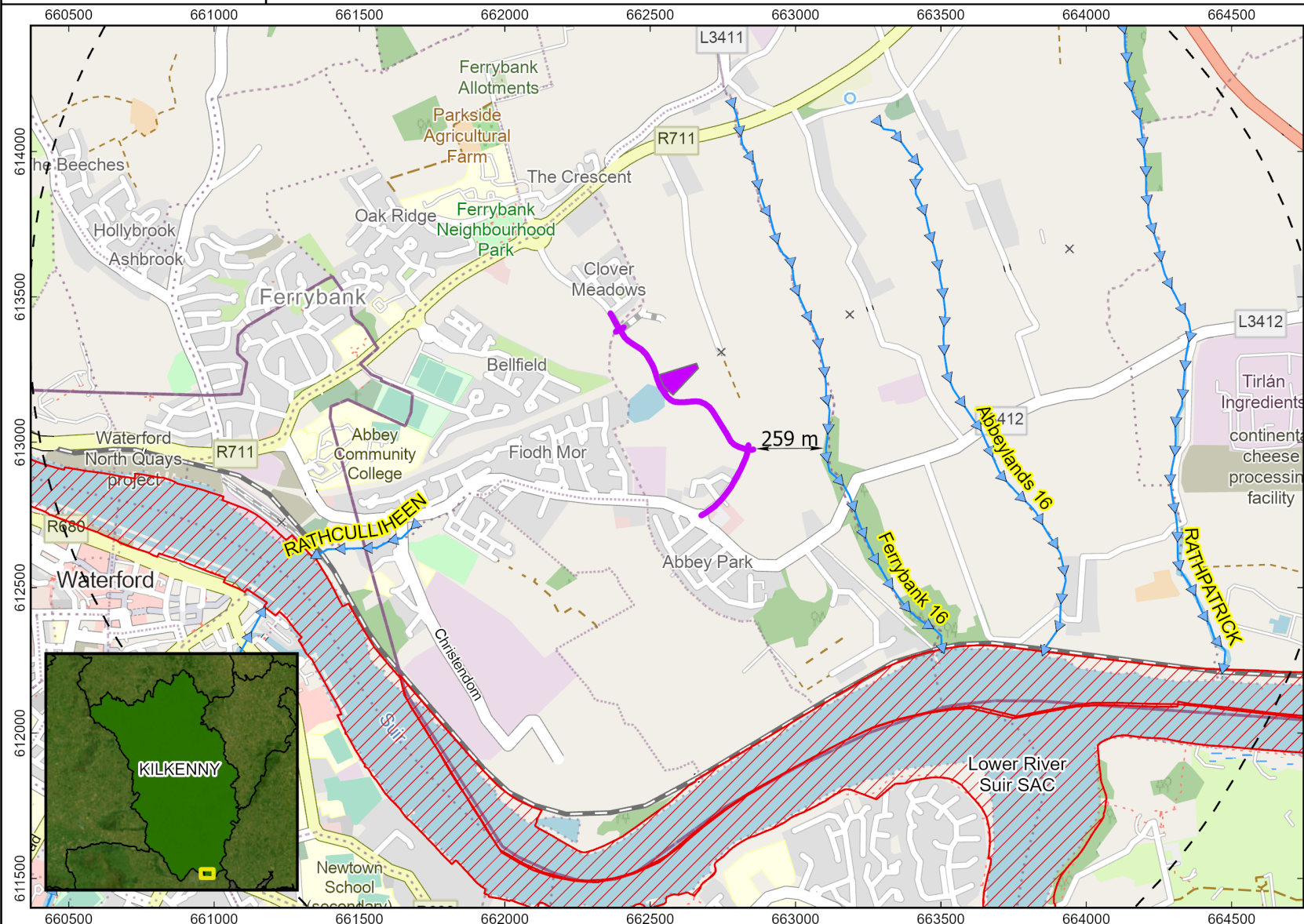
Figure 3.1: NPWS Designated Sites (Source: OCSC, 2024)

Water Flow and NPWS Designated Sites

Legend

Site

-  Site
-  2km Buffer
-  15km Buffer
-  Flow Network
-  Flow Direction
-  SAC
-  SPA
-  Distance



0 0.5 1 Kilometers

Scale: 1:20,000

Spatial Reference
Name: IREN95 Irish Transverse Mercator
PCS: IREN95 Irish Transverse Mercator
GCS: GCS IREN95
Datum: IREN95
Projection: Transverse Mercator

Earthstar Geographics, Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Facebook, Inc. and its affiliates, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri

Project: South-North Access Road

Reference: W383/1

Client: Kilkenny County Council

Figure 3.2: European Sites and EPA Rivers near the Study Area (Source: OCSC, 2024)

Table 3.1: European Sites Within 15 km of the Proposed Works

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors	Site Code
002137	Lower River Suir SAC	0.78 S (0.83 downstream during the CP 1.79 downstream during the OP)	[1330] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [6430] Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91E0] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91J0] <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles [1029] <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1092] <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1095] <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1096] <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1099] <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1103] <i>Alosa fallax fallax</i> (Twaites Shad) [1106] <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1355] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter)	Lower River Suir SAC consists of the freshwater stretches of the River Suir immediately south of Thurles, the tidal stretches as far as the confluence with the Barrow/Nore immediately east of Cheekpoint in Co. Waterford, and many tributaries including the Clodiagh in Co. Waterford, the Lingaun, Anner, Nier, Tar, Aherlow, Multeen and Clodiagh in Co. Tipperary. The Suir and its tributaries flow through the counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny and Waterford. The site is of particular conservation interest for the presence of a number of Annex II animal species, including Freshwater Pearl Mussel (both <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> and <i>M. margaritifera</i> subsp. <i>durrovensis</i> occur), White-clawed Crayfish, Salmon, Twaites Shad (<i>Alosa fallax fallax</i>), three species of Lampreys - Sea Lamprey, Brook Lamprey and River Lamprey, and Otter. This is one of only three known spawning grounds in the country for Twaites Shad. The Lower River Suir contains excellent examples of a number of Annex I habitats, including the priority habitats alluvial forest and Yew woodland. The site also supports populations of several important animal species, some listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive or listed in the Irish Red Data Book. The presence of two legally protected plants (Flora (Protection) Order, 1999) and the ornithological importance of the site adds further to the ecological interest and importance.
002162	River Barrow and River Nore SAC	4.8 E (6.0 downstream during the CP 7.04 downstream during the OP)	[1130] Estuaries [1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1170] Reefs [1310] <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [4030] European dry heaths [6430] Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91E0] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [1016] <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1029] <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1092] <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1095] <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey)	This site consists of the freshwater stretches of the Barrow and Nore River catchments as far upstream as the Slieve Bloom Mountains, and it also includes the tidal elements and estuary as far downstream as Creadun Head in Waterford. The site passes through eight counties – Offaly, Kildare, Laois, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Wexford, and Waterford. Major towns along the edge of the site include Mountmellick, Portllington, Monasterevin, Stradbally, Athy, Carlow, Leighlinbridge, Graigueanamanagh, New Ross, Inistioge, Thomastown, Callan, Bennettsbridge, Kilkenny, and Durrow. The larger of the many tributaries include the Lerr, Fushoge, Mountain, Aughavau, Owenass, Boherbaun, and Stradbally Rivers of the Barrow and the Delour, Dinin, Erkina, Owveg, Munster, Arrigle, and King's Rivers on the Nore. Overall, the site is of considerable conservation significance for the occurrence of good examples of habitats and of populations of plant and animal species that are listed on Annexes I and II of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Furthermore, it is of high conservation value for the populations of bird species that use it. The occurrence of several Red Data Book plant species including three rare plants in the salt meadows and the population of the hard water form of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel, which is limited to a 10 km stretch of the Nore, add further interest to this site.

			[1096] Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1099] Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1103] Alosa fallax fallax (Twite Shad) [1106] Salmo salar (Salmon) [1355] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1421] Trichomanes speciosum (Killarney Fern) [1990] Margaritifera durrovensis (Nore Pearl Mussel)	
000671	Tramore Dunes and Backstrand SAC	10.2 S	[1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1210] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1220] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1310] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [2110] Embryonic shifting dunes [2120] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2130] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)	This composite coastal site lies at the head of Tramore Bay, east of Tramore town in Co. Waterford. The Tramore dunes (Burrow) are the result of a classic inshore process - the growth of a spit of shingle and sand across a shallow bay. Behind the spit lies the Back Strand which dries out at low tide and is connected to the open sea by narrows at Rinneshark. The Burrow has a narrow neck and expands eastwards. Longshore drift is from the west, so any loose material accumulates at the tip, which is hooked, and on the opposing spit at Bass Point. Tramore Dunes and Back Strand is a site of major ecological importance for the range of good quality coastal habitats which occur, including fixed dunes, which are listed as a priority habitat on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site has a remarkably rich flora, featuring a number of rare and protected species, and the intertidal area is important for wintering waterfowl.
004027	Tramore Back Strand SPA	10.2 S	[A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A140] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A141] Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A142] Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A149] Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A156] Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A160] Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds	Tramore Back Strand SPA is located approximately 2 km east of Tramore town in County Waterford. It comprises a medium-sized estuary sheltered from the open sea by a long shingle spit, with high dunes. The area known as the Back Strand empties almost completely at low tide; it is connected to the outer bay and sea by narrows at Rinnashark. Tramore Back Strand SPA is of high ornithological importance for wintering waterfowl, with one species occurring in internationally important numbers and a further seven species having populations of national importance. The regular occurrence of Little Egret, Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit is of particular note as these three species are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Tramore Back Strand is also a Ramsar Convention site.
004193	Mid-Waterford Coast SPA	14.7 SW	[A017] Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A103] Peregrine (Falco peregrinus) [A184] Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) [A346] Chough (Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax)	The Mid-Waterford Coast SPA encompasses the areas of high coast and sea cliffs in Co. Waterford between Newtown Cove to the east and Ballyvoyle to the west. The site includes the sea cliffs and the land adjacent to the cliff edge. The high-water mark forms the seaward boundary. Sea cliffs are the predominant habitat of the site; these occur along its length and are generally well-vegetated by a suite of typical sea cliff species. Above the cliffs, areas of heath, improved grassland, unimproved wet and dry grassland, and woodland occur. The Mid-Waterford Coast SPA is an important site for Chough and Peregrine, both species that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. It also supports a range of breeding seabirds, including nationally important populations of Cormorant and Herring Gull.
004237	Seas off Wexford SPA	14.8 SE	[A001] Red-throated Diver (Gavia stellata) [A009] Fulmar (Fulmarus glacialis) [A013] Manx Shearwater (Puffinus puffinus) [A016] Gannet (Morus bassanus) [A017] Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo)	The marine waters off the coast of County Wexford mark the boundary between the Irish and Celtic Seas. These waters constitute a valuable feeding resource for the seabirds that return every spring to Wexford's coastal and island colonies to breed. Outside of the summer months these relatively shallow coastal waters provide safe feeding and roosting opportunities for a range of marine birds overwintering here or on passage.

			[A018] Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A065] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A176] Mediterranean Gull (<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>) [A179] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A183] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A184] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A188] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A191] Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>) [A192] Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A193] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A194] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A195] Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) [A199] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A200] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A204] Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>)	The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Common Scoter, Red-throated Diver, Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Gannet, Shag, Cormorant, Kittiwake, Black-headed Gull, Mediterranean Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Little Tern, Roseate Tern, Common Tern, Arctic Tern, Sandwich Tern, Puffin, Razorbill and Guillemot.
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CP: Construction Phase
OP: Operational Phase

3.3 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

3.3.1 EXCLUSION FROM APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

As set out in the provisions of the Habitats Directive, plans or projects that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site do not require AA. For this exception to apply, management is required to be interpreted narrowly as nature conservation management in the sense of Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive. This refers to specific measures to address the ecological requirements of annexed habitats and species (and their habitats) present on a site(s). The relationship should be shown to be direct and not a by-product of the plan, even if this might result in positive or beneficial effects for a site(s).

In this case, however, the proposed south-north access road and car park is neither necessary for nor directly connected with the management of a European Site. As such, the proposed development cannot be excluded from AA.

3.3.2 ELEMENTS OF THE WORKS WITH THE POTENTIAL TO GIVE EFFECTS

Both the construction and operational phases of the proposed works have the potential to introduce effects such as disturbance due to noise and vibrations, and surface water run-off. In addition, the construction phase also has the potential to introduce effects due to sedimentation. These effects are examined in detail in relation to the sensitive receptors of each of the European sites identified with regard to the conservation objectives and the potential pathways for effects.

3.3.3 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS AND SCREENING OF SITES

This section documents the final stage of the screening process. It uses the information collected on the sensitivity of each European Site and describes any impact to have likely significant effects on any European Site, in view of the site's conservation objectives, resulting from the proposed works. This assessment assumes the absence of any controls, conditions, or mitigation measures. In determining the potential for effects, a number of factors have been considered including the sensitivity and reported threats to the European Site and the individual elements of the proposed works and the potential effect they may cause to the site.

Sites are screened out based on one or a combination of the following criteria:

- Where it can be shown that there are no significant pathways such as hydrological links between activities of the proposed works and the site to be screened;
- Where the site is located at such a distance from proposed works that effects are not foreseen; and/ or

- Where it is that known threats or vulnerabilities at a site cannot be linked to potential impacts that may arise from the proposed works.

3.4 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

Assessment is the process of evaluating the importance or significance of project/plan effects (whether negative or positive). The following parameters are described when characterising impacts (following guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland/ National Roads Authority):

Direct and Indirect Impacts – An impact can be caused either as a direct or as an indirect consequence of proposed development.

Magnitude - Magnitude refers to size, amount, intensity, and volume. It should be quantified if possible and expressed in absolute or relative terms (e.g., the amount of habitat lost, percentage change to habitat area, percentage decline in a species population). Magnitude measures the size of an impact which is described as high, medium, low, very low, or negligible.

Extent - The extent is the spatial or geographical area over which the impact/effect may occur under a suitably representative range of conditions (e.g. noise transmission underwater).

Duration - The time for which the effect is expected to last prior to recovery or replacement of the resource or feature.

- Temporary: the effects would take up to 1 year to be mitigated;
- Short Term: the effects would take 1-7 years to be mitigated;
- Medium Term: the effects would take 7-15 years to be mitigated;
- Long Term: the effects would take 15-60 years to be mitigated; and
- Permanent: the effects would take 60+ years to be mitigated.

Likelihood – The probability of an impact/effect occurring taking into account all available information.

- Certain/Near Certain: >95% chance of occurring as predicted;
- Probable: 50-95% chance as occurring as predicted;
- Unlikely: 5-50% chance as occurring as predicted; and
- Extremely Unlikely: <5% chance as occurring as predicted.

The document '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, European Commission Environment DG, 2001' outlines the types of effects that may impact European sites. These include effects from the following activities:

- Land take

- Resource requirements (drinking water abstraction, etc.)
- Emissions (disposal to land, water, or air)
- Excavation requirements
- Transportation requirements
- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning

In addition, the guidance outlines the following likely changes that may occur at a designated site which may result in significant effects on any European Site and its function, in view of its conservation objectives:

- Reduction of habitat area
- Disturbance to key species
- Habitat or species fragmentation
- Reduction in species density
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality, etc.)
- Climate change

The elements detailed above were considered with reference to each of the European sites identified within a 15km radius of the site (Table 3.1).

3.4.1 LAND TAKE/HABITAT LOSS

The proposed development of the south-north access road and car park will see no land take or habitat loss in European Sites as the Lower River Suir SAC, the closest European Site, is approximately 0.78km from the proposed development.

3.4.2 RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

There are no resource requirements (i.e. mineral/drinking water abstractions, etc.) for the access road and car park works which will be additional to existing requirements. Therefore, there will be no interactions with resources necessary for the maintenance of the ecological integrity of any European sites.

3.4.3 DURATION OF WORKS

The construction phase of the proposed works is anticipated to be short-term. Given the relatively small scale of these works, the duration of the works is extremely unlikely to impact nearby European sites.

3.4.4 EMISSIONS (DISPOSAL TO LAND, WATER OR AIR)

Construction Phase:

Potential water quality impacts during the construction phase include increased siltation and turbidity to surface runoff during the construction of the access road as well as pollution from surface runoff due to accidental spillages of oils or fuels from machinery, concrete/cement, bitumen, paint, etc. As seen in Figure 3.2, the Ferrybank stream creates an indirect hydrological connection to the Lower River Suir SAC located 830m downstream. However, this stream is located approximately 259m at its nearest point. Therefore, in the absence of mitigation measures, changes in water quality in the Lower River Suir SAC as a result of the construction phase are anticipated to be unlikely and negligible, given the distance from the route to the Ferrybank Stream (259m).

Construction phase elements of the plan may give rise to increased temporary side effects such as noise or dust. However, given the scale and short-term nature of the project and the distance to the nearest European site, these impacts are predicted to be temporary, unlikely, and negligible.

No other European sites within the ZOI are hydrologically connected to the proposed site other than the River Barrow and River Nore SAC which is indirectly connected via the Ferrybank Stream and the River Suir and is located approximately 6km downstream. Therefore, due to the scale and duration of the proposed works, the distance from the study area to these sites, and the indirect or lack of hydrological connection, the impact on these European sites is determined to be extremely unlikely and negligible.

Operational Phase:

During the operational phase, surface water from the site will be treated before discharge by attenuation and oil separation to ensure that the water quality of the receiving watercourse is not adversely impacted. The rate of discharge will be discharged at an allowable rate equal to or lesser than the green field (estimated Q_{bar} rate is 6.7l/s) discharge rate from the development into the Ferrybank Stream, at a minimum distance of 550m. The development's storm network outfall chamber will be fitted with a site flow control device, that will help restrict the stormwater flows to pre-development levels for the Soil Type 2. Therefore, during the operational phase of the project the site will have an indirect hydrological connection to the Lower Suir SAC (1786m downstream), via the drainage along the greenway to the Ferrybank Stream (550m) and from the Ferrybank Stream to the River Suir (1236m). See Figure 3.3 below. Although the operational phase of the proposed project will contribute intermittent additional surface water to the Ferrybank Stream and the River Suir due to rainfall events, it is unlikely to cause a significant impact on the Lower River Suir SAC due to the nature of the works and distance downstream .

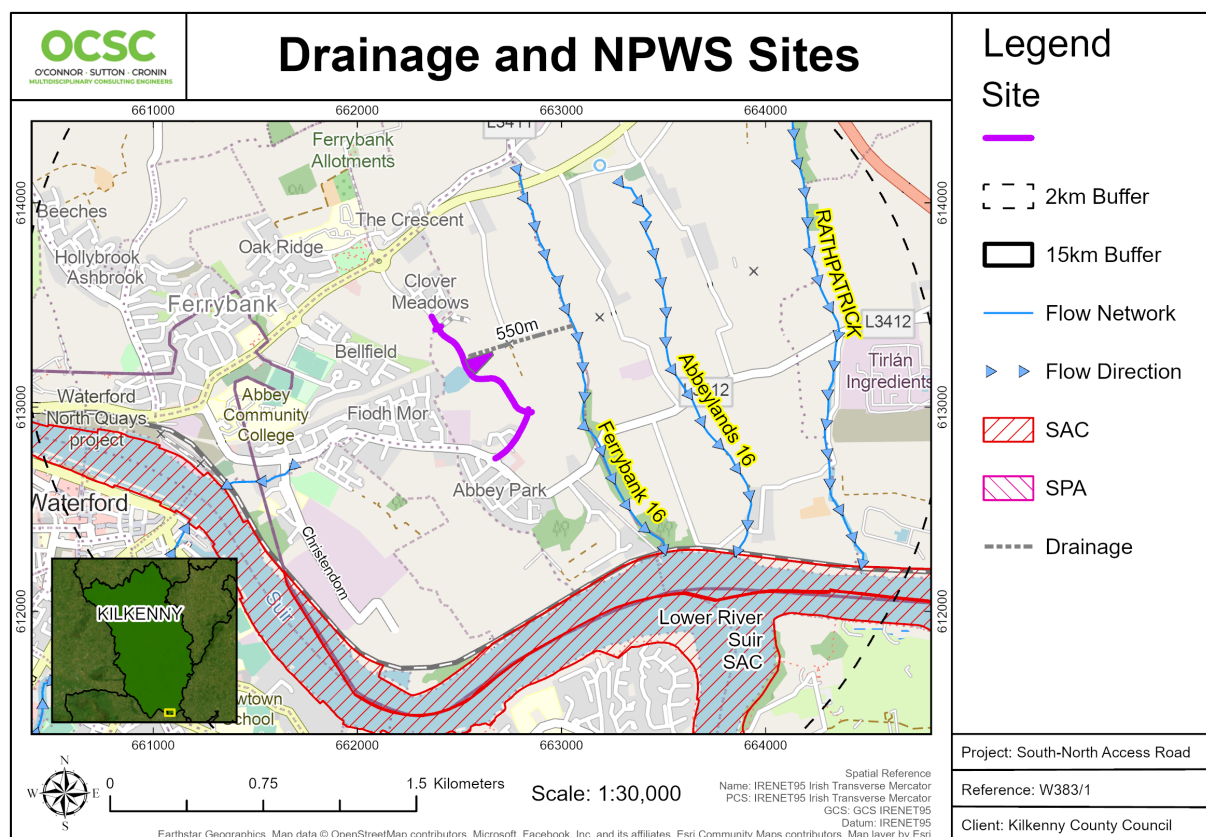


Figure 3.3: Site Drainage to the Ferrybank Stream (Source: OCSC, 2024)

3.4.5 EXCAVATION REQUIREMENTS/EROSION/SEDIMENTATION

The proposed development requires excavation works including regrading of the land surface. However, given the short-term nature of the scale of the proposed works and the distance to the nearest European site, the impacts on European sites arising from these works are considered to be short-term, unlikely, and negligible.

3.4.6 TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS

There will be a moderate, short-term increase in construction traffic during the construction phase and a permanent increase during the operational phase. However, the operational phase traffic will consist largely of rerouted traffic already using other roads in the area. The effects of transportation during construction and operational phases are considered to be negligible with regard to European sites due to the small scale and short duration of the construction works, the negligible increase in traffic in the larger local area due to the implementation of the project, and the distance to the nearest European sites.

3.4.7 DURATION OF CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION, DECOMMISSIONING

The construction phase of the proposed project is short-term and will have no significant effects on European sites given the small scale and duration of the works and the distance to European sites. The access road and car park will be permanent features with no decommissioning phase and are predicted to have no significant effects on European sites during operations due to the nature of its use, the design mitigation measures incorporated in its construction, and the distance to European sites.

3.4.8 HABITAT REDUCTION

The closest qualifying habitat feature, 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) identified within the Lower River Suir SAC, is located 0.78km south of the site at its closest point. However, the likelihood of run-off from the proposed works entering the River Suir (via the Ferrybank Stream) and the Lower River Suir SAC is negligible, given distance from the site and the nature of the work. Therefore, it is not anticipated any reduction of the habitat of European sites resulting from the proposed development.

3.4.9 SPECIES DISTURBANCE

There are no qualifying species identified within this area of the SAC. However, *Lutra lutra* (Otter), *Petromyzon marinus* (Sea Lamprey), *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey), *Lampetra fluviatilis* (River Lamprey), *Alosa fallax fallax* (Twaiite Shad), and *Salmo salar* (Salmon) are widespread species that could occur in the area.

The site is located 0.78km from the Lower River Suir SAC. Therefore, considering the scale and duration of the proposed construction works, any species disturbance within the SAC caused during the construction phase of the project will be unlikely and negligible. Disturbance due to noise during the operational phase will be intermittent and not significant, given the distance to the SAC.

3.4.10 HABITAT OR SPECIES FRAGMENTATION

Given the nature, scale, and duration of the construction phase and the long-term use of the proposed project, the project is considered to have no potential effects on any European site with regard to habitat or species fragmentation.

3.4.11 CHANGES IN KEY INDICATORS OF CONSERVATION VALUE

Given there is an indirect hydrological connection between the site and the Lower River Suir SAC via the Ferrybank Stream, changes in key indicators of conservation value for water quality on this European site

resulting from the proposed site works are negligible. In the absence of mitigation, these impacts are considered to be unlikely and negligible during the construction phase. During the operational phase, considering the incorporation of surface water drainage measures designed into the road network and car park, these impacts are considered to be extremely unlikely and negligible, given the distance (0.83km downstream during the construction phase and 1.38km downstream of Ferrybank Stream and the site's closest point during the operational phase) to the SAC.

3.4.12 CLIMATE CHANGE

Due to the nature and scale of the proposed work, the negative effects of the proposed development on climate and Ireland's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol are not anticipated to be significant and may aid in reducing carbon emissions due to shortened journey times in the area.

3.4.13 COMBINATION EFFECTS WITH OTHER PROJECTS

Grants of planning in the vicinity of the site were reviewed to identify works of a significant scale which may produce in-combination effects with the proposed works. The following planning grants of larger than a single domestic scale were identified:

- **19730:** construction of 98 no. residential units immediately north of the study area
- **20453:** construction of 40 no. residential units within the study area
- **20845:** for the following: a) change of use of the existing first floor area to residential use to provide 15 no. apartments, b) construct a new rooftop penthouse containing 8 no apartments (23 apartments in total) together with c) elevational modifications, and all associated site works

Other granted planning permissions in the vicinity of the site pertain primarily to small-scale agricultural, residential, and commercial constructions, alterations, extensions, change of use, or retention of works. Although three larger planning grants were identified within and in the vicinity of the site, due to the small scale of the proposed development and the distance to the nearest SAC, in-combination effects with these are considered to be unlikely and not significant.

Table 3.2: Screening assessment of the potential effects arising from the proposed works.

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Characterisation of Potential Effects	Potential Significant Effects	Potential In- Combination Effects
002137	Lower River Suir SAC	0.78 S (0.83 downstream during CP 1.79 downstream during OP)	[1330] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculus fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [6430] Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91E0] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91J0] Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles [1029] Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1092] Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1095] Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1096] Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1099] Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1103] Alosa fallax fallax (Twaite Shad) [1106] Salmo salar (Salmon) [1355] Lutra lutra (Otter)	Threats to the site include: A08 (Fertilisation) E01 (Urbanised areas, human habitation) E03 (Discharges) H01 (Pollution to surface waters (limnic, terrestrial, marine & brackish)) J02.12.02 (dykes and flooding defence in inland water systems) A01 (Cultivation) B (Sylviculture, forestry) D03.01 (port areas) I01 (invasive non-native species) J02.01.02 (Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh) J02.01 (Landfill, land reclamation and drying out, general) There is no spatial overlap or direct impact on habitats. Hydrological link considered to pose a significant risk to Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey), Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey), Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey), Alosa fallax fallax (Twaite Shad), and Salmo salar (Salmon). Given the scale and nature of the works, construction phase effects will be temporary to short-term, probable and low to cause significant impact on the SAC.	Unlikely	Unlikely
002162	River Barrow and River Nore SAC	4.8 E (6.0 downstream during CP 7.04 downstream during OP)	[1130] Estuaries [1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1170] Reefs [1310] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculus fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [4030] European dry heaths [6430] Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)	Threats to the site include: A02.01 (agricultural intensification); H01 (Pollution to surface waters (limnic, terrestrial, marine & brackish)); J02.05.02 (modifying structures of inland water courses); J02.12.02 (dykes and flooding defence in inland water systems); K01.01 (Erosion); A10.01 (removal of hedges and copses or scrub); C01.01.01 (sand and gravel quarries) D03.01 (port areas) E02 (Industrial or commercial areas) F01.01 (intensive fish farming, intensification) F02.01.02 (netting) F02.03 (Leisure phishing) A04.01.01 (intensive cattle grazing) B02 (Forest and Plantation management and use)	Unlikely	Unlikely

			[91A0] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91E0] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [1016] Vertigo moulinsiana (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1029] Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1092] Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1095] Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1096] Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1099] Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1103] Alosa fallax fallax (Twaite Shad) [1106] Salmo salar (Salmon) [1355] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1421] Trichomanes speciosum (Killarney Fern) [1990] Margaritifera durrovensis (Nore Pearl Mussel)	B05 (use of fertilizers (forestry)) B07 (Forestry activities not referred to above) C01.03 (Peat extraction) F02 (Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources) I01 (invasive non-native species) J02 (human induced changes in hydraulic conditions) J02.02.01 (dredging/ removal of limnic sediments) J02.06 (Water abstractions from surface waters) J03.02.01 (reduction in migration/ migration barriers) M01 (Changes in abiotic conditions) There is no spatial overlap or direct hydrological link between the site and the protected area. Given the scale and nature of the works and the distance to the designated site, construction phase effects will be localised and unlikely to cause significant impact on the SAC.		
000671	Tramore Dunes and Backstrand SAC	10.2 S	[1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1210] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1220] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1310] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [2110] Embryonic shifting dunes [2120] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2130] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)	Threats to the site include: E03 (Discharges) G01.02 (walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles) A04 (grazing) F03.01 (hunting) C01.01.02 (removal of beach materials) I01 (invasive non-native species) F02.03 (Leisure phishing) G02.08 (camping and caravans) E01 (Urbanised areas, human habitation) F02.03.01 (bait digging / collection) There is no spatial overlap or hydrological link between the site and the protected area. Given the scale and nature of the works, construction phase effects will be localised and unlikely to cause significant impact on the SAC.	Unlikely	Unlikely
004027	Tramore Back Strand SPA	10.2 S	[A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A140] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A141] Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A142] Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A149] Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A156] Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A160] Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds	Threats to the site include: H (pollution) A04 (grazing) E01 (Urbanised areas, human habitation) G01.02 (walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles) E03 (Discharges) I01 (invasive non-native species) A08 (Fertilisation) There is no spatial overlap or hydrological link between the site and the protected area. Given the scale and nature of the works,	Unlikely	Unlikely

				construction phase effects will be localised and unlikely to cause significant impact on the SPA.		
004193	Mid-Waterford Coast SPA	14.7 SW	[A017] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A103] Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) [A184] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A346] Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>)	Threats to the site include: E04.01 (Agricultural structures, buildings in the landscape) A02 (modification of cultivation practices) E05 (storage of materials) A04.03 (abandonment of pastoral systems, lack of grazing) There is no spatial overlap or hydrological link between the site and the protected area. Given the scale and nature of the works, construction phase effects will be localised and unlikely to cause significant impact on the SPA.	Unlikely	Unlikely
004237	Seas off Wexford SPA	14.8 SE	[A001] Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>) [A009] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A013] Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>) [A016] Gannet (<i>Morus bassanus</i>) [A017] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A018] Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A065] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A176] Mediterranean Gull (<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>) [A179] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A183] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A184] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A188] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A191] Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>) [A192] Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A193] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A194] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A195] Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) [A199] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A200] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A204] Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>)	At the time of this report been written the threats for this SPA were not published however, there is no spatial overlap or hydrological link between the site and the protected area. Given the scale and nature of the works, construction phase effects will be localised and unlikely to cause significant impact on the SPA.	Unlikely	Unlikely

CP: Construction Phase

OP: Operational Phase

4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

4.1 SUMMARY

The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance and establishes the requirement for an AA. This AA screening is based on the best scientific knowledge and has utilised ecological and hydrological expertise. In addition, a detailed online review of published scientific literature and 'grey' literature was conducted.

This AA has been prepared for the proposed south-north access road (Abbey Road to Belmont Road) and car park at Ferrybank, County Kilkenny. Proposed works include the construction of a carriageway with footpaths, a cycle lane, a verge, a car park and an associated drainage system.

The Ferrybank stream establishes an indirect hydrological connection with the Lower River Suir SAC, situated 0.83km downstream. However, it is important to emphasise that the distance between the Ferrybank stream and the site is approximately 0.26km (measured at its nearest point). Despite the surface water discharging to the Ferrybank Stream (at an allowable discharge rate and based on the greenfield runoff calculation which will be restricted to pre-development levels), the significant separation (1.79km downstream) negates any hydrological connection between the proposed project and the Lower River Suir SAC and in the absence of mitigation measures, impact to this and other European sites within the ZOI is considered to be unlikely and negligible.

As a result, no changes are predicted to occur at any designated sites which may result in effects on the conservation objectives of those sites with regard to the following:

- Land take/habitat loss
- Resource requirements
- Reduction of habitat area
- Disturbance to key species
- Habitat or species fragmentation
- Reduction in species density
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality, etc.)
- Climate change

4.2 CONCLUSION

There is a Natura 2000 site, the Lower River Suir SAC, located 0.78km direct from the site. It is proposed to discharge surface water to the Ferrybank Stream which is an indirect hydrological connection to the Lower River Suir SAC as it is located 1.79km downstream of Ferrybank Stream. Therefore, in the absence of mitigation measures, changes in water quality in the Lower River Suir SAC are anticipated to be unlikely and negligible, given the distance from the route to the Ferrybank Stream (0.26km) and the Lower Suir SACs location 1.79km downstream of the site during the operational phase.

Therefore, this stage 1 screening for AA for the proposed works on the south-north access road (Abbey Road to Belmont Road) and car park concludes that the proposed works are not likely to create significant impacts on the Lower River Suir SAC or any other European sites in the absence of mitigation.

The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during the construction and operational phases as a result of the implementation of the project. Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the project characteristics, taking into account the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated that there are not likely to be significant adverse effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interests, or the conservation objectives of the Lower River Suir SAC.

Given the nature of the development, its scale, and the localised and temporary nature of the construction effects identified as potential sources, it is concluded that the proposed project is not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects on any designated European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

This evaluation is made in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species for which these sites have been designated. Consequently, a Stage Two Appropriate Assessment is not required for the project.

5 VERIFICATION

This report was compiled by Bruna Guasti, BEng, MIEI, Environment Consultant and Sinéad Doran, BSc, AMIEnvSc, Environment Consultant; reviewed by Glenda Barry, BSc, MSc, PGeo, Eurgeol, Associate and Luis Iemma, BSc, MSc, Ph. D, CEcol, MCIEEM, Associate Ecologist; and approved by Eleanor Burke, BSc, MSc, DAS, MIEEnvSc, CSci, and OCSC Director (Environmental).



Bruna Guasti BEng MIEI
Environmental Consultant
O'Connor Sutton Cronin & Associates



OCSC

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