



Louth County Council

Ardee 2040 Regeneration

Screening for Appropriate Assessment

603902 (03)

MAY 2025

RSK

RSK GENERAL NOTES

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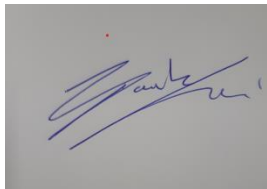
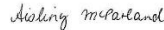
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Where field investigations have been carried out, these have been restricted to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives of the work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This statement to inform a Screening for Appropriate Assessment report has been prepared by RSK Ireland on behalf of Louth County Council (the applicant) as part of a public realm regeneration proposal for lands in Project Ardee 2040. The aim of this report is to identify and evaluate any potential effects of the proposed development on Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), referred to jointly as European sites. It covers Stage 1 of the Appropriate Assessment process.

It assesses a regeneration project that aims to enhance and improve the townscape character and quality for pedestrian access and enjoyment.

In accordance with their obligations under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477/2011), the planning authority must assess whether the proposed project could have 'likely significant effects' on any Natura 2000 sites. This document provides supporting information to assist the authority with an Appropriate Assessment screening exercise, including: a description of the plan, a review of the site's environmental setting, details of Natura 2000 sites within the potential zone of effect based on an appraisal of source-pathway-receptor relationships, and an assessment of potential impacts.

It is concluded that the development will not lead to direct or indirect impacts on any Natura 2000 sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, so progression to a stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Appropriate Assessment

- 1.1.1 Approximately 14% of the land area of Ireland is included in the European Network of Natura 2000 sites, which includes Special Protection Areas (SPAs) to protect important areas for birds, and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to protect a range of habitats and species. Legal protection for these sites is provided by the European Council *Birds Directive* (79/409/EEC) and E.C. *Habitats Directive* (92/43/EEC, as amended), which are jointly transposed into Irish law by the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011* (SI 477/2011, as amended).
- 1.1.2 Regulation 42 (1) states that: “*Screening for Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project for which an application for consent is received [...] shall be carried out by the public authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the site, if that plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on [any Natura 2000 sites].*” To ensure compliance with this regulation, public authorities must screen all land-use plans for potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites.
- 1.1.3 This document provides background information to support a ‘Screening for Appropriate Assessment’ for the proposed regeneration project at Ardee outlining works to create a more pedestrian accessible themed townscape with the aim of creating a created sense of community and belonging. It includes a description of the plan, a review of the site’s environmental setting, details of Natura 2000 sites within the zone of influence of the project (i.e. the potential zone of impact), an appraisal of source-pathway-receptor relationships, and an assessment of potential impacts.

1.2 Statement of authority

- 1.2.1 This report was written by Conor McKinney, senior ecologist at RSK Ireland. Conor has worked for over 15 years in the ecological field and has a BSc in Environmental Science from University of Stirling and an MSc in Ecological Management and Conservation Biology from Queens University Belfast. Conor has completed numerous similar projects including Ecological Impact Assessments and biodiversity chapters for Environmental Impact Assessment Reporting and has previous experience working with the Scottish Government and European Union on the management of Natura 2000 sites.
- 1.2.2 Technical and quality review has been undertaken by Mark Lang, an Associate Director (ecologist) at RSK Biocensus Ltd. He has an ecologically relevant B.Sc. from the University of York and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and a Chartered Ecologist and Chartered Environmentalist. His experience in commercial consultancy exceeds 30 years.

1.3 Methods

1.3.1 This report has been prepared with reference to the following guidelines:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009)*
- *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4), E.C., 2002.*
- *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2019).*
- It also heeds recent case law (*Case C-323/17 People Over Wind and Sweetman*) which establishes that a Screening for Appropriate Assessment exercise cannot take account of proposed or standard site-management or mitigation procedures when making any assessment of likely significant impact on a Natura 2000 site. To quote the determination: “*Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out, subsequently, an appropriate assessment of the implications, for a site concerned, of a plan or project, it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site*”.

1.3.2 In accordance with Section 3.2 of *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland*, the screening exercise was conducted using the following steps:

- Description of the plan and local site characteristics.
- Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites, and compilation of information on their qualifying interests and conservation objectives.
- Assessment of potential impacts upon Natura 2000 sites, including:
 - i. Direct impacts (e.g. loss of habitat area, fragmentation).
 - ii. Indirect impacts (e.g. disturbance of fauna, pollution of surface water).
 - iii. Cumulative / ‘in-combination’ effects associated with other concurrent projects.
- Screening Statement with conclusions.

1.3.3 A desk-based study was carried out using data from the following sources:

- i. The building and landscape plans for the proposed scheme, and specialist reports prepared in support of any planning application for it.
- ii. Qualifying interests / conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites from www.npws.ie.
- iii. Bedrock, soil, subsoil, surface water and ground water maps from the Geological Survey of Ireland web mapping service

(www.gsi.ie/mapping.htm), the National Biodiversity Data Centre (<http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/>), and the Environmental Protection Agency web viewer (<http://gis.epa.ie/Envision/>).

- iv. The *Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027* which has superseded the Ardee Local Area Plan (2010-2016); and details of proposed developments from same planning authority's online register.

- 1.3.4 All web-based resources were accessed in April 2022. The Louth County Council planning website (<https://www.eplanning.ie/LouthCC/>) was also accessed on 15 February 2023 to update this screening report within any applications within the vicinity of the proposed development to check for in-combination impacts.

1.4 Limitations

- 1.4.1 It is important to note that this screening exercise was carried out using desktop resources, including information from public sources (e.g. online mapping systems), and has incorporated the findings of the Preliminary Ecological Assessment and subsequent site visits carried out in the preparation of the accompanying Environmental Impact Statement, Technical Note: Greylag Goose Habitat Assessment and Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) Bat Survey.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 Environmental setting

Site location and surroundings

- 2.1.1 Ardee is the third largest town in County Louth. The town itself is located on the River Dee, which runs through the southern end of the town and straddles the N2 Dublin to Derry National Primary Route, which runs south to north, and the N52 Dundalk to Kells National Secondary Route which runs from the west into the town, joins the N2 and then at its northern end leaves the town in a north easterly direction.
- 2.1.2 Ardee town sits at a height of approximately 25 – 30 metres above sea level, with the surrounding rich fertile gently undulating land rising to 45 – 50 metres in the east, west and south.
- 2.1.3 The project area (hereafter referred to as the 'Site') covers approximately 7.69 hectares in area and concentrates on four main Key Character Areas in Ardee town which are interconnected by vehicular / pedestrian infrastructure. These areas include:
 - 1) Lands at Golf Links Road, Dundalk Road, Main Street (including Irish Street, Market Street, Castle Street), William Street, Hale Street and Ash Walk.
 - 2) Lands to the rear of 4 no. dwellings on Sean O'Carroll Street (no house numbers available – Eircode's A92 W684, A92 ND36, A92 V260 & A92 A6P2); no's 1 – 5 Cappocksgreen, Sean O'Carroll Street; east of Mid-Louth Garage, Old Railway Station, Sean O'Carroll Street; north of no's 1 – 5 The Avenue; north of 7 no. dwellings on Tierney Street (no house numbers available – Eircode's A92 D528, A92 XH77, A92 CP80, A92 KW80, A92 YD35, A92 AF86, A92 DP68) and no's 1 - 13 Cappocksgreen, Tierney Street.
 - 3) Lands to the east of Greenvale House, Old Dawsons Demesne, Tierney Street (Eircode A92 RH76); to the west of Ardee Wastewater Treatment Works and north of the River Dee.
 - 4) HSE lands at St. Joseph's Hospital between Golf Links Road and Ash Walk.

- 2.1.4 The areas outlined above are mapped in Figure 1.

Geology, soils and hydrology

- 2.1.5 The underlying bedrock is a mixture of limestone and sandstone, with 'argillaceous bioclastic limestone' at the western extent of the Site, 'dark limestone, mudstone and sandstone' in the centre, and 'calcareous red-mica greywacke' in the east. The first two categories provide a locally-important

aquifer, whereas the greywacke is a poor aquifer. Sub-soils are limestone till, with alluvium along the river corridor, and made ground in urban areas. Soils are deep and well-drained in most areas.

- 2.1.6 The River Dee passes through the centre of Ardee (refer to Figure 1). It flows south of the character areas of the proposed Site, including flowing immediately south of the Amenity Lands and flows under the southern end of the Main Street/ Ash Walk. There could potentially be hydrological links from the Site to the River Dee. A tributary (the Townparks Stream) also flows to the north of the town, passing the northern extent of the N2 main street, however, this stream does not interact with the Site. There are no other watercourses in the vicinity of the Site. The River Dee flows east, and meets the coast of the Irish Sea at Annagasan, approx. 17 km downstream.
- 2.1.7 Under the Water Framework Directive status assessments 2013 – 2018, the River Dee (and its tributaries) are of Moderate status, declining to Bad status near the coast. The coastal waters of Dundalk Bay are of Good status. The main significant pressures listed in the Third Cycle Reporting (EPA 2021) are agricultural pressures followed by hydro -morphological pressures, domestic wastewater, peat and urban wastewater pressures.
- 2.1.8 The River Dee follows a course of approximately 17.5km from site to sea although lies within the sites 15km buffer. The river flows into Dundalk Bay which is designated as both an SPA and a SAC.

Figure 1: Character Areas of the Proposed Development



2.2 Site location

- 2.2.1 The application site covers an area of approx. 7.79 hectares which includes the following roads/streets/lanes/areas and their adjoining footpath/public realm areas at Ardee Main Street (N2) including Golf Links Road, Dundalk Road, Main Street, Irish Street, Market Street, Castle Street, Boat Trench, Bridge St, Fosters Close, Markethouse Lane, Tierney St, O' Carroll St, Barrett's Lane (N52), William Street, Hale Street and Ash Walk (in the townland of Townparks); the former railway lands off O'Carroll Street (in the townlands of Dawsons Demesne / Cappocksgreen) and lands off Tierney St. (in the townland of Cappocksgreen). It is noted that the application site is partly located within Ardee Architectural Conservation Area and in the vicinity of Ardee Castle (National Monument LH017-101018, Protected Structure LHS017-017 (NIAH Reg. No. 13823004)) and Hatches Castle (Recorded Monument LH017-101015, Protected Structure LHS017-009 (NIAH Reg. No. 13823055)).

2.3 Description of the Plan

- 2.3.1 The proposed development comprises the following:
- 1) Public realm improvement works at Ardee Main Street (N2) and surrounding streets as listed above (in the townland of Townparks) comprising: new hard landscaping including resurfacing; soft landscaping including new tree planting; street furniture; new pedestrian connections and footpaths; Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS); new cycle parking; tactile paving; and undergrounding of services.
 - 2) Road improvement works at Ardee Main Street (N2) and surrounding streets as listed above (in the townland of Townparks) to include: alteration of road alignment; realignment of Golf Links Road / N2 junction; raised junctions; resurfacing; shared surface treatments; revised access arrangements; pedestrian crossing points; reduction and rationalisation of the layout / orientation of existing on-street public car parking provision; installation of electric vehicle charging points; new bus stop shelters; road signs; and new public lighting.
 - 3) Resurfacing of Bridge Street Bridge (NIAH Reg. No. 13823008 / Protected Structure Ref: LHS017/056) at Bridge Street.
 - 4) Construction of a new segregated cycle lanes at Main Street (N2) (in the townland of Townparks), Ardee provided as dedicated one-way and two-way bi-directional cycle lanes and associated cycle parking stands.
 - 5) Alterations to the existing car parking layout at Ardee Library off Ardee Main Street (N2) (in the townland of Townparks) to create in part a public plaza including retention of Sir Frederick Foster Memorial Fountain scheduled monument (NIAH Reg No. 13823042 / Protected Structure Ref: LHS017/070) and realignment of existing access road to Foster Close.
 - 6) Extension of Ash Walk Road (extending approx. 60m to the west and upgrades to existing junction to the Supervalu car park / services access off Ash Walk Road.

- 7) Development of a woodland walk within St. Joseph's Hospital Grounds (in the townland of Townparks) including: resurfacing of existing informal path within St. Joseph's Hospital grounds (Protected Structure Ref: LHS017/035); a new footpath on agricultural land linking St. Joseph's Hospital grounds to Ash Walk and Golf Links Road; resurfacing of existing footpath linking St. Joseph's Hospital grounds to the rear of Ardee Day Care Centre to create new pedestrian access point onto Ardee Main Street; and new soft landscaping, boundary treatments, bollards and signage.
- 8) Construction of a new community park at lands known as the Old Railway Lands off O'Carroll Street (in the townlands of Dawsons Demesne / Cappocksgreen) including: hard and soft landscape areas; community garden; equipped children's play space; pedestrian footpaths and kerbing; storage container; proposed boundary treatments; street furniture; public lighting; Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS); heritage enhancement including demarcation of former location of Ardee Town Wall with engraved natural stone paving; new signage; construction of a new vehicle / pedestrian access and associated gate piers to O'Carroll Street and associated works; and provision of car parking and circulation space within community park.
- 9) Retention of existing railway heritage infrastructure off O'Carroll Street (in the townland of Dawsons Demesne) to provide a public amenity space.
- 10) Construction of a community sports and recreation facility and single storey sports pavilion building (7m high) on lands off Tierney St. (in the townland of Cappocksgreen) to include: a 200m all-weather running track; bowling green and associated flood lighting and boundary treatments; hard and soft landscape areas; Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS); new pedestrian access points to existing old railway walk retaining pedestrian linkage to Old Railway Lands; provision of new car parking; new public lighting; street furniture; and signage.
- 11) All associated site works including: drainage; undergrounding of services; and all other associated ancillary development works.

2.3.2 The project concentrates on four key character areas in Ardee which include the Main Street /Ash Walk, Old Railway Lands, Amenity Lands and Woodland Walk. A full description of the proposed development is included in Chapter 5 of the EIAR accompanying this application. Below includes a summary description of each Character Area.

- **Character Area 1 - Main Street and Ash Walk:** this area primarily consists of buildings, roads, car parks, and other paved surfaces. None have any substantial vegetation cover, so they are of negligible nature conservation value.
- **Character Area 2 – Old Railway Lands:** The Old Railway Lands is currently unmaintained grassland with semi-mature trees located sporadically throughout the space. The remains of the former railway platform are visible in the west portion of the site. The boundaries of the site are currently identified by existing fences and walls. The site is currently maintained grassland with semi-mature trees located sporadically throughout the space. The remains of the former

railway platform are visible in the west portion of the site. A pedestrian walkway traverses the site from Sean O'Carroll Street in the north before exiting the site via the route of the old railway line to the east of the site. A second pedestrian access is located to the south east linking the site to Tierney Street. Character Area 2 is linked to Character Area 3 via an existing pedestrian footpath along the former railway line.

- **Character Area 3 – Amenity Lands:** most of the Amenity Lands area is unmaintained grassland. The northern boundary is marked by a row of existing mature trees, whereas the northeastern corner is currently used for the storage of building materials by Louth County Council. A roadway traverses the centre of the site in a west to east direction linking Tierney Street to Ardee Wastewater Treatment Plant. The west boundary of the site is marked by a post and wire fence and existing hedge / mature trees. The southern boundary of the site follows the alignment of the River Dee/
- The Woodland Walk travels in a north to south direction in the west of the town linking Ash Walk to Golf Links Road. The route begins directly to the west of the existing Supervalu overflow car park and travels north through agricultural land towards the wooded area surrounding St. Josephs Hospital. The route follows the alignment of an established path through the wooded area and connects to Golf Link Road in the north. This portion of the route is currently used as agricultural land and an existing path through the wooded area.

2.4 Other nearby developments (potential in-combination effects)

- 2.4.1 The project area covers a number of locations in Ardee Town. In Map 2.1 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027, these areas are zoned for a range of uses, including open space, residential, town centre and general employment. The project accords with the Strategic Settlement Strategy Policy Objectives for Ardee and policy objectives of the plan, and it will also provide a more-detailed plan for future development in the area.
- 2.4.2 Live and recently approved planning applications in the vicinity of the Site were reviewed on the online planning records of Louth County Council. The Site is extensive, so a large number of applications were found for small-scale works such as residential modifications or changes-of-use, however, these applications are not considered to have in-combination impacts with the proposed application. In terms of larger scale projects, a SHD application (272 no. residential units) was made by the Ardee Partnership (Ref No 22228). This application site occurs south-east of Ardee Town, but it is not considered to have in-combination impacts with the proposed application as it does not occur within the vicinity of the proposed Character Areas or their associated works. Another housing development application was made by Vincent Mathews (Ref No 22616) on land at Cappocksgreen, in proximity north to the Old Railway Lands and Amenity Lands. The housing development is relatively small scale (38 units) and no potential sources of in-combination effect were noted for this housing development and the proposed application.

2.4.3



25/60141

2.4.4 **Table 1** provides details on relevant planning applications outside, but within the immediate vicinity of the subject site. **Figure 2** shows the identified planning applications in the context of the application site.

2.4.5 We consider that these applications will not have a direct impact on the proposed development, however they have been considered as part of the design concept evolution to ensure that the Ardee 2040 Regeneration Project maximises the potential to link that will build upon and improve existing and future residential and community infrastructure, where possible.

Figure 2: Map Showing Location of Relevant Planning Applications in the Immediate Area

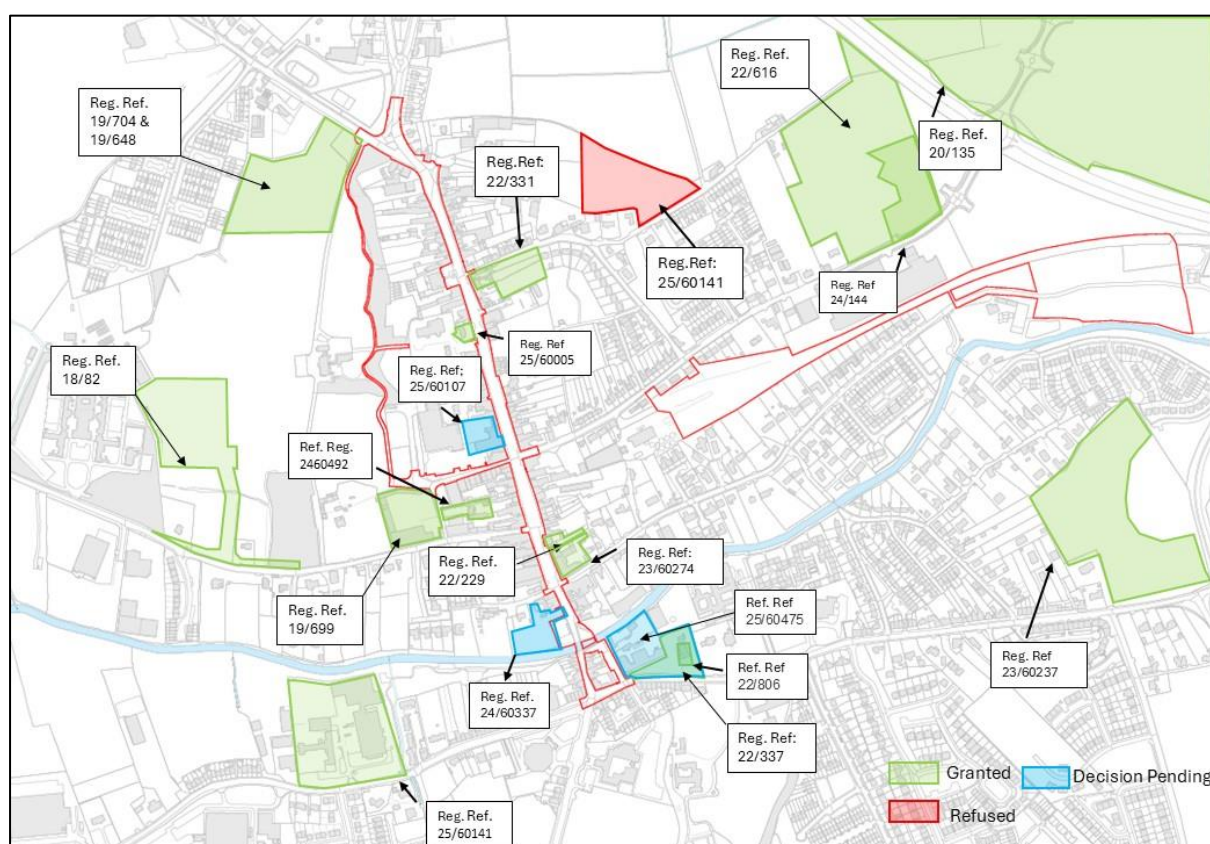


Table 1: Relevant Planning History in the Immediate Area

Planning Reference	Site Location	Proposed Development (as per planning application description on Planning Authority portal)	Decision
2560141	John St, Ardee, Co. Louth	Permission for a two-storey extension to the south and west elevations of the existing factory, incorporating first floor offices and ground floor factory extension. A small single storey infill extension to the existing canteen to the south elevation, upgrading the existing south elevation with new cladding to match proposed finishes, together with all ancillary and associated site development works at our existing premises at John Street, Ardee, Co. Louth. The	Granted 07/05/2025

		development is within the confines of a protected structure Ref LHS017-063.	
2460492	Ashwalk, Ardee	Permission for the construction of 2no. buildings (Blocks A & B). Proposed Block A is a three storey mixed use building comprising of a ground floor retail unit and a one bedroom apartment with vertical access area (stairs & lift) to the first and second floor residential accommodation; the first floor to consist of 2no. one bedroom apartments; the second floor to consist of 2no. one bedroom apartments. Proposed Block B consists of a two storey residential building comprising of 2no. ground floor apartments (1no. one bedroom & 1no. two bedroom) with vertical access area (stairs) to the first floor residential accommodation comprising of 2no. apartments (1no. one bedroom & 1no. two bedroom); a landscaped courtyard between Blocks A & B, ancillary bin, bike and bulk storage areas, connections to the existing adjoining public water and drainage systems and all associated site development works. Note the proposed site / buildings in question are located within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) as outlined in the current Louth County Council Development Plan -2021 - 2027	Granted 18/10/2024
2560532	Black Ridge, Townparks, Ardee	Permission for the development to comprise of a total 45no. residential units as follows: (a) The provision of a total of 20no. two storey & 3no. three storey dwellings which will consist of 20no. 3 bed units and 3no. 4 bed units. (b) The provision of a total of 22no. apartments units consisting of 11no. 1 bed units and 11no. 2 bed units across 3no. buildings. (Block A comprises 4no. 1 bed & 4no. 2 bed units over two storeys, Block B comprises 3no. 1 bed & 3no. 2 bed units over two storeys, Block C comprises 4no. 1 bed & 4no. 2 bed units over two storeys). (c) Provision of associated car parking at surface level via a combination of in-curtilage parking for dwellings and via on-street parking for the apartment units. (d) Provision of electric vehicle charge points with associated site infrastructure ducting to provide charge points for residents throughout the site. (e) Provision of associated bicycle & bin storage facilities at surface level adjoining the apartment units. (f) Creation of a new vehicular and pedestrian access from The Black Ridge road with associated upgrade works to sections of the existing adjoining access (Black Ridge) road including the provision of a new footpath. (g) Provision of internal access roads and footpaths and associated works. (h) Provision of residential communal & public open space areas to include a formal play area along with all hard and soft landscape works with public lighting, planting and boundary treatments to include boundary walls, railings & fencing. (i) Provision of 1no. ESB substation. (j) Internal site works and attenuation systems including a pumping station. (k) All ancillary site development / construction works to facilitate foul, water and service networks for connection to the existing foul, water, gas and ESB networks. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared and will be submitted to the Planning Authority with the application.	Refused (20/10/2025)

2560005	Market Street, Ardee, Co. Louth	Permission for (1) the Change of Use of the former Health Centre to a Community Support Centre, (2) demolition of tiled hipped roof structure including 2No chimneys & replacement with a slated gabled roof structure, (3) demolition of single storey flat roof structure to east elevation (front) & replacement with larger single storey flat roofed structure, (4) flat roofed extension to west (rear) elevation to house services room, (5) elevational changes including alterations to existing window & door openings, new window & door openings, removal of wet dashing & replacement with a rendered finish, (6) site development works.	Granted 31/03/2025
24144	Potters Field, Cappocksgreen, Ardee, Co Louth	Permission for 47 no. two storey houses comprising 3 no. detached houses, 32 no. semi-detached houses and 12 terraced units. Works will include all associated landscaping and site development works on a site of 1.27 hectares	Granted 24/03/2025
2360237	Lands at Dawsons Demesne, Ardee, Co. Louth	Large-scale Residential Development (LRD) Application. Permission for development to consist of the provision of a total of 122 no. residential units along with provision of a creche. Particulars of the development comprise as follows: (a) site excavation works to facilitate the proposed development to include excavation and general site preparation works. (b) the infilling, raising and reprofiling of ground levels within the site as required with inert materials. (c) the provision of a total of 48 no. residential dwellings which will consist of 2 no. 2 bed units, 44 no. 3 bed units and 2 no. 4 bed units. The dwellings range in height from single storey to three storeys. (d) The provision of a total of 74 no. apartments / duplex units consisting of 17 no. 1 bed units, 32 no. 2 bed units and 25 no. 3 bed units. The apartment blocks range in height from two storey to three storey in height. (e) Provision of a creche at ground floor within apartment block H. (f) provision of associated car parking at surface level via a combination of in-curtilage parking for dwellings and via on-street parking for the creche, duplexes and apartment units. (g) provision of electrical vehicle charge points with associated site infrastructure ducting to provide charge points for residents throughout the site. (h) provision of associated bicycle storage facilities at surface level throughout the site and bin storage facilities. (i) creation of a new access point from Castleguard Road with associated works to include for a cycleway and footpath to the southern and eastern site boundaries. (j) provision of internal access roads and footpaths and associated works. (k) provision of residential communal open space areas to include a formal play area along with all hard and soft landscape works with public lighting, planting and boundary treatments to include boundary walls, railings and fencing. (l) provision of 1 no. ESB substation. (m) internal site works and attenuation systems which will include for provision of a hydrocarbon and silt interceptor prior to discharge into the surface water network in Castleguard Manor. (n) all ancillary site development / construction works to facilitate foul, water, and service networks for connection to the existing foul, water, and ESB networks.	Granted 21/12/2023 Appeal decision – granted modified (Ref: ABP-318163-23)

2360274	Castle Street and Tierney Street, Ardee	<p>Permission for development as follows: 1. Demolition of rear projections and outbuildings associated and within the curtilage of the protected structures (Former Ardee Bread Company protected structure reference 13823007 and the former Sheridan's Services house protected structure reference 13823006) along with demolition of the boundary wall to Tierney Street. 2. Construction of the following:(a) 2no. apartment buildings ranging in height from 2 storey to 4 storeys which will comprise a total 20no. apartments of which there are 6no. 1 bed and 14no. 2bed units, all with balconies or ground floor terraces along with provision of a communal space at roof level. (b) The provision of 1no. 3bed semi-detached dwelling and associated garden area. (c) The adaptation and change of use of the former Ardee Bread Company building (protected structure reference 13823007) to provide for 2no. retail units at ground floor, 2no. 1bed apartments at first floor level and 1no. 1bed duplex apartment. Associated refurbishment works of the former Ardee Bread Company building are also to be carried out. (d) The adaptation and change of use of the former Sheridans Services house (protected structure reference 13823006) to provide for a total of 1no. 2bed apartments and 1no. 1bed apartment. Associated refurbishment works of the former Sheridans Services house are also to be carried out. (e) The creation of a new pedestrian entrance from Tierney Street. (f)Associated bin and bicycle storage facility. (g) Provision of internal footpaths and communal space areas at ground level to include all hard and soft landscape works with planting and boundary treatments;(h) Internal site works and attenuation systems (i)All ancillary site development/construction works to facilitate foul, water and service networks for connection to the existing foul, water and ESB networks. The proposed works relate to the protected structures within the site (Former Ardee Bread Company protected structure reference 13823007 and the former Sheridan's Services house (protected structure reference 13823006)</p>	<p>Granted (08/07/2024)</p> <p>3rd Party Planning Appeal – appeal withdrawn (Ref: ABP-319595-24)</p>
22806	De La Salle House, Moorehall, Townparks, Ardee	<p>Permission for development at Protected Structure LHS017-031, consisting of alterations to the previously approved development - Ref. No. 22337, which was for (1) the change of use from a monastery to a boutique hotel and restaurant, (2) internal alterations and restoration of the existing building, (3) erection of a part 2, part 1.5 storey extension to the side and rear, (4) creation of a glazed courtyard between the house and outbuilding, (5) formation of a new car park and adjustment of site boundaries to allow for vehicular circulation and (6) all associated site works, including connections to public foul drainage system. The alterations relate to the building only and affect the plan layout at ground and first floor levels and elevations to the rear and sides of the building. The alterations will result in a reduction of floor area from that previously approved</p>	<p>Granted – 1/12/2022</p>
22331	Market Street and Market	<p>Permission for the demolition of 3 no. habitable dwellings/2 no. with ground floor shop units and existing out buildings, demolition of existing boundary walls to Market House Lane,</p>	<p>Granted 17/04/2023</p>

	House Lane, Ardee	alteration to existing road entrance to Market House Lane and the construction of 2 no. retail units and 28 no. housing units comprising a mix of apartments, terraced dwellings including: (i) Block A: 8 no. apartment units (House Type E,F,G,H,I), comprising of two one-bed apartments over 2 no. ground floor retail spaces, 4 no. two-bedroom duplex apartments and 2 no. three-bedroom duplex apartments with own door access; (ii) Block B: 10 no. terraced houses comprising 5 no. two-bedroom and 5 no. three-bedroom houses (House Type A,B); (iii) Block C: 4 no. terraced houses comprising 1 no. two-bedroom and 3 no. three-bedroom houses (House Type A,B); (iv) Block D: 3 no. terraced houses, comprising of 2 no. three-bedroom and 1 no. four-bedroom houses (House Type D,J); (v) Block E: 3 no. terraced houses, comprising of 3 no. four-bedroom houses (House Type C). The proposed development will also include the provision of surface car parking (28 no. spaces including 2 no. accessible), bicycle parking (44 no. spaces), bin stores, private open space, public open space, foul and surface water drainage, street lighting, boundary treatments and all ancillary site development works necessary to facilitate the development, on a site located within an ACA *SFI received 23.03.23 which provides for, inter alia, a reduction from 2 to 1 no. retail units, an increase from 28 to 45 no. dwelling units and a reduction in site size to 0.4587ha****	Appeal Decision – granted with modifications 28/08/2024 (Ref: ABP-317116-23)
22228	Bridgewater, Rathgory, Mulladrillen, Drogheda Road, Ardee, Co Louth (Location not shown at Figure 3.6)	SHD Stage 3. Stage 2 Ref. No. 20/759 - See www.bridgewater.shd.ie for details. The Ardee Partnership, intend to apply to An Coimisiún Pleanála for permission. Development will consist of: A) construction of 272 no. residential units comprising 206 houses 66 no. duplex units (3 storeys), with private open space, B) A part 1, part 2 no. storey crèche and playground and a single storey community building adjacent at a community hub accessed from Bridgewater Avenue served by car parking on Bridgewater Green and Bridgewater Avenue; C) A Park located in the north of the site extending to accessed from community hub and between duplex B & C at Bridgewater Avenue, with 2 no. pedestrian links to public park adjoining to the west and 1 no. pedestrian footpath extending to the north perimeter at Hale Street, with reservation for a future link road to the east facilitated in the north section of park; D) Works to the Rathgory Tributary comprising realignment of the channel and regrading and reprofiling of land, implementation of 2 vehicular crossings and provision of a riparian corridor based around the open watercourse comprising landscaping and planting with access to the watercourse provided for maintenance purposes and 1 no. pedestrian and cyclist crossing; E) A series of public open spaces; open spaces will provide a mix of hard and soft landscaping, pedestrian and cycle access and a range of activities	Granted 15/08/2023

		<p>F) Provision of shared surfaces, landscaped streetscapes including planting and landscaping at two neighbourhood streets in the southern part of the site, with roads provided to site boundaries to the east, south and west to facilitate possible future connections;</p> <p>G) All landscaping and boundary treatments;</p> <p>H) Roads and access infrastructure taken from Bridgegate Avenue (permitted Ref: 10/174; ABP Ref: PL15.238053, provision of a bus stop on the south side of Bridgegate Avenue adjacent to community hub and provision of cycle lanes at this location (continued through Public Open Space 01); a total of 480 no. car parking spaces (362 no. serving houses, 84 no. serving duplexes, 23 no. serving crèche and community building and 11 no. visitor and public open spaces), a total of 296 no. bicycle parking spaces ;</p> <p>I) Provision of 2 ESB substations, drainage and services infrastructure, lighting, SUDS drainage. An EIAR and a NIS have been prepared</p>	
22616	Cappocksgreen, Ardee, Co Louth	<p>Permission for amendments to previously granted permission Ref. No. 08/1220 (extended under Ref. No. 19/178), amended under Ref. No. 21/20 and 21/1190, for</p> <p>1. Replacement of 32 no. 2 storey 3 and 4 bedroom dwelling houses, (6 number at 1-2 and 15-18 Potters Field Close; 17 number at 1-17 Potters Field Walk; 4 number at 22-27 and 33-34 Potters Field Green) with 38 no. 2, 3 and 4 bedroom revised residential dwellings, 2 storeys in height and their associated site works.</p> <p>2. Modifications to 7 no. house types at 4-10 Potters Field Avenue to recently approved house types A & A1 from granted permission 2120, also involving minor amendments to rear gardens of 1, 2 and 4 Potters Field Avenue.</p> <p>3. Revised naming and numbering of dwellings to include proposed amendments. All on site of 4.6 hectares at Cappocksgreen, bounded at north by N33 Ardee Link Road and south by Sean O'Carroll Street</p>	Granted 17/10/2022
22/337	De La Salle House, Moorehall, Townparks, Ardee, Co Louth	<p>Permission for development to Protected Structure LHS017-031, De La Salle House to consist of (1) the change of use from a monastery to a boutique hotel and restaurant; (2) internal alterations and restoration of the existing building; (3) erection of a part two storey, part storey and a half extension to the side and rear; (4) creation of a glazed courtyard between the house and outbuilding; (5) formation of a new car park and adjustment of site boundaries to allow for vehicular circulation and (6) all associated site works, including connections to public foul drainage system</p>	Granted 18/07/2022
22229	Ardee Castle, Main Street, Ardee	<p>Part 8 - Louth County Council hereby gives notice of its intention to carry out refurbishment works to Ardee Castle, a Protected Structure comprising the Castle, Bridewell building to the rear and modern courtyard extension (Reference Lhs 017-017, NIAH 13823004 and a National Monument and Protected Structures and are within the Ardee Conservation Area as designated in the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027. This application is an</p>	Granted 02/06/2022

		amendment to previously approved Part 8 procedure namely Ardee Castle Refurbishment and Access Improvement Works (Ref:17/137) and comprises the following over and above the previously approved Part 8 procedure: - Altered and extended external stair, lift and services core to height of 4 floors to rear of buildings providing universal access and egress to ground and all upper levels of the building. - All associated site development works.	
20135	Cappocksgreen, Ardee	EXTENSION OF DURATION OF 09/509: Ten year Permission for the construction of: A light industrial / business park of 43,418sqm (gross floor area), consisting of 29 no. light industrial/ warehouse buildings ranging in size from 648sqm to 1944sqm (gfa), each subdividable in up to 8 units, 1 no. building of 1080sqm (gfa) for restaurant and gym use and 1 no. building of 3,236sqm (gfa) for builders providers' use; Associated surface car parking (1,002 spaces); Associated internal road network; Access from new roundabout to N33; 8 no. ESB substations; Entrance totem sign of 5.0m in height; Re-routing of a 38Kv power line traversing the site; Landscaping works including along the River Dee, Captain's Stream & N33 boundary; Foul and surface water drainage, connection to existing public sewer network and all associated site works. An EIS will be submitted to the Planning Authority with the planning application, all on a 19.82 ha site bounded by the N33 to the south, the River Dee to the east, and agricultural lands to the north and west	Granted - 05/03/2020
19704	St Joseph's Hospital, Golf Links Road, Ardee, Co Louth	Construction of a new single storey ambulance base and upgrading of the existing access road within the site to a two-way road with a new 3m wide shared pedestrian/cycleway path and associated site development works.	Granted 20/02/2020
19699	Jervis Street, Ardee, Co Louth	Development of an Aldi Store with new access road from Jervis Street.	Granted 08/10/2020
19648	St Joseph's Hospital, Golf Links Road, Ardee, Co Louth	Development of new community nursing unit/residential care unit.	Granted 30/09/2021
1882	Jervis Street, Ardee, Co. Louth	PART 8: Notice of Intention to carry out works on a site measuring approximately 2.37 hectares at Jervis Street, Ardee, County Louth. The development will consist of: (i) Construction of a single storey primary school building, Ardee Educate Together National School, (1923 sq.m. gross floor area); with associated external signage. The constituent elements of the new school building comprise: (a) a single storey south facing wing containing 8 classrooms and associated sanitary accommodation, (b) an east facing double class special needs unit incorporating multi-sensory	Granted 05/04/2018

room, para-educational room, central activities room and specialist sanitary accommodation and (c) a one and half storey general purpose room, library, multi-purpose room, special tuition, general sanitary and administration rooms within a central entrance wing. The immediate school site development works include (d) a single hard ball court, junior hard play, sensory play and sensory garden with general grass play areas (e) vehicular access to a bus set-down area, 19 car parking spaces and 2 universally accessible car parking spaces and (f) 22 bicycle racks for 44 bicycles.

The general site estate development includes an access boulevard, pedestrian pavements and cycle lanes to be constructed from Jervis Street to service the school site and make provision for future development within the existing adjacent estate. The existing stone wall on Jervis Street shall be taken and realigned to form a new public access to this boulevard. The proposed development also includes hard and soft landscaping, boundary fencing, site attenuation, associated site services integration and services diversions. The areas for the proposed works are within the curtilage of a number of Protected Structures located adjacent or abutting the subject site, and includes the removal of freestanding gates, boundary walls and stone square piers, (Protected Structure Reference No. Lhs 017-068 NIAH 13823034) along the north side of Jervis Street within the urban boundary of Ardee Local Area Plan. The proposed development is also in the Ardee Architectural Conservation Area. Louth County Council has undertaken Appropriate Assessment Screening, the details of which are available to the general public.

2.5 Planned Projects

- 2.5.1 The EPA document Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports states that “*It may also be appropriate to consider other projects that are planned but not yet permitted*”. On this basis, this assessment also took into consideration relevant planned projects.
- 2.5.2 **Table 2** provides details of planned projects (i.e. projects that do not have planning permission) have been identified at the time of writing of this AA Screening Report (**see Figure 2**). We consider that these applications will not have a direct impact on the proposed development, however they have been considered as part of the design concept evolution to ensure that the Ardee 2040 Regeneration Project maximises the potential to link that will build upon and improve existing and future residential and community infrastructure, where possible.

Table 2: Pending Planning Applications

Planning Reference	Address	Proposed Development (as per planning application description on Planning Authority portal)	Decision
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2560475	Moorehall, Ardee	<p>Planning permission is sought for a mixed-use development on the sites of disused buildings of Odea Agri Seeds Limited (listed on the records of protected structures: LHS017-060) and the De La Salle Monastery (listed on the Record of Protected Structures: LHS017-031) in Moorehall, Townparks, Ardee, Co. Louth. The development applied for consists of: (A) Demolition or partial demolition of existing derelict disused buildings and outbuildings / sheds on the existing site. (B) Construction of a 4-Storey commercial building to cater for a restaurant and retail unit at ground floor level and office spaces on upper floors. (C) Construction of a 3-Storey residential building that consists of 9No. of apartments with the following configuration: o 1No. - 1 Bedroom (Studio Apartment) o 6No. - 2 Bedroom Apartments o 2No. - 3 Bedroom Apartments (D) Demolition of the structurally unsound concrete extensions and the 2-storey corner building attached to the existing protected structure (LHS017-060) and form new 2-Storey extensions to the sides within the existing building footprint. (E) Renovation and change of use of the existing disused Odea Agri Seeds building to form 12 No. of apartments with the following configuration: o 5No. - 1 Bedroom Apartments o 4No. - 2 Bedroom Apartments o 3No. - 3 Bedroom Apartments The development shall include removal of all derelict internal floors and creation of additional openings on external walls. It is also proposed to raise the existing roof to create a band of glazing around the outer profile of the building and to improve the floor heights inside the dwellings. (F) Conversion and extension of the existing Silos building to form a 22 bedroomed hotel building that will function ancillary to the already granted 18 bedroomed hotel proposed in De La Salle house (ref. 22806) (G) Modify the entrance to the site with the public road on William Street and to create internal vehicular and pedestrian paved routes and car parking. (H) Revised car parking layout from the previously approved application (ref. 22/806) for De La Salle house. We intend to maintain the one-way system and integrate additional parking spaces to accommodate the expanded development needs. (I) Construction of refuse storage, bicycle storage, public plaza, and river side park. (J) Repairs to riverbank wall. (K) Permission is also sought to connect to the existing drainage and services and all ancillary site works associated with the above.</p>	Decision Pending – FI Request (5/09/2025)
2460337	Boat Trench, Ardee, Co. Louth	<p>Permission for the demolition of a dwelling house and the erection of 22 No. Older people and persons with limited mobility housing units consisting of 5 no. blocks of single storey semi-detached and terrace buildings comprising 18 no. one bedroom units and 4 no. two bedroom units. The development also includes the provision of a new access road & pedestrian access leading to public road, carparking spaces, covered bicycle spaces, bin storage enclosure, site lighting and revised site boundary treatments with associated site works. To connect to council water mains and public foul sewage with associated siteworks. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will accompany the planning application</p>	Decision pending.

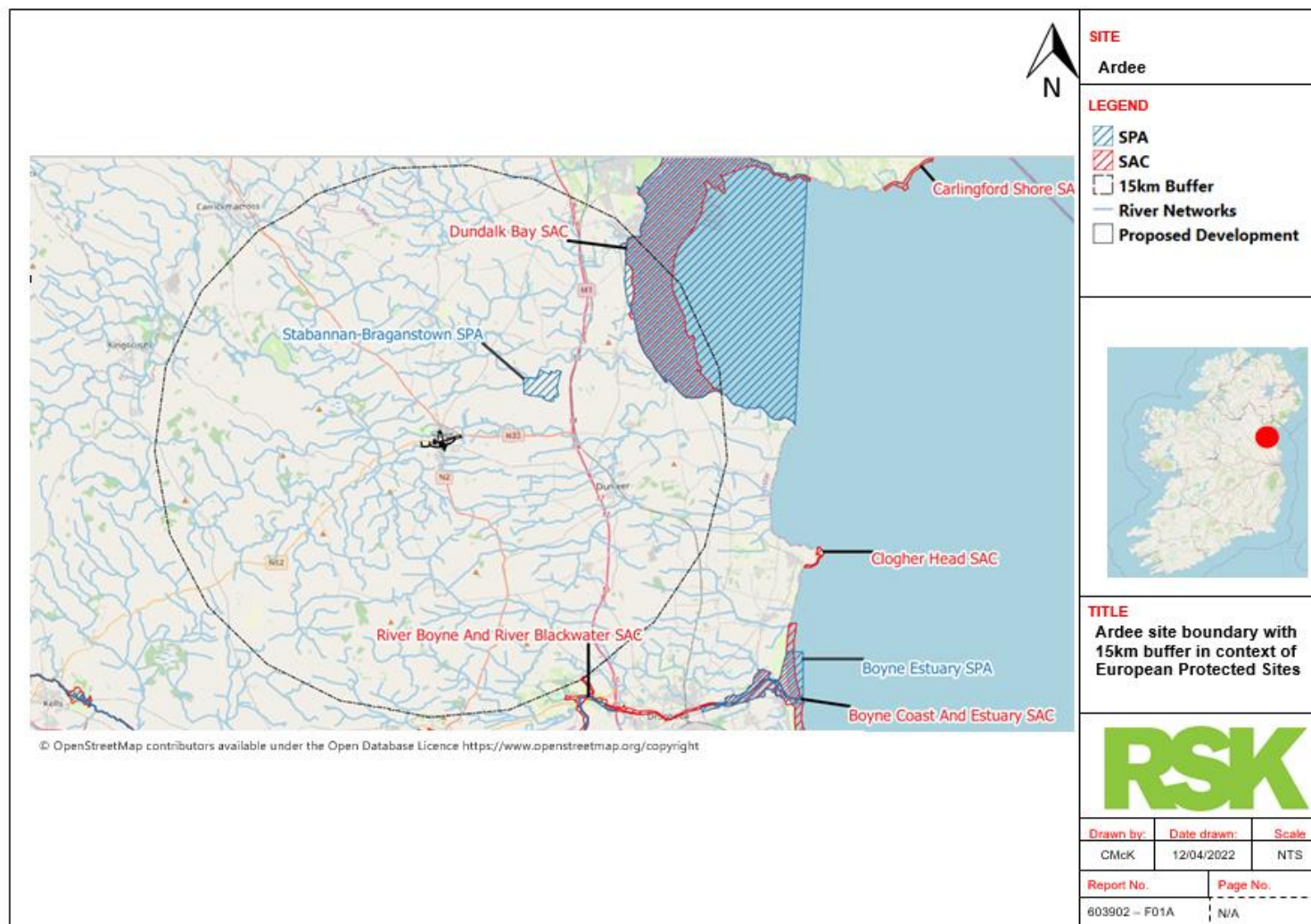
2.6 Identification of Natura 2000 sites within the zone of influence

- 2.6.1 There are no Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the site and therefore no direct habitat loss of any Natura 200 site will occur.
- 2.6.2 Due to the scale of the development a zone of influence of 15 km was considered for appropriate assessment purposes. This was based on application of the source–pathway–receptor model to the project, as well as a supplementary literature review of potential impacts of possible pollutants (e.g. Wear 2021).
- 2.6.3 Though critically important information on the sites is included in **Table 3**, the assessment has been based on the site information sheets available on-line from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Natura 2000 Standard Data Form.

Table 3: Natura 2000 sites within 15 km of the site.

Natura 2000 Site	Area (Ha)	Site No.	Distance (Km)	Qualifying Feature(s)
Stabannan-Braganstown SPA	252	4091	4.3 km north-east	Key habitats: agricultural grasslands on alluvial plains Special Conservation Interests: greylag goose (wintering populations)
Dundalk Bay SAC	13238	455	11.2 km north-east	Annex I habitats: estuaries, mudflats and sandflats, perennial vegetation of stony banks, <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand, Atlantic salt meadows, Mediterranean salt meadows Annex II species: none
Dundalk Bay SPA	5196	4026	11.2km north-east	Key habitats: intertidal / coastal wetlands Special Conservation Interests: great-crested grebe, greylag goose, light-bellied brent goose, shelduck, teal, mallard, pintail, common scoter, red-breasted merganser, oystercatcher, ringed plover, golden plover, grey plover, lapwing, knot, dunlin, black-tailed godwit, bar-tailed godwit, curlew, redshank, black-headed gull, common gull, herring gull (all are wintering populations)
River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC	2318	2299	14.8 km south- east	Annex I habitats: Alkaline fens, alluvial forests with <i>Alnus gluticosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> . Annex II species: Otter, Atlantic salmon, river lamprey

Figure 3: Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the Ardee site boundary



2.7 Identification of potential pathways for direct impacts

- 2.7.1 Given the distance of the development proposals from any Natura 2000 sites no obvious impact pathways for direct impacts have been identified.

2.8 Identification of potential pathways for indirect impacts

- 2.8.1 Indirect impacts can occur if there is a viable pathway between the source (the site) and the receptor (the habitats and species for which a Natura 2000 site has been designated). The most common pathway for impacts is surface water, e.g. if a pollutant reaches a river and is carried downstream into a Natura 2000 site. Other potential pathways are groundwater, air (e.g. airborne dust or sound waves), or land (e.g. flow of liquids, vibration). The zone of effect for hydrological impacts can be several kilometres, but for air and land it is considered to be rarely more than c.100 m. An appraisal of potential pathways for impacts on Natura 2000 sites is provided below.
- 2.8.2 How far a pollution impact is felt from a site depends in part on the size of the pollutant release – larger releases may disperse further. It is therefore important to consider the relatively large size of the proposed development at Ardee (e.g. compared to very common development types and those historic applications immediately adjacent to the site), which in turn means that relatively large quantities of materials (whether soil or construction materials) are involved, which makes large pollutant spills possible, albeit unlikely given that standard pollution prevention control measures will be in place. This lengthens the distance from the site at which Natura 2000 sites are liable to be significantly affected.
- 2.8.3 There are four Natura 2000 sites within 15 km of the site, these are listed in Table 3. One site lies approximately 4.5km to the east of the site (Stabannan-Braganstown SPA), two of which lie approximately 11 km to the northeast of the site (Dundalk Bay SAC and Dundalk Bay SPA) and one just over 14.5km to the south (River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC).
- 2.8.4 Stabannan-Braganstown SPA 's qualifying habitat features relate to wintering greylag geese (*Anser anser*); Dundalk Bay SAC's to a number of intertidal habitat types, Dundalk Bay SPA's to intertidal and coastal wetlands and breeding bird assemblages and River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC to alkaline fens, alluvial forests, Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), river lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*).
- 2.8.5 Indirect pathways may exist in the possibility of diffuse groundwater flow from the site into a locally important aquifer facilitated by the site geology (see 2.1.5). However, given the distances from Natura 2000 sites to the Site (the closest Natura 2000 site being the Stabannan-Braganstown SPA 4.5km away), it is considered highly unlikely that a link exists.
- 2.8.6 Airborne pollution pathways may also exist around the site, but the distances to the Natura 2000 sites would involve considerable attenuation of any pollutant release and any airborne pollutants are likely to have been deposited to ground surface before reaching the nearest Natura 2000 site.

- 2.8.7 There is no evident reason for materials to be moved by personnel or vehicles from the site to any of the Natura 2000 sites, other than accidentally with extremely remote probability. No records exist on site of any invasive non-native species therefore there can be no pathway for transference of such species to any Natura 2000 site.
- 2.8.8 These statements encompass all the sites in **Table 3**. In summary there seems to be no viable surface water or airborne pathway connecting the site to any of the Natura 2000 sites. Though a link may exist between the groundwater and Natura 2000 sites, this is considered unlikely given the distances involved.

2.9 Conservation objectives

- 2.9.1 The standard conservation objective for all SACs and SPAs in Ireland is “*to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the qualifying interests for which the SAC / SPA has been selected*”. In addition, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has produced detailed conservation objectives for the sites listed in **Table 3**. They can be viewed on the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (<http://www.npws.ie/protected-sites>) but are not reproduced here in the interests of brevity.

3.0 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

3.1 Direct impacts

- 3.1.1 The site is not within, adjacent to, or near any Natura 2000 sites, so there is no risk of loss, fragmentation, direct damage or direct disturbance to qualifying habitat types within any Natura 2000 sites, nor to any qualifying species populations while resident there.
- 3.1.2 Of the qualifying species associated with adjacent Natura 2000 sites a number are sufficiently mobile to range over large distances for purposes such as foraging or roosting (hence to 10-15 km zone of influence adopted for the assessment). Such movements however are likely to be transitional and of minimal impact to the site (e.g. dispersal).
- 3.1.3 Otters can travel considerable distances from appropriate foraging habitats to rest sites. Although this is generally capped at no more than 1km and mostly within 500m (Vincent Wildlife Trust Ireland 2021 and Chanin 2003). Otters may have home ranges of up to 32km (NatureScot 2022, Kruuk 2006) so while it is not unfeasible for the Site to be part of the home range for otters designated in the River Boyne and Blackwater SAC it is highly unlikely given the fact that the SAC is in a different river system and the urban context of the site. In addition, no signs of otters were recorded from the Site during the Phase 1 Habitat Survey although records do exist of otters in the River Dee. In summary while they are likely to be otters on the River Dee, they are likely to prefer foraging and denning in habitat less prone to disturbance as would be the case on Site given its urban location, and are unlikely to be the populations considered to be a feature of interest of the River Boyne and Blackwater SAC.
- 3.1.4 The context of the site in Ardee is not suitable for foraging roosting waders or wildfowl on account of the distance to the site from relevant Natura 2000 sites, more suitable intermediate habitat, and urban context of the site. Therefore, there would be no loss of supporting habitat (known as functionally linked land) for qualifying species while ranging outside their Natura 2000 sites. In addition, the birds recorded during the field survey of the Site did not include roosting waders or wildfowl. This is noted in the accompanying Biodiversity Chapter which notes the following bird species being present on site: woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*), feral pigeon (*Columba livia domestica*), jackdaw (*Coloeus monedula*), rook (*Corvus frugilegus*), hooded crow (*Corvus cornix*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), blackbird (*Turdus merula*), wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), pied wagtail (*Motacilla alba*), robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), great tit (*Parus major*) and kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*).

3.2 Indirect impacts

Potential changes in water quality (construction phase)

- 3.2.1 In the absence of mitigation, construction works may release various substances into surface water flows of diverse types. For example, soil disturbance may generate fine

sediments (silts), powdery construction materials such as cement may escape, and there may be accidental spills of oil or other toxic chemicals. Any of this could be harmful to aquatic and marine habitats and species if there is a pathway by which such substances can reach them. Surface water flows are the most likely pathway by which such substances might theoretically reach a Natura 2000 site at a distance.

- 3.2.2 Oil and related substances account for around 25% of all reported pollution events in Britain (NRA, 1994a). Oil and petroleum products are often complex mixtures of alkanes with low water solubility and low densities allowing them to float in rivers. Spills to rivers have been known to result in severe short-term impacts on macroinvertebrate fauna and fish discernible up to 4 km with ecological effects up to 10 km (Smith *et al.* 2010).
- 3.2.3 The project by its scale and nature is not of a kind that would entail the use of exceptionally toxic substances, nor very large amounts of less toxic substances. From Section 2.5, there is no likely pathway for pollution from oil spills (or similar spills of ordinary construction materials) to pass from the site to any Natura 2000 site.
- 3.2.4 The *Stabannan-Braganstown SPA* is located approx. 4.3 km north-east of the Site. It has been designated to protect a population of over 1,000 greylag geese that feed on alluvial plains at the confluence of the Rivers Glyde and Bawn. These watercourses are part of a separate river catchment to the River Dee, so a surface water pathway can be ruled out. Pathways via groundwater, air and land can be ruled out due to distance.
- 3.2.5 *Dundalk Bay SAC* and *Dundalk Bay SPA* are located 11.2km north-east of the Site. The SAC was designated to protect a range of coastal and intertidal habitats, and the SPA to protect a range of overwintering bird species that feed in intertidal areas. The SAC and SPA are located at the mouth of the River Dee, so there is a surface water pathway. However, any waterborne pollutants entering the river at Ardee would likely be deposited to ground before the Natura 2000 site is reached and be diluted by over 17 km of intervening watercourse, as well as by coastal waters, prior to reaching the qualifying interests of the SAC or SPA. On this basis, the surface water pathway is not considered to be feasible. Pathways via groundwater, air and land can be ruled out due to distance.
- 3.2.6 The *River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC* is located approx. 14.5 km south of the Site. It has been designated to protect otter, river lamprey, and Atlantic salmon and alkaline fens and alluvial forests. These watercourses are part of a separate river catchment to the River Dee, so a surface water pathway can be ruled out. Pathways via groundwater, air and land can be ruled out due to distance. This applies not only to impact on their qualifying features, but also to any prospect of impact on their wider non-qualifying interest, or their condition.
- 3.2.7 In summary, no potential indirect pathways were identified to any of the Natura 2000 site during the construction phase.

Potential changes in water quality (operational phase)

- 3.2.8 The project will involve creation of green space and works to improve pedestrian accessibility of the Ardee townscape. Therefore, current land use will not change much from the current status quo but what changes will occur will likely result in fewer potential polluting sources and more provision of more green space that is likely to help prevent any potential water quality pollution events (e.g. oil leaks from vehicles).
- 3.2.9 Conclusions in Section 3.2 are also relevant here in that no potential pathways were identified from the Site to any Natura 2000 site and therefore it is concluded no potential pathways exist via surface water during the operational phase.

Potential changes in air quality (construction and operational phase)

- 3.2.10 Distances between the site and the Natura 2000 sites are too large for releases of dust and other airborne pollutant to have any likely significant effect on any of the sites, in addition the habitat types are not especially vulnerable to airborne pollutants associated with construction activities.

Conservation Objectives

- 3.2.11 In largely dismissing any prospect of likely significant impact, the assessment in the preceding paragraphs further implies that the delivery of conservation objectives for the SACs and SPAs (Section 3.3) would be unaffected too.

3.3 Potential in-combination effects

- 3.3.1 The project area covers a number of locations within the town of Ardee. In Map 2.1 of the *Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027*, these areas are zoned for a range of uses, including open space, residential, town centre and Institutional Lands. The project will also provide a more-detailed plan for future development in the area.
- 3.3.2 Live and recently approved planning applications in the vicinity of the Site were reviewed on the online planning records of Louth County Council. The Site is extensive, so a large number of applications were found for small-scale works such as residential modifications or changes-of-use. However, no large-scale developments were identified, so no potential sources of in-combination effect were noted.

4.0 SCREENING STATEMENT

4.1 Conclusions

4.1.1 Section 3 of the OPR guidance (OPR 2021), states that the first stage of the AA process can have two possible conclusions:

No likelihood of significant effects. Appropriate assessment is not required, and the planning application can proceed as normal. Documentation of the screening process including conclusions reached and the basis on which decisions were made must be kept on the planning file.

Significant effects cannot be excluded. Appropriate assessment is required before permission can be granted. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be required in order for the project to proceed.

4.1.2 Having considered the indicative proposals, we conclude that this application meets the first conclusion, because there is no risk of likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites.

4.1.3 Therefore, with regard to Article 42 (7) of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations* 2011, it can be concluded on the basis of objective scientific information following screening, that the plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have no likely significant effect on any Natura 2000 site. Consequently, we conclude that Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

4.1.4 No account was taken of mitigation measures in concluding that this application can be screened out for Appropriate Assessment.

4.1.5 Though this screening assessment has looked primarily at effects on the qualifying features of Natura 2000 sites, the impact assessment also suggests that there will be no likely significant effects on their non-qualifying biodiversity interest or on their condition.

5.0 SCREENING STATEMENT SUMMARY

Table 4: Screening Statement Summary (Source Appendix A from the Office of the Planning Regulator (ORP) Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management).

STEP 1. Description of the project/proposal and local site characteristics:	
(a) File Reference No:	N.A.
(b) Brief description of the project or plan:	Public realm regeneration works on lands associated with the Ardee 2040 Regeneration Project
(c) Brief description of site characteristics:	Public realm works within the town centre and surrounds.
(d) Relevant prescribed bodies consulted: e.g. DHLGH (NPWS), EPA, OPW	N.A.
(e) Response to consultation:	N.A.

STEP 2. Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model and compilation of information on Qualifying Interests and conservation objectives.				
European Site (code)	List of Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest ¹	Distance from proposed development ² (km)	Connections (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
Stabannan-Braganstown SPA 4091	Key habitats: agricultural grasslands on alluvial plains Special Conservation Interests: greylag goose (wintering populations)	4.3 km north-east	None	No
Dundalk Bay SAC 455	Annex I habitats: estuaries, mudflats and sandflats, perennial vegetation of stony banks, <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand, Atlantic salt meadows,	11.2 km north-east	None	No

	<p>Mediterranean salt meadows</p> <p>Annex II species: none</p>			
<p>Dundalk Bay SPA 4026</p>	<p>Key habitats: intertidal / coastal wetlands</p> <p>Special Conservation Interests: great-crested grebe, greylag goose, light-bellied brent goose, shelduck, teal, mallard, pintail, common scoter, red-breasted merganser, oystercatcher, ringed plover, golden plover, grey plover, lapwing, knot, dunlin, black-tailed godwit, bar-tailed godwit, curlew, redshank, black-headed gull, common gull, herring gull (all are wintering populations)</p>	11.2km north-east	None	No
<p>River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC 2299</p>	<p>Annex I habitats: Alkaline fens, alluvial forests with <i>Alnus gluticosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i></p> <p>Annex II species: Otter, Atlantic salmon, river lamprey</p>	14.8 km south-east	None	No

STEP 3. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

(a) Identify all potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the project under the following headings:

Impacts:	Possible Significance of Impacts: (duration/magnitude etc.)
<p>Construction phase e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetation clearance Demolition Surface water runoff from soil excavation/infill/landscaping (including borrow pits) Dust, noise, vibration Lighting disturbance Impact on groundwater/dewatering Storage of excavated/construction materials Access to site Pests 	<p>It is expected that construction activities will be carried out in line with all the relevant regulatory environmental practices and standard pollution prevention control measures and for this reason no significant impacts are identified during the construction phase.</p>
<p>Operational phase e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct emission to air and water Surface water runoff containing contaminant or sediment Lighting disturbance Noise/vibration Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage or abstraction Presence of people, vehicles and activities Physical presence of structures (e.g. collision risks) Potential for accidents or incidents 	<p>Rainwater runoff poses no risk to the qualifying interests of the SAC.</p> <p>The proposed development will not generate foul water.</p> <p>The proposed development will not increase the likelihood of recreational disturbance of Natura 2000 sites. Increased human activity in the area will not affect the qualifying interests of the SAC or the special conservation interests of nearby SPAs (either in-situ or ex-situ).</p>
In-combination/Other	No developments were identified that could potentially give rise to in-combination effects.

(b) Describe any likely changes to the European site:

<p>Examples of the type of changes to give consideration to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction or fragmentation of habitat area Disturbance to QI species Habitat or species fragmentation Reduction or fragmentation in species density Changes in key indicators of conservation status value (water or air quality etc.) 	None
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- Changes to areas of sensitivity or threats to QI
- Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site

(c) Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Step 4. Screening Determination Statement

The assessment of significance of effects:

Describe how the proposed development (alone or in-combination) is/is **not likely** to have **significant** effects on European site(s) in view of its conservation objectives.

No European sites are within the immediate vicinity of the project areas, The nearest site is 4.3km from the project areas and the works planned are of an insignificant scale to create a pollution pathway to or a degradation in quality of a European site.

Conclusion:

	Tick as Appropriate:	Recommendation:
(i) It is clear that there is no likelihood of significant effects on a European site.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The proposal can be screened out: Appropriate assessment not required.
(ii) It is uncertain whether the proposal will have a significant effect on a European site.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Request further information to complete screening <input type="checkbox"/> Request NIS <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse planning permission
(iii) Significant effects are likely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Request NIS <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse planning permission

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