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Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and Natura Impact Statement

Kingston Stables, Knocknacarra West Proposed Large-Scale Residential Development

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Appendix 7 ..... Civil Works Design Report

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

MKO has been appointed to provide the information necessary to allow the competent authority to conduct an Article 6(3) Appropriate Assessment of a Proposed Large-scale Residential Development (LRD) at Knocknacarra, Co. Galway.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment is required under Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive). Where it cannot be excluded that a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, would have a significant effect on a European Site then same shall be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The current project is not directly connected with, or necessary for, the management of any European Site. Consequently, the project has been subject to the Appropriate Assessment Screening process.

This Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance documents:

Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, 2021)
Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, 2018)
Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010)
Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR), 2021).

1.1.1 References to Proposed Development

The Proposed Development, for which planning permission is being sought, is a component of a larger residential development project (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Project). The Proposed Project involves the construction of 495 no. residential units together with associated infrastructure, open space and all other site related infrastructure. The Proposed Project forms part of an overarching masterplan for the wider landholding that was extensively discussed and refined in collaboration with the planning authority.

For the purposes of this NIS:

- Proposed Development – This term refers to all the development components detailed in Section 2.2.1 below, which are the subject of the current planning application, comprising 133 residential units and associated infrastructure on a site of approximately 2.9 ha.
- LRD East – This term refers to the adjacent residential development submitted to GCC under Planning Reference Number: 25/60320 which is currently under appeal with ACP under Planning Reference Number: ACP-324237-26 and comprises 362 residential units and associated infrastructure on a site of approximately 5.37 ha.
- Proposed Project – refers to the wider master planned residential development encompassing both the Proposed Development and LRD East and which will provide 495 residential units.
- An EIAR has been prepared for the Proposed Development and forms part of the planning application submitted. The term EIAR Study Area is therefore used

throughout this report to refer to the entire Proposed Project Area. The EIAR Study Area encompasses an overall area of 8.74 ha. The EIAR Study Area is primarily comprised of areas of agricultural grassland which are predominantly located in the southern portion of the study area with areas of brownfield being located in the northern section. There is an existing residential dwelling along with agricultural sheds present within the EIAR Study Area. This NIS assesses and provides baseline information on the EIAR Study Area as a whole with specific impact assessment sections relative to the Proposed Development site only. The EIAR Study Area represents the primary area of study and not necessarily areas where proposed works will occur as part of the Proposed Project. This EIAR Study Area is shown in Figure 1-1 below.

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Map Legend

- Planning Application (red line) Boundary
- EIAR Study Area Boundary
- LRD East Application Planning Reference No. 2560320

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Drawing Title
References to Proposed Development

Project Title
Kingston Knocknacarra LRD West

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1.1.2 Appropriate Assessment Process

Screening - The purpose of the screening stage is to determine, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

There is no necessity to establish such an effect; it is merely necessary for the Competent Authority to determine that there may be such an effect. The need to apply the precautionary principle in making any key decisions in relation to the tests of Appropriate Assessment has been confirmed by the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on a European site may be excluded. The threshold at this first stage is a very low one and operates as a trigger in order to determine whether Appropriate Assessment of a project is required. Therefore, where significant effects are likely, uncertain or unknown at screening stage, an AA of the project will be required.

Appropriate Assessment - This stage of the process is a focused and detailed examination, analysis and evaluation by the Competent Authority of the implications of the plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of a European site in view of that site's conservation objectives. Case law has established that such an Appropriate Assessment, to be lawfully conducted must:

(i) identify, in the light of the best scientific knowledge in the field, all aspects of the proposed project which may, by itself or in-combination with other plans or projects, affect the conservation objectives of the European site;

(ii) contain complete, precise and definitive findings and conclusions and may not have lacunae or gaps; and

(iii) may only include a determination that the proposed project will not adversely affect the integrity of any relevant European site where the competent authority decides (on the basis of complete, precise and definitive findings and conclusions) that no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of potential adverse effects. If adverse effects can be satisfactorily avoided or successfully mitigated at this stage, so that no reasonable doubt remains as to the absence of the identified potential effects, then the process is complete. If the assessment is negative, i.e. adverse effects on the integrity of a site cannot be excluded, then the process must proceed to stage three (assessment of alternative) and, if necessary, stage four (IROPI).

1.2 Statement of Authority

This report has been prepared by Fiona Killeen (B.Sc., (Env)) and Caroline Kelly (BSc., MSc.), and reviewed by Sarah Mullen (BSc., MSc. PhD). Fiona is an experienced Ecologist with over 2 years professional consultancy experience. Caroline is a Senior Ecologist at MKO with over 10 years' experience in ecological consultancy. Sarah is Project Director of Ecology in MKO and has over 10 years' professional experience in ecological consultancy.

Previous baseline ecological surveys were undertaken by MKO ecologist Fiona Killeen on the 20th of March 2024, 24th of April 2024, 15th May 2024 and 20th March 2025. Dedicated wintering bird survey were conducted by Fiona, Ciara Lynn-Sheehan (B.Sc. (Ecology), Mairead Kavanagh (B.Sc.), Tom Peters (B.Sc. M.Sc.) and Rachel Minogue (B.Sc. (Env)) of MKO, on the 20th of March 2024, 29th of November 2024, 11th of December 2024, 23rd of January 2025, 13th of February 2025 and 20th of March 2025. Three dedicated breeding bird surveys were carried out on the 24th of April, 15th of May and 12th of June 2024 by MKO ecologists.

Updated breeding bird surveys were carried out by Deepali Mooloo, of MKO, on the 30th April, 21st May and 23rd June 2026. In addition, an updated multidisciplinary ecological walkover survey was carried out by Deepali Mooloo on the 23rd June 2026, to record any changes which had occurred since previous ecological surveys were undertaken.

Bat surveys were conducted in August 2023, April, May, June, July, August and September 2024 by MKO Ecologists; Laura McEntegert (B.Sc.), Fiona Killeen (B.Sc.), David Culleton (B.Sc.), Charlie Meehan (B.Sc., M.Sc.), Kate Greaney (B.Sc., M.Sc.) and Mairead Kavanagh (B.Sc.). One additional bat emergence survey was carried out on the 11th May 2026 by Chandra Walter, Deepali Mooloo and Jo Ruane to assess bat activity at structures which were identified as bat roosts in previous years.

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1.3 Structure and Format of this Document

- Section 2 provides a full description of all elements of the Proposed Development.
- In Section 3, the characteristics of the receiving environment are fully described.
- In Section 4, a Stage 1 Screening is undertaken to identify any European Sites upon which there is a potential for a likely significant effect to occur either individually or in combination with other plans and projects as a result of the Proposed Development.
- Section 5, the Natura Impact Statement provides a detailed consideration of the Screened In European Sites and identifies the relevant qualifying features and how they may be affected in light of their conservation objectives.
- Section 6 provides an assessment of the potential for adverse effects on the identified European Sites as a result of the Proposed Development and in the absence of mitigation. This section also prescribes mitigation to robustly block any identified pathways for effect.
- Section 7 provides an assessment of residual effects taking into consideration the proposed mitigation.
- In Section 8, the potential in combination effects of the Proposed Development on European Sites, when considered in combination with other plans and projects were assessed.
- A concluding statement is provided in Section 9.

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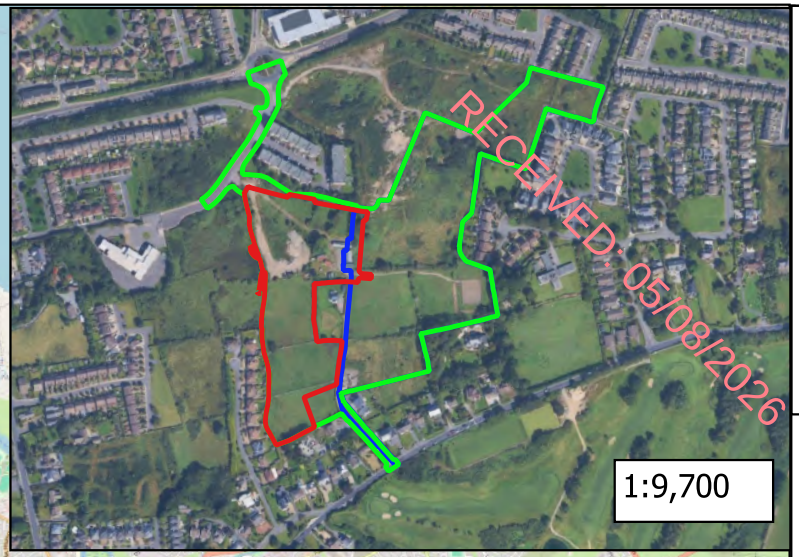
2. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Site Location

The Proposed Development site is located in Knocknacarra, Galway City, covering an area of approximately 2.9 hectares (ha). The site is contained within the Knocknacarra Masterplan Area at Knocknacarra, County Galway which is approximately 3 kilometres (km) west of Galway City Centre. Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM) coordinates for the approximate centre of the site are X 526577, Y 724658.

Currently, the site comprises a mixture of agricultural grassland in the southern section as well as areas of hardstanding, stone walls, hedgerows and agricultural buildings in the northern section. The surrounding area is urban in character with several residential housing estates as well as commercial buildings.

The location of the Proposed Development site is shown in **Figure 2-1** below.



Map Legend

- Site Location Point
- Planning Application (red line) Boundary
- EIAR Study Area Boundary
- LRD East Application Planning Reference No. 2560320

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Site Location

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2.2 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

2.2.1 Development Description

The Proposed Development will consist of the following:

- Provision of 133 no. residential units in 2 no. development areas with a mix of duplex and house types on a site area of 2.9 ha. The buildings range between 2 no. and 3 no. storeys in height. The development will comprise the following:
  - 51 no. 3-bed townhouses;
  - 6 no. 4-bed townhouses;
  - 1 no. 1-bed duplex apartments;
  - 1 no. 2-bed duplex houses;
  - 37 no. 2-bed ground floor duplex apartments;
  - 37 no. 3-bed duplex houses.
- Demolition of existing structures (388 m^2);
- Vehicular access to the proposed development from a permitted road (Planning Reference 24/60370 refers);
- Upgrades to the permitted road (Planning Reference 24/60370 refers);
- Pedestrian and cycle access to the adjacent Kingston Park (ACP Ref: 323873);
- Conversion and upgrade of an existing structure to a cafe (65.8 m^2);
- The provision of public open space;
- The provision of 192 no. bicycle parking spaces;
- The provision of 143 no. car parking spaces;
- Public lighting, bin stores, signage, services, 2 no. ground mounted substation kiosks, site landscaping and all ancillary site development and enabling works.

It should be noted that the Applicant has previously submitted a planning application for a large residential development on lands to the immediate east of the Proposed Development site (LRD East) (GCC Planning Reference No: 25/60320; ACP Planning Reference No: ACP-324237-26), located within the EIAR Study Area, as shown in **Figure 1-1.**

A full detailed description of the Proposed Development and associated construction methodologies to be employed is provided in Chapter 4 of the EIAR (included as **Appendix 1** to this NIS).

2.2.2 Proposed Site Drainage

2.2.2.1 Surface Water Drainage

The management of surface water for the Proposed Development has been designed to comply with the philosophies of nature-based Sustainable urban Drainage Systems(SuDS) and CIRIA guidelines as embodied in the recommendations of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) and with the requirements of Galway City Council.

The surface water strategy incorporates attenuation of storm water to limit discharge from the site, although storage facilities and SuDS elements will be designed to allow infiltration or reduction of run-off volumes and rates where possible. The proposed storm water drainage system has been designed to cater for all surface water runoff from all hard surfaces in the Proposed Development including roadways, parking areas etc. All stormwater generated on site from roadways and parking areas will discharge via an Oil/Petrol Interceptor to remove possible hydrocarbons. The soakaway/ attenuation units are strategically located within the site. Where there is adequate infiltration, stormwater will discharge to soakaways/ attenuation. Otherwise, it will discharge at a controlled Greenfield runoff rate to existing 450 mm storm sewer network west of the Proposed Development.

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By-pass separators will be installed prior to discharging to the existing storm sewer. The separators will be sized to cater for impermeable areas i.e. roads, car parking and footpath areas.

The following SuDS elements are applicable to the Proposed Development and layout:

- Water butts
- Tree pits
- Rain gardens
- Permeable paving
- Swales
- Drainage kerbs with infiltration trenches
- Soakaways/attenuation units.
- Hydrobrake manholes to control the flow of surface water to allow the soakway/attenuation units to fill to their capacity (designed to largest stormwater required over 48-hour storm period with rainfall depths taken for the 100year return period +20 % for climate change).
- Hydrocarbon separation prior to the outfall to the exiting surface water network and immediately downstream of any hydrobrake manholes.

Storm-water attenuation for the Proposed Development has been sized in accordance with the requirements of the GDSDS. Run-off rates from the Proposed Development to the public system are in accordance with the GDSDS.

2.2.2.2 Foul water drainage

The foul drainage layout for the Proposed Development will be similar to the surface water drainage. All wastewater generated from the Proposed Development will outfall, via gravity, to a wastewater network permitted by Galway City Council (Planning Reference 24/60370). From this, the wastewater will discharge to an existing Uisce Éireann owned 375mm foul sewer line located west of the development along the southern arm junction of the adjacent roundabout and Altan road. The foul network for the Proposed Development has been designed using Causeway Flow Drainage modelling software. The pipework has been designed to provide six times the dry weather flow in accordance with Uisce Éireann Code of Practise and standard details. The proposed foul sewer design and layout is in accordance with the Irish Water Code of Practice for Wastewater Infrastructure and The Irish Water Infrastructure Standard Details. The predicted foul loading of the Proposed Development is 366P.E. A letter has been received from Uisce Eireann confirming that a water connection can be facilitated for the Proposed Development (see **Appendix 2**).

All foul water will be discharged to the public sewer and will be treated at the Galway Mutton Island Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) before discharging to Galway Bay. The Mutton Island WWTP has a current capacity of 170,000P.E. (Uisce Eireann, 2025).

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

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Assessing the impacts of any project and associated activities requires an understanding of the ecological baseline conditions prior to and at the time of the project proceeding. Ecological baseline conditions are those existing in the absence of proposed activities (CIEEM, 2018).

The following sections outline the methodologies utilised to establish the baseline ecological condition of the Site.

3.1 Desk Study

The desk study undertaken for this assessment included a thorough review of available ecological data including the following:

Review of NPWS Conservation Objectives supporting documents, site synopsis, standard data forms and supporting documents for European Designated Sites,

- Review of online web-mappers: National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA),
- Review of the publicly available National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) web-mapper,
- Review of NPWS Article 17 metadata and GIS database.

3.2 Consultation

The Development Application Unit (DAU) was consulted on the 30th of April 2024 (Reference No: G Pre00159/2024) in relation to the Proposed Project, of which the Proposed Development is a part. A response was received on the 12th June 2024 and is attached as **Appendix 3**. The recommendations of the DAU have been considered in the preparation of this planning application.

Consultation with the DAU highlighted the need to consider the likely significant effects on European Sites, as stated below:

'*The Department notes that the Galway Bay Complex SAC (Site Code: 000268) is located 1km to the southwest and that Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code: 000297) is 2.8km east of the site. The scope of works includes these for assessment however, the Inner Galway Bay SPA (Site Code: 004031) and Lough Corrib SPA (Site Code: 004042) have not been mentioned, and should be included for assessment. In relation to potential significant effects on a European site, assessments are carried out with respect to the implications for the conservation objectives of that site. Where available, the attributes, targets and notes specified as part of the conservation objectives will determine the scope and detail of surveys, data and analyses required to produce an NIS, if required. The NIS should present the scientific examination of all necessary evidence and data. It should be noted that the conservation objectives of a European site are wider in scope than the qualifying interests or special conservation interests alone, and will encompass other habitats and species, as well as aspects of habitat structure and function, and existing environmental problems and trends. The final analyses are carried out with respect to whether the conservation objective is to maintain or to restore the favourable conservation condition of the habitat or species in question within the site.*

The key concerns in relation to likely significant effects of the project alone and incombination with other plans and projects, on these European sites, in view of their conservation objectives, include the following:

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- *Disturbance of potential resting/roosting sites for Annex II species (e.g. Lesser Horseshoe Bat)*
- *Increased disturbance and displacement of species, and progressive habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration surrounding European sites arising from the development, and loss of important ecological corridors*
- *Added pressures on existing water services'*

These concerns have been considered in the preparation of this NIS.

3.3 Ecological Survey Methodologies

3.3.1 Ecological Multidisciplinary Walkover Surveys

Multidisciplinary walkover surveys, carried out in line with NRA (2009) guidelines, were undertaken on the 20th of March 2024, 24th of April 2024, 15th May 2024, 20th March 2025 and 23rd June 2026. The surveys in April, May and June fall within the recognised optimum period for vegetation surveys/habitat mapping, i.e. April to September (Smith et al., 2011), while the surveys carried out in March, when vegetation cover is reduced, focused on identifying features which could potentially be used by protected mammals (e.g. potential roost features on trees which could support bats, mammal burrows etc.).

The walkover surveys were designed to detect the presence, or likely presence, of a range of protected species. The surveys included a search for badger setts and areas of suitable habitat, potential features likely to be of significance to bats and additional habitat features for the full range of other protected species that are likely to occur in the vicinity of the Proposed Development (e.g. otter etc.). In addition, an inventory of other species of local biodiversity interest was compiled including invertebrates (butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies, beetles), plants, fungi etc.

The multi-disciplinary walkover surveys comprehensively covered the EIAR Study Area, within which the Proposed Development site is located. Habitats were identified in accordance with the Heritage Council's 'Guide to Habitats in Ireland' (Fossitt, 2000). Habitat mapping was undertaken with regard to guidance set out in 'Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping' (Smith *et al.*, 2011). Plant nomenclature for vascular plants follows 'New Flora of the British Isles' (Stace, 2019).

During the multidisciplinary surveys, a search for Invasive Alien Species (IAS) listed under the First Scheule of the European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024 (S.I. 374 of 2024) and/or Third Schedule of the European Communities Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011) was conducted.

3.3.2 Bird Surveys

Due to the close proximity of the site to the Lough Corrib Special Protection Area (SPA) and Inner Galway Bay Complex SPA, 6 no. dedicated wintering bird surveys and two seasons of 3 no. dedicated breeding bird surveys (one in 2024 and one in 2026) were considered necessary to assess the sites' significance (if any) for both breeding and wintering birds (following the precautionary principle).

3.3.2.1 Winter Bird Surveys

The winter bird surveys were carried out on a monthly basis between November 2024 and March 2025. One survey in March 2024 was also undertaken. Surveys were conducted from eight predefined vantage points which offered as large a view as possible of potentially suitable wintering bird habitat within the EIAR Study Area and adjacent area. Following completion of the vantage point surveys, seven predefined transects were walked and any winter birds occurring within proximity to these transects, including their numbers and exhibited behaviours were recorded. Winter bird surveys

followed the Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS) methodology; the simple 'look-see' method, whereby all birds present within a predefined area are counted (Bibby et al., 1992).

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All observations were recorded, and detailed point data was gathered for each species observation, with all bird species denoted using standard British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) codes and with the number of each species recorded next to each registration. The target species recorded in the surveys were those covered by Irish Wetlands Bird Survey (I-WeBS) counts, i.e. all divers, grebes, cormorant, shag, herons, swans, geese, ducks, rails, crakes, waders, gulls and kingfisher. Target species also included Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species associated with SPAs in the likely zone of influence, any species listed on Annex I of the Birds Directive and any birds included on the Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 4: 2020-2026 (BoCCI) red list (Gilbert et al., 2021). In addition to this, all other bird species, including all common and widespread passerines, were recorded as incidentals where they occurred within the Proposed Development site.

3.3.2.2 Breeding Bird Surveys

Breeding bird surveys were carried out on a monthly basis between April and June 2024 (inclusive). 2024 surveys were carried out in a similar fashion to the winter bird surveys in that surveys from the same eight vantage points were undertaken first, followed by transect surveys along the same seven transects. During the surveys, target species (SCIs of nearby SPAs, Annex I species and BoCCI red-listed species) were recorded both within and adjacent to the development site, with non-target species recorded as incidentals. All bird species were denoted using standard British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) codes and with the number of each species recorded next to each registration.

During the 2026 breeding bird surveys, surveys were undertaken using a methodology adapted from the *Bird Monitoring Methods – A Manual of Techniques for Key UK Species* (Gilbert et al., 1998). Surveys covered the entirety of the Proposed Development site, which was walked in a slow manner, with birds identified by sight and song. General locations of all species observed, along with their numbers and exhibited behaviours were recorded using BTO species and activity codes.

The locations of Vantage Points and walked transects undertaken over the course of the bird surveys carried out across the EIAR Study Area are shown in **Figure 3-1.**



Map Legend

- Planning Application (red line) Boundary
- EIAR Study Area Boundary
- LRD East Application Planning Reference No. 2560320
- Walked Transects
- Vantage Points

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Drawing Title: Vantage Points and Walked Tansects

Project Title: Kingston Knocknacarra LRD West

Drawn By	Checked By
FK/ CK	SM
Project No.	**Drawing No.**
251145	Figure 3-1
Scale	**Date**
1:3,000	01.07.2026

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3.3.3 Bat Surveys

A detailed Bat Report has been prepared by MKO bat ecologists and is attached to this document as **Appendix 4**. The following bat surveys were carried out within the EIAR Study Area, full details of which can be found in **Appendix 4:**

- Daytime bat walkover, comprising bat habitat suitability and preliminary roost assessment
- Bat habitat suitability appraisal (suitability to support roosting, foraging and/or commuting bats)
- Preliminary bat roost assessments of trees and existing buildings on site
- Bat activity surveys, comprising night-time bat walkover surveys, dusk emergence surveys and static detector surveys

3.3.4 Non-volant Mammal Surveys

During the multidisciplinary walkover surveys, a comprehensive search of the site for the presence of terrestrial mammal species was undertaken and the habitats on site were assessed for their potential to support protected mammal species.

The survey included a search for signs of otter (*Lutra lutra*). The isolated drainage ditch within the site was surveyed for otter as per TII (2008) guidelines (Ecological Surveying Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna during the Planning of National Road Schemes). This involved a search for all otter signs e.g. spraints, scat, prints, slides, trails, couches and holts.

3.4 Hydrological Desk Study

3.4.1 EPA Water Quality Data:

The EPA web-mapper (https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/Water) was consulted on the 1st July 2026 regarding the water quality, status of groundwater bodies and surface or transitional waterbodies that are located downstream of the site of the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development site is located within the Galway Bay North hydrological catchment (Catchment 31), and the Knock [Furbo]_SC_010 hydrological sub-catchment. The Knocknacarragh stream (31K16) watercourse (part of the Knocknacarragh_010 system) is located approximately 85m from the northern boundary of the Proposed Development site. According to the River Waterbodies Risk on EPA Maps, the Knocknacarragh_010 system is under review. Further, the River Waterbody Water Framework Directive (WFD) Status 2019-2024 awarded the Knocknacarragh_010 system a "Poor" Status. No Q-values have been recorded on the Knocknacarragh_010 system as per EPA maps.

The Proposed Development site is underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body which is described as 'poorly productive bedrock'. In terms of vulnerability to contamination by human activities, the Spiddal groundwater body in the vicinity of the Proposed Development Site is of 'Extreme' and 'High' vulnerability with 'Exposed rock' also present, as per EPA maps. The WFD Status 2019-2024 for the Spiddal groundwater body was deemed to be 'Good'. The groundwater flow pathways described in the Spiddal Groundwater Body Summary of Initial Characterisation[1] (WFD) states that, '*Groundwater flow is expected to be concentrated in fractured and weathered zones and in the vicinity of fault zones. Flow paths are likely to be short – up to 100 m, with groundwater discharging rapidly to nearby streams and small springs. Overall, flow directions follow topography, generally to the south. The available water*

[1]GSI (2004) *Spiddal GWB: Summary of Initial Characterisation. 1st Draft Spiddal GWB Description June 2004. Geological Survey of Ireland (GS1). Available at:* https://gsi.geodata.gov.ie/downloads/Groundwater/Reports/GWB/SpiddalGWB.pdf

level data show that the water table is from 0-6 m below ground level.'Results of Baseline Ecological Surveys

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A total of nine habitats/ habitat mosaics were recorded within the Proposed Development site and wider EIAR Study Area. A description of the main habitats within the site boundary is provided below.

3.4.2 Habitats within the Proposed Development Site Boundary

The Proposed Development site is largely composed of agricultural grasslands, classified as Dry calcareous and neutral grassland (GS1) and Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2). Field boundaries are delineated by Stonewalls and other stonework (BL1), hedgerows (WL1) and treelines (WL2). Areas of disturbed ground exist in the northern half of the site and was best described as Spoil and bare ground (ED2) and Recolonising bare ground (ED3). One area of previously Recolonising bare ground (ED3) is now best classified as Wet grassland (GS4). The agricultural structures which occur to the centre of the Proposed Development site were classified as Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3).

A description of the main habitats within the EIAR Study Area, which includes the Proposed Development site, is provided below.

3.4.2.1 Recolonising bare ground (ED3) & Spoil and bare ground (ED2)

The majority of the northern parcel of the EIAR Study Area, and a small area in the north of the Proposed Development site, has been subject to deposition of construction waste and consists mainly of large mounds of exposed gravel, mulch, rubble, stones, and areas of exposed gravel. Vegetative regrowth in the form of forb and woody species including bramble and gorse was recorded recolonising these areas. This area is therefore categorised as a mosaic habitat of Recolonising bare ground (ED3)/Spoil and Bare Ground (ED2). Vegetation has been cleared/mulched in the north-east of the wider EIAR Study Area and is subject to regrowth (Plate 3-1to Plate 3-3).

Recolonising spoil heaps, rocks piles and earth mounds were identified in the north of the EIAR Study Area. These areas have been recolonised by a variety of species including Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum),* Common Sedge (*Carex nigra*), White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Field Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), Springy turf-moss (*Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus),* Pointed Spear-moss (*Calliergonella cuspidata),* Heath plait-moss *(Hypnum jutlandicum),* Field Wood-rush *(Luzula campestris),* Sow thistle (*Sonchus spp.),* Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Germander Speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum vulgaria*), Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*), Yellowwort (*Blackstonia perfoliate*), Common Figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*), Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium*), Red Clover (*Trifolium Pratense*) and Hawkweed (*Hieracium hibernicum*). Herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Hedge Mustard (*Sisymbrium officinale*), Greater Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus pedunculatus),* Hop Trefoil *(Trifolium campestre*), Black Medick (*Medicago lupulina),* Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Cat's Ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), Kidney vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*), Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*), Red Valerian (*Centranthus ruber*), Great Mullein (*Verbascum Thapsus),* Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), Field Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), Rosebay Willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), Sticky Mouse-ear (*Cerastium glomeratum*), Field Forget-me-not (*Myosotis arvensis*), Rapeseed (*Brassica napus*), Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*), Weld (*Reseda luteola*), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata),* Greater Plantain (*Plantago major),* Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Colt's Foot (*Tussilago farfara),* Silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Cleavers (*Galium aparine*), Self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), Scarlet Pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*) and Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*) were also occurred.

Butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*) was recorded growing extensively on the large rock piles throughout the northern portion of the EIAR Study Area. This plant species is considered a second schedule, medium impact invasive species, as per the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC).

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Plate 3-1. View of mulched vegetation and machinery tracks classified as Recolonising bare ground (ED3) /Spoil and bare ground (ED2) in the north of the EIAR Study Area.



Plate 3-2. View of recolonising rock and stone piles located in the north of the EIAR Study Area. Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2) habitat was also recorded in this section of the EIAR Study Area.



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Plate 3-3. View of black pine and Italian alder trees in the north-east of the EIAR Study Area, occurring in an area of Recolonising bare ground ED3/Spoil and bare ground ED2 and Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2) habitat.

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3.4.2.2 Treeline (WL2)

Treeline (WL2) habitat dominated by mature Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsion*) trees was recorded in the centre of the EIAR Study Area acting as a field boundary adjacent to the existing stables (Plate 3-4).



Plate 3-4. View of section of treeline (WL2) habitat dominated by ash and sycamore, recorded in the west of the EIAR Study Area.

3.4.2.3 Buildings and Artificial surfaces (BL3) and Stone walls and other Stonework (BL1)

Stone walls were recorded throughout the EIAR Study Area (Plate 3-5) and are categorised as Stone walls and other stonework (BL1). The vast majority of field margins throughout the EIAR Study Area are delineated by old and lightly vegetated stone walls.

Existing residential and farm buildings exist in the centre of the Proposed Development site. Residential dwellings and dog kennels are located in the centre and south of the EIAR Study Area classified as Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3). The EIAR Study Area is immediately surrounded by residential dwellings to the north, south and east. The existing access road, which lies immediately east of the Proposed Development boundary was classified as Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3) (Plate 3-6). Species recorded at the old farm buildings include Ivy (*Hedera hibernica)*, Rusty Back Fern (*Asplenium ceterach*), Maiden Hair Spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*), Polypody (*Polypodium spp.*) and Hart's Tongue Fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*). Woody species recorded surrounding the stables in the centre of the EIAR Study Area include Hawthorn, Sycamore and Privet (*Ligustrum spp.).* Himalayan Honeysuckle *(Leycesteria formosa)* was recorded by a field margin in the west of the EIAR Study Area. This plant species is not listed on the Third Schedule (S.I.447 2011) European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulation 2011 or the First Schedule (S.I. 374/2024 - European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024. This plant is considered an invasive species of medium impact according to the NBDC.


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Plate 3-5. View of stone walls classified as Stone walls and other stonework (BL1) located in the south of the EIAR Study Area adjacent to the existing residential dwelling classified as Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3).



Plate 3-6. View of old stone farm sheds and newly built stables classified as Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3) located in the centre of the EIAR Study Area.

3.4.2.4 Dry Meadows and Grassy Verges (GS2)

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Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2) habitat occurs throughout the EIAR Study Area, but only comprises a relatively small area of the Proposed Development site. The grassy verges identified running along the existing road and farm tracks in the south of the wider EIAR Study Area are categorised as Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2). Unmanaged grassland habitat, categorised as Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2), was identified in the centre of the EIAR Study Area (Plate 3-7). This grassland is currently ungrazed. Semi-mature Basket Willows (*Salix viminalis*) were recorded in this section of the EIAR Study Area.

A mosaic of Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2)/Dry calcareous and neutral grassland (GS1) was recorded in the south-east of the wider EIAR Study Area, by the dog kennels, along the edges of the existing road/access tracks and colonising the disturbed ground in the north of the site (Plate 3-8).

Species recorded in this habitat include Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Dandelion, Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Germander Speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), Red Clover, Broad leaved Willowherb (*Epilobium montanum),* Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre),* Meadow grass (*Poa annua*), Common Vetch (*Vicia sativa ssp. segetalis*), Ragwort, Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*), Cocks' foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), Nettle, Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), Common Dog Violet (*Viola riviniana*), Curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), Common Bent Grass (*Agrostis capillaris*), Pignut, Sow thistle, Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Cowslip (*Primula veris*), Greater Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Sorrel, Yellow Flag Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*), Hedge Mustard (*Sisymbrium officinale*), Cleavers, Cuckoo Flower (*Cardamine pratensis*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), Common Poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*), White Clover, Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), Hart's Tongue Fern, Herb Robert and Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*).



Plate 3-7. View of unmanaged Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2) recorded in the centre of the EIAR Study Area.



Plate 3-8. View of Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2)/Dry calcareous and neutral grassland (GS1) habitat in the south of the Proposed Development site by the dog pens..

3.4.2.5 Dry Calcareous and Neutral Grassland GS1

The majority of the Proposed Development site is dominated by managed Dry calcareous and neutral grassland (GS1) habitat and is considered a species rich grassland (Plate 3-9). Stone walls categorised as Stone walls and other stonework (BL1) make up field margins in the southern portion of the Proposed Development site. The grassland is heavily poached in areas due to grazing (Plate 3-10).

Species recorded in areas of Dry Calcareous and Neutral Grassland (GS1) include Ribwort Plantain, Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Cowslip, Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*), Buttercups (*Ranunculus bulbosus & Ranunculus acris*), Field Rush, Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*), Dandelion, Dock (*Rumex spp.*), Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), Field Speedwell (*Veronica persica),* Germander Speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Hawksbit (*Leontodon spp.*), Common Mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*), Thyme Leaved Speedwell (*Veronica serpyllifolia*), Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Curly Dock (*Rumex crispus*), Silverweed, Greater Plantain (*Plantago major*), Sorrel, Nettle, Meadow Grass (*Poa annua*), Rough Meadow Grass (*Poa trivialis*), Birds Foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), *Festuca spp.,* Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Sweet Vernal (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Redshank (*Persicaria maculosa*), Selfheal and Pignut. Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*) were also found.

This habitat does not align with the Annex I habitat type 'Semi-natural dry grassland and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometea) [6210]' owing to its species composition which demonstrates a lack of positive indicator species typical of this Annex I habitat type. Only two high-quality positive indicator species (Cowslip and Yellow-wort) and three positive indicator species (*Ranunculus bulbosus, Leontodon spp.* and *Lotus corniculatus)* were recorded here, while four negative indicator species occurred (Nettle, White clover, Ragwort, Curly dock).

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Plate 3-9. View of unmanaged dry calcareous and neutral grassland (GS1) and stone wall (BL1) located in the south of the Proposed Development site.



Plate 3-10. View of heavily poached area in the south-west of the EIAR Study Area due to horses grazing the fields.

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3.4.2.6 Scrub (WS1)

Approximately two small, isolated pockets (approx. 0.053ha in total) of Scrub (WS1) habitat occur in the northern portion of the Proposed Development site (Plate 3-11). One of these pockets of scrub is dominated by Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) while the other, which occurs along the western boundary of the Proposed Development site, is composed of sycamore, ash, hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*).



Plate 3-11. View of gorse dominated Scrub (WS1) habitat recorded in the north of the Proposed Development site.

3.4.2.7 Hedgerow (WL1)

Hedgerow (WL1) habitat, dominated by hawthorn, was recorded within the Proposed Development site and wider EIAR Study Area (Plate 3-12). This habitat was typically isolated and associated with old stone walls delineating the field boundaries within the Proposed Development site. Ground flora identified included Common Dog Violet (*Viola riviniana*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Germander Speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Cowslip (*Primula veris*), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Docks (*Rumex spp.*), Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*), Daisy (*Bellis perennis*) and Cleavers (*Galium spp.).*

Individual mature trees/shrubs such as Ash, Blackthorn, *Sorbus spp.*,Wych Elm (*Ulmus procera*), Beech and Holly were also recorded within the hedgerows on site.

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Plate 3-12. View of hedgerows (WL1) typical of that found in the Proposed Development site

3.4.2.8 Drainage ditch (FW4)

A small, isolated ditch, best classified as a Drainage ditch (FW4), with no connectivity to any other drainage features, was recorded in the north-east of the wider EIAR Study Area, but beyond the boundary of the Proposed Development site (Plate 3-13). Small amounts of stagnant water were recorded in parts of this ditch, along with Silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*), Watercress (*Nasturtium officinale)* and *Juncus spp.* No water was present in the drainage ditch during summer months.



Plate 3-13. View of stagnant water in isolated drainage ditch (FW4) in the north of the Proposed Development site, adjacent to willow scrub (WS1) habitat.

3.4.2.9 Wet grassland (GS4)

One area which was previously classified as Recolonising bare ground (ED3), was found to be more closely aligned with Wet grassland (GS4), during the updated multidisciplinary walkover survey in 2026 (Plate 3-14). This area was dominated by flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), with fringed willowherb (*Epilobium ciliatum*), Yorkshire fog, creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), water figwort (*Scrophularia auriculata*), bramble, broad-leaved dock (Rumex obtusifolius) and false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) also occurring to a lesser extent.



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Plate 3-14:View of wet grassland (GS4) habitat recorded in the northern section of the Proposed Development site.

3.4.3 Invasive species

During field surveys, a search for Invasive Alien Species (IAS) listed under the First Schedule of the European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024 (S.I. 374 of 2024) and/or Third Schedule of the European Communities Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011) was conducted. Small clusters of Three-cornered leek were recorded in proximity to the northern boundary of the Proposed Development site, growing along the base of hedgerow habitat (Plate 3-15 and Plate 3-16). In addition, one small plant of this invasive species was recorded in the south of the Proposed Development site, along a field boundary, in June 2026. In the wider EIAR Study Area, this was recorded along the access track in the south and by a boundary. A larger infestation of this invasive plant species was recorded adjacent the Kingston Rd (R337), outside of the Proposed Development site.

Sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) plants were recorded, initially as saplings, along the base of a hedgerow in proximity to the northern boundary of the Proposed Development site in 2024 (Plate 3-17). However, in the 2026 survey it was noted that Sea buckthorn had now become established within the hedgerow and had spread along this field boundary. More than five stands of Sea buckthorn, approx. 4-5m tall and approx. 5m wide, were recorded within this hedgerow (Plate 3-18).

No additional species listed on the First Schedule of the European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024 or Third Schedule of the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 were recorded within the Proposed Development site during the surveys undertaken The locations of invasive species recorded within, and in close proximity to, the Proposed Development site is shown in **Figure 3-2.**

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Plate 3-15: View of three-cornered leek located in close proximity to the northern boundary of the Proposed Development site.



Plate 3-16: View of a single specimen of three-cornered leek, located in proximity to the northern boundary.

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Plate 3-17. View of juvenile saplings of sea buckthorn recorded in proximity to the northern boundary in 2024.



Plate 3-18: View of Sea buckthorn growing along the hedgerow habitat which lies in proximity to the northern boundary of the Proposed Development site.



Map Legend

- Sea buckthorn
- Three cornered leek
- Sea buckthorn
- Planning Application (redline) Boundary
- EIAR Study Area Boundary
- LRD East Application Planning Reference No. 2560320

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Drawing Title
Invasive Species Recorded

Project Title
Kingston Knocknacarra LRD West

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3.4.4 Birds

Dedicated wintering and breeding bird surveys were conducted by MKO ecologists to investigate the suitability of potentially supporting habitats for bird species and how bird species interact and utilise the habitats within the Proposed Development site. The wintering and breeding bird surveys were carried out in line with the methodologies described in Section 3.3.2 above. No limitations were observed.

3.4.4.1 Winter Bird Surveys

The target bird species recorded within and flying over the EIAR Study Area, which includes the Proposed Development site, are shown in Table 3-1 below. Any species of conservation concern (i.e. those listed on the amber list or higher of Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (2021)), recorded during the winter bird surveys are also shown in Table 3-1.

The following SCI species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA were recorded during wintering bird surveys undertaken: Common gull (*Larus canus*), Black-headed gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), and Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*).

Black-headed gulls were observed flying over and adjacent to the Proposed Development site and also perched on the apartment block located west of the site. No Black-headed gulls were recorded utilising the habitats within the Proposed Development site during the surveys undertaken. One Common gull was recorded foraging in the grassland in the south of the wider EIAR Study Area on the 29th of November 2024. One Curlew was recorded foraging in the grassland in the east of the Proposed Development site on the 29th of November 2024. Two Curlew were recorded flying over the southern parcel of the EIAR Study Area in a southerly direction on the 11th of December 2024 and one landed in the grazed pasture in the south of the EIAR Study Area on this day. One Curlew was recorded flying/foraging on each of the 23rd of January 2025 and 13th of February 2025. Three Cormorants were recorded flying over the EIAR Study Area on the 20th of March 2025. One Grey heron, also an SCI for Inner Galway Bay SPA, was recorded flying over the Proposed Development site on the 20th March 2025. Grey herons are included on the BoCCI Green list and are therefore not regarded as a species of conservation concern.

Table 3-1.Target Bird species, and amber listed bird species, recorded during the Winter Bird Surveys

Species	Peak Number Recorded	Notes	Date observed	Status
Meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis)*	4	› Foraging within the Proposed Development site.	20th March 2024 29th November 2024 13th February 2025 20th March 2025	BoCCI Red Listed
Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus)*	1	› Hovering/hunting over habitats in the north of the Proposed Development site	29th November 2024	BoCCI Red Listed
Lesser black backed gull (*Larus fuscus)*	8	› Flying over the Proposed Development site	29th November 2024 11th December 2024 13th February 2025 20th March 2025	BoCCI Amber Listed
Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago)*	2	› Flushed from scrub within the north of the site › Flushed from grassland in the center of the site	29th November 2025 13th February 2025	BoCCI Red Listed
Redwing (*Turdus iliacus)*	25	› Heard in the south of the site in grassland › Foraging within the grasslands within the	29th November 2024 11th December 2024 23rd January 2025 13th February 2025 20th March 2025	BoCCI Red Listed

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Species	Peak Number Recorded	Notes	Date observed	Status
		south and west of the site		
European Herring gull (*Larus argentatus)*	20	› Juvenile & adults flying over the site › Perched on apartments outside the Proposed Development site	20th March 2024 29th November 2024 11th December 2024 23rd January 2025 13th February 2025 20th March 2025	BoCCI Amber Listed
Common gull (*Larus canus)*	5	› Flying over the Proposed Development site › Foraging in grassland within the Proposed Development site	20th March 2024 29th November 2024 11th December 2024 23rd January 2025	BoCCI Amber Listed **SCI Species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA**
Black headed gull (*Larus ridibundus)*	15	› Flying over the Proposed Development site	20th March 2024 29th November 2024 11th December 2024 23rd January 2025 13th February 2025 20th March 2025	BoCCI Amber Listed **SCI Species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA**
Curlew (*Numenius arquata)*	5	› 3 x Foraging on grassland to the immediate east of the Proposed Development site › Flying over the Proposed Development site › 1 x Flushed from the grassland in the east of the site	29th November 2024 11th December 2024 23rd January 2025 13th February 2025	BoCCI Red Listed **SCI Species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA**
Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)	3	› Flying over the western parcel of the site in a northerly direction	20th March 2025	BoCCI Amber Listed **SCI Species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA**
Grey heron (Ardea cinerea)	1	› Flying over the Proposed Development site	20th March 2025	BoCCI Green Listed **SCI Species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA**
Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus)*	1	› Perched	13th February 2025	BoCCI Amber Listed
House sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)	1	› Foraging within the Proposed Development site	29th November 2024 11th December 2024 20th March 2025	BoCCI Amber Listed
Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*)	27	› Foraging within the Proposed Development site	29th November 2024 23rd January 2025 13th February 2025	BoCCI Amber Listed
Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)	36-46	› Foraging within the grasslandsof the Proposed Development site	20th March 2024 29th November 2024 11th December 2024 23rd January 2025	BoCCI Amber Listed

Species	Peak Number Recorded	Notes	Date observed	Status
			13th February 2025 20th March 2025	
Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*)	1	› Perched	20th March 2025	BoCCI Amber Listed
Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)	1	› Flushed from within the site	13th February 2025	BoCCI Red Listed

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3.4.4.2 Breeding Bird Surveys

Target species, as well as any species of conservation concern (i.e. those listed on the amber list or higher of Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (2021)), recorded during the dedicated surveys undertaken are detailed below in Table 3-2.

Only four SCI species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA were recorded during the breeding bird surveys undertaken: Common gull, Cormorant, Black-headed gull and Wigeon. These species were recorded in very low numbers- i.e. less than five individuals- and were recorded flying over the Proposed Development site rather than occurring within it.

Table 3-2. Target Bird species, and amber listed bird species, recorded during the Breeding Bird Surveys

Species	Peak Number of individuals	Notes	Date	Status
Common gull (*Larus canus)*	5	› Flying over the Proposed Development site › Seen perched on roof of apartments outside the Proposed Development site	24th April 2024 15th May 2024 30th April 2026 21st May 2026 23rd June 2026	BoCCI Amber Listed **SCI Species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA and Lough Corrib SPA**
Herring gull (*Larus argentatus*)	12	› Flying over the Proposed Development site › Seen perched on roof of apartments outside the Proposed Development site › Flying over the Proposed Development site, carrying material to a rooftop outside the northern boundary	24th April 2024 15th May 2024 30th April 2026 21st May 2026 23rd June 2026	BoCCI Amber Listed
Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus)*	1	› Foraging in willow scrub within the Proposed Development site › Observed perched within the Proposed Development site boundary	24th April 2024 21st May 2026	BoCCI Amber Listed
Tree sparrow (*Passer montanus*)	5	› Seen and heard foraging/flying within the Proposed Development site in basket willows	24th April 2024 12th June 2024	BoCCI Amber Listed

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Species	Peak Number of individuals	Notes	Date	Status
House sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)	5	› Foraging within the Proposed Development site › Observed perched on a wall, pole and hedgerow	15th May 2024 21st May 2026	BoCCI Amber Listed
Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*)	5+	› Foraging within the Proposed Development site › Observed perched in gorse scrub and later flying › Observed perched on cables	24th April 2024 15th May 2024 12th June 2024 30th April 2026 21st May 2026 23rd June 2026	BoCCI Amber Listed
Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)	10	› Foraging within the grasslands on the proposed development site › Observed in the vicinity of hedgerow habitat	24th April 2024 15th May 2024 12th June 2024 21st May 2026	BoCCI Amber Listed
Willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)	3	› Heard and seen foraging in the willow scrub in the Proposed Development site	24th April 2024 15th May 2024 12th June 2024 30th April 2026 21st May 2026 23rd June 2026	BoCCI Amber Listed
Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)	30+	› Feeding/flying over grassland in south of site › One swallow nest recorded in shed on site during April survey. Nest presence checked in May and June and still present. › Swallows also observed perched on cables within the site and flying over the grassland.	24th April 2024 15th May 2024 12th June 2024 30th April 2026 21st May 2026 23rd June 2026	BoCCI Amber Listed
Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)	1	› Observed perched on an ash tree on the eastern boundary	21st May 2026	BoCCI Amber Listed
Meadow Pipit (*Anthus petrosus*)	1	› Observed foraging within the Proposed Development site boundary	21st May 2026	BoCCI Red Listed
Black-headed gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)	1	› Observed flying over the site	21st May 2026	BoCCI Amber Listed **SCI Species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA and Lough Corrib SPA**
Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)	2	› Observed flying in an easterly direction over the site	30th April 2026 21st May 2026 23rd June 2026	BoCCI Amber Listed **SCI Species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA**

Species	Peak Number of individuals	Notes	Date	Status
Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)	1	› Flying in a southerly direction	30th April 2026 23rd June 2026	BoCCI Red Listed
Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*)	1	› Heard calling from outside the Proposed Development site boundary	30th April 2026	BoCCI Amber Listed **SCI Species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA**

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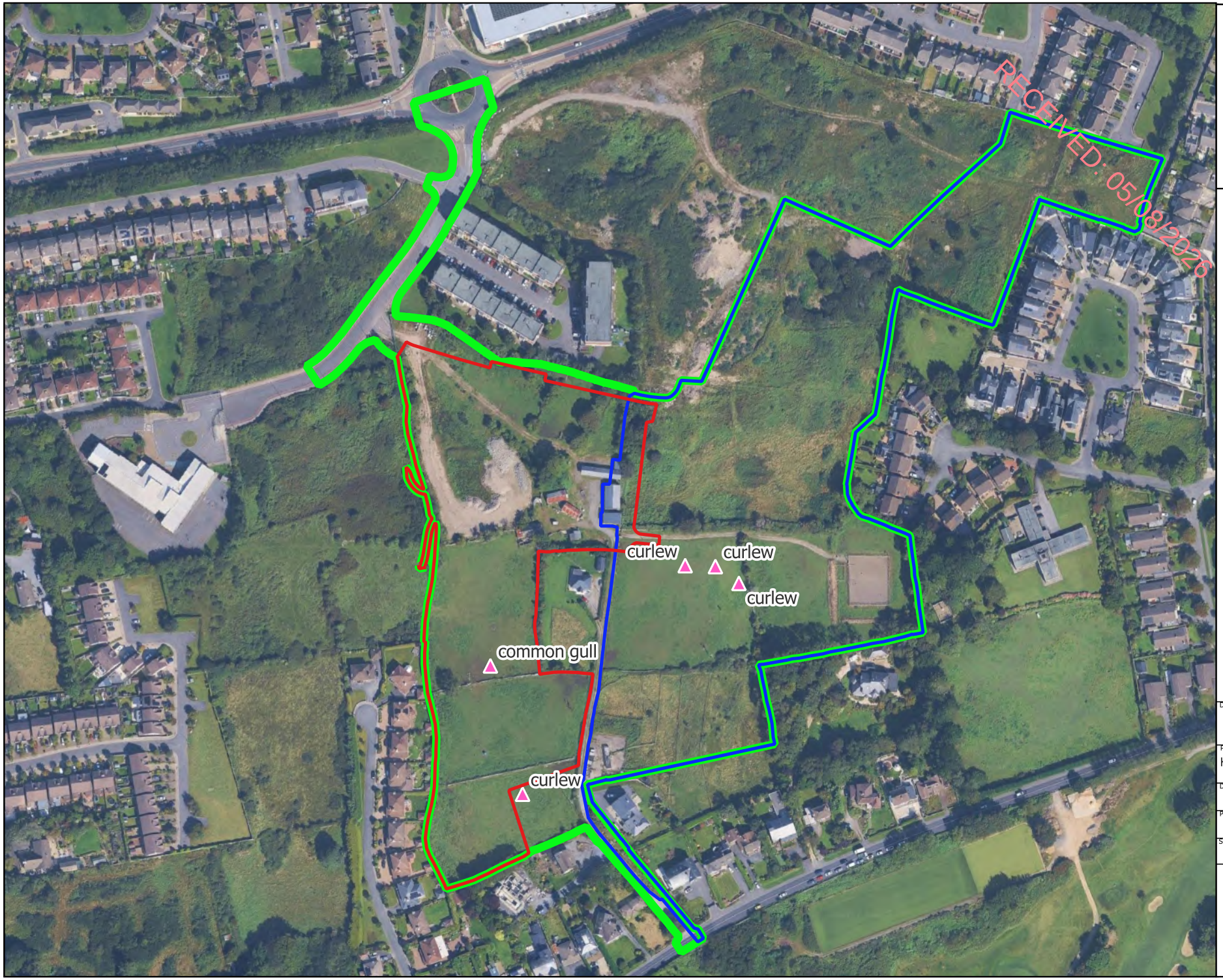
3.4.4.3 Discussion

Six SCI species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA were recorded during the winter and breeding bird surveys undertaken: Common gull (*Larus canus)*, Black-headed gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus),* Curlew (*Numenius arquata),* Cormorant *(Phalacrocorax carbo),* Wigeon *(Mareca Penelope)* and Grey heron *(Ardea cinerea).* These were all recorded during the wintering bird surveys undertaken, with the exception of Common gull, Cormorant, Black-heade gull and Wigeon which were also recorded during the breeding bird surveys completed. As per the data presented in Table 3-1 and Table 3-2, these SCI bird species did not occur in significant numbers within, or in the vicinity of the Proposed Development site and most of the SCI bird species recorded were observed flying over the wider EIAR Study Area.

Only two of these SCI bird species (associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA and Lough Corrib SPA) were observed utilizing the habitats within the EIAR Study Area– Common Gull and Curlew. One Common gull was recorded within grassland habitat in the centre of the Proposed Development site on one occasion, and 4 no. Curlew were recorded foraging in the southern grass pastures of the EIAR Study Area, which includes grasslands located just beyond the south-east boundary of the Proposed Development site. No other SCI bird species associated with any Special Protection Areas were recorded within the EIAR Study Area. SCI bird species recorded within the EIAR Study Area during winter and breeding bird surveys undertaken are shown in **Figure 3-3.**

Although grassland pastures exist within the Proposed Development site, the site is considered urban/ semi-urban in nature, with existing high levels of anthropogenic activity in the form of surrounding human activity, noise, lighting etc. Based on survey findings, and the habitat composition, the site does not provide significant supporting habitat for wintering wildfowl or waders associated with any SPA in the wider vicinity. It is likely that the bird species utilising the grassland habitats within the site are opportunistic and are not heavily dependent on the habitats contained within the site boundary. As such, the Proposed Development site does not provide any significant supporting habitat for SCI species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA or any other SPA in the wider vicinity.

It can therefore be concluded that the construction of the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of significant supporting *ex-situ* habitat or generate significant disturbance/ displacement related impacts to the SCI species associated with Inner Galway Bay SPA. Given the lack of significant suitable supporting habitat for rare or protected bird species identified within the site, there is no requirement for further bird surveys at the site.



Map Legend

- EIAR Study Area Boundary
- LRD East Red Line Boundary
- SCI bird species recorded

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Drawing Title
SCI Bird Species Recorded

Project Title
Kingston Knocknacarra LRD West

Drawn By	Checked By
FK/ CK	PD/ SM
Project No.	Drawing No.
251145	Figure 3-3
Scale	Date
1:3,000	01.07.2026

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3.4.5 Bats

Bat survey results are provided in the Bat Report, attached as **Appendix 4**. No Lesser Horseshoe bats, which are the only Qualifying Interest bat species for SACs in Ireland, were recorded within the Proposed Development site.

3.4.6 Otter

No signs of otter, including resting or breeding sites were recorded. The drainage ditch (approx. 33m), which lies beyond the Proposed Development site boundary, was deemed unsuitable supporting habitat for otter given its isolated, urban nature. There are no EPA mapped or unmapped watercourses within the Proposed Development site. Therefore, no suitable supporting habitat for this Annex II species exists within the Proposed Development site.

The Knocknacarragh stream which lies approximately 85m to the north of the Proposed Development site is culverted where it occurs in proximity to the Proposed Development site and is therefore unsuitable habitat for local populations of otter. Much of the Knocknacarragh stream in the vicinity of the Proposed Development site has been culverted in recent years to improve drainage in the area with only small isolated open sections of this watercourse remaining.

3.4.7 Marsh Fritillary

While dedicated Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) surveys were not carried out as part of the range of ecological surveys undertaken, a habitat suitability assessment for this species was undertaken during the multidisciplinary walkover surveys. No Devil's-Bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), the foodplant upon which the larval stage of Marsh Fritillary depends, and therefore a key habitat component, was recorded during these surveys, which indicates that the Proposed Development site does not provide suitable supporting habitat for this species.

4. STAGE 1 – APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING

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4.1 Identification of Relevant European Sites

The following methodology was used to establish whether there are any European Sites upon which there is a potential for a likely significant effect to occur, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, as a result of the Proposed Development:

- Initially the most up to date GIS spatial datasets for European designated sites and water catchments were downloaded from the NPWS website (www.npws.ie) and the EPA website (www.epa.ie) on the 29th June 2026.
- All European Sites that could potentially be affected were identified using a source-pathway - receptor model. To provide context for the assessment, European Sites surrounding the development site are shown on Figure 4-1. Information on these sites according to the site-specific conservation objectives is provided in Table 4-1. Sites that were further away from the Proposed Development were also considered and no complete source-pathway-receptor chain for significant effect was identified for any other European Site.
- The catchment mapping was used to establish or discount potential hydrological connectivity between the site of the Proposed Development and any European Sites. The hydrological catchments are also shown in Figure 4-1.
- In relation to Special Protection Areas, in the absence of any specific European or Irish guidance in relation to such sites, the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Guidance, 'Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPA)' (2016) was consulted. This document provides guidance in relation to the identification of connectivity between Proposed Development and Special Protection Areas. The guidance takes into consideration the distances species may travel beyond the boundary of their SPAs and provides information on dispersal and foraging ranges of bird species which are frequently encountered when considering plans and projects.
- Table 4-1 provides details of all relevant European Sites as identified in the preceding steps and assesses the potential for likely significant effects on each.
- The assessment considers any likely direct or indirect effects of the Proposed Development, both alone and in combination with other plans and projects, on European Sites by virtue of criteria including the following: size and scale, land-take, distance from the European Site or key features of the site, resource requirements, emissions, excavation requirements, transportation requirements and duration of construction, operation and decommissioning were considered in this assessment.
- The site synopses and conservation objectives of these sites, as per the NPWS website (www.npws.ie), were consulted and reviewed at the time of preparing this report on the 2nd July 2026.
- Where potential pathways for Likely Significant Effect are identified, the site is included within the Likely Zone of Influence and further assessment is required within the NIS.
- The potential for the Proposed Development to result in cumulative impacts on any European Sites in combination with other plans and projects was considered in the assessment that is presented in Table 4-1. Plans and projects considered include those that are listed in Appendix 5.

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735000 730000 725000 720000 715000

N

Ross Lake and Woods SAC

BallycuirkeLoughStream_SC_010

Lough Corrib SPA

Lough Corrib SAC

Corrib_SC_010

Clare[Galway]_SC_050

Clare[Galway]_SC_060

Clare[Galway]_SC_070

Owenboliska_SC_010

Galway Bay North

Connemara Bog Complex SAC

Connemara Bog Complex SPA

Owenriff[SouthGalway]_SC_010

Knock[Furbo]_SC_010

CARROWMONEASH[Oranmore]_SC_010

Cregganna Marsh SPA

Galway Bay South East

Clarinbridge_SC_010

Kilcogan_SC_020

Inner Galway Bay SPA

Galway Bay Complex SAC

Lough Fingall Complex SAC

Kilchreest_SC_010

Kiltiernan Turlough SAC

Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC

GLENINAGH_SOUTH_SC_010

East Burren Complex SAC

0 125 250 m

0 5 10 km

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Map Legend

- EIAR Boundary
- Proposed Development Red Line Boundary
- Permitted Development Blue Line Boundary
- WFD Catchments
- WFD Subcatchments
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)

Spatial Reference
Name: IRENET95 Irish Transverse Mercator
Datum: IRENET95
Projection: Transverse Mercator

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SITE LOCATION - NOT TO SCALE

Drawing Title

European Sites

Project Title

King Knocknacarra West LRD

Project No.	Drawing No.	Scale
251145	4-1	1:100,000
Drawn By	Checked By	Date
AMcL	JB	22/07/2026

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Table 4-1 Identification of European Sites within the Likely Zone of Influence

European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
Galway Bay Complex SAC [000268] **Distance:** 0.7km **Downstream Hydrological distance via Knocknacarragh stream**: 1.4km	› [1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide › [1150] Coastal lagoons* › [1160] Large shallow inlets and bays › [1170] Reefs › [1220] Perennial vegetation of stony banks › [1230] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts › [1310] *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand › [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) › [1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*) › [1365] Harbour seal (*Phoca vitulina*) › [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) › [3180] Turloughs	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 2, June 2026[2]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie	The Proposed Development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and no potential for direct effect to the QIs designated as part of the SAC was identified. The potential for indirect effects on this European Site has also been considered. The QIs for which this SAC is designated are terrestrial, groundwater dependant terrestrial and aquatic in nature. No QI habitat or signs of QI species were identified within the Proposed Development site during the surveys conducted to inform this assessment. The Proposed Development site and this SAC are located within the same hydrological sub-catchment (Knock [Furbo]_SC_010). There is potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Development site and the Galway Bay Complex SAC in the form of surface water connection via the Knocknacarragh stream (EPA Code: 31K16) which discharges into this SAC, approx. 1.4km downstream. Taking a precautionary approach, there is potential for indirect effects to the aquatic influenced QI species and habitats associated with this SAC. As such a complete source pathway receptor chain for likely

[2] *NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives: Galway Bay Complex SAC 000268. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
	› [5130] *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands › [6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*)(*important orchid sites) › [7210] Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae › [7230] Alkaline fens › [8240] Limestone pavements*		significant effect was identified via the potential for the deterioration to water quality resulting from pollutants arising due to works associated with the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development site is underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body and this SAC is partially underlain by this groundwater body. As stated by Geological Survey Ireland (2004), '*flow paths are short, up to 100m, with groundwater discharging to nearby streams. Flow direction is generally south.*' Further stated, '*Groundwater will discharge locally to streams and rivers crossing the aquifer and also to small springs and seeps. Owing to the poor productivity of the aquifers in this body it is unlikely that any major groundwater - surface water interactions occur'.* In light of this, and given the scale and duration of the works proposed, in the absence of mitigation, the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development have potential to result in the deterioration of water quality in the SAC via pollution to groundwaters through the percolation of polluting materials through the bedrock underlying the site, potentially adversely impacting the aquatic or groundwater influenced QI habitats and species associated with this SAC. Therefore, taking a precautionary approach, a potential pathway for indirect effects on aquatic/ groundwater dependent QIs associated with this SAC was identified during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development, in the form of deterioration of water quality resulting from potential hydrological connectivity via groundwater and surface water.

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
			Surveys undertaken within the Proposed Development site recorded two invasive species which are listed on the First Schedule of the European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024 (S.I. 374 of 2024) and/or Third Schedule of the European Communities Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011): Three-cornered leek (*Allium triquetrum*) and Sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*). In the absence of mitigation or treatment of these invasive species, the proposed works involved in the construction of the Proposed Development (excavations, earthworks and movement of excavated materials etc.) have the potential to exacerbate the spread of these species beyond the site boundary, including downstream to Galway Bay SAC, via the surface water network or drainage network. The introduction of invasive species into Galway Bay SAC, as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development, could result in degradation of the existing habitats present and therefore undermine the conservation objectives for this SAC. The Knocknacarragh stream (EPA Code: 31K16) is culverted in the vicinity of the Proposed Development site and therefore no suitable supporting habitat for otter, which is a QI species for this SAC, exists within or directly adjacent to the Proposed Development site. In addition, no signs of otter activity were recorded during surveys undertaken. As such, there is no potential for *ex-situ* habitat loss or disturbance/displacement to otter associated with the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development and likely significant effects in that regard can be excldued.

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
			A complete source pathway receptor chain for likely significant effect has been identified via the deterioration of surface and groundwaters during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development as well as the potential spread/ introduction of invasive species during the construction phase. **Therefore, the European Site is located within the Likely Zone of Influence and is considered further in this assessment.**
Lough Corrib SAC [000297] **Distance:** 2.9km	› [1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (Margaritifera margaritifera) › [1092] White-clawed Crayfish (Austropotamobius pallipes) › [1095] Sea Lamprey (Petromyzon marinus) › [1096] Brook Lamprey (Lampetra planeri) › [1106] Salmon (Salmo salar) › [1303] Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) › [1355] Otter (Lutra lutra) › [1393] Slender Green Feather-moss (Drepanocladus vernicosus)	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, April 2017[3]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie	The Proposed Development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and no potential for direct effect to the QIs designated as part of the SAC was identified. The potential for indirect effects on this European Site has also been considered. The QIs for which the site is designated are terrestrial, groundwater dependant, and aquatic in nature and are located 2.9km east of the Proposed Development boundary. No QI habitat or signs of QI species were identified within the Proposed Development site during the surveys conducted to inform this assessment. There is no surface water connectivity between the Proposed Development site and this SAC. Further, the Proposed Development site is underlain by a separate groundwater body to this SAC.

[3] *NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Lough Corrib SAC 000297. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.*

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
	› [1833] Slender Naiad (Najas flexilis) › [3110] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) › [3130] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea › [3140] Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. › [3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation › [6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) › [6410] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) › [7110] Active raised bogs		Therefore, due to the buffering distance of approx. 2.9km, and the lack of a hydrological connection, there is no potential for indirect effects in the form of water/ habitat deterioration to the aquatic or groundwater influenced QI habitats and species associated with this SAC. The Proposed Development site is located approx. 33km southeast from the nearest mapped foraging grounds for the QI species Lesser Horseshoe (LHS) bat according to the Conservation Objectives document and thus is outside the core foraging range of 2.5km for this terrestrial QI species, (NPWS, 2017). As such, there is no potential for indirect effects to this QI species in the form of ex-situ habitat loss, disturbance or displacement during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. Furthermore, this species was not recorded during the bat surveys undertaken to inform this assessment. Therefore, no source-pathway-receptor chain for likely significant effect was identified between the Proposed Development site and the QIs designated as part of Lough Corrib SAC. **No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence and is not considered further in this assessment.**

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
	› [7120] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration › [7150] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion › [7210] Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae › [7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) › [7230] Alkaline fens › [8240] Limestone pavements › [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles › [91D0] Bog woodland		
Connemara Bog Complex SAC [002034] **Distance:** Approximately 9.9km	› [1065] Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) › [1106] Salmon (*Salmo salar*) › [1150] Coastal lagoons › [1170] Reefs › [1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*) › [1833] Slender Naiad (*Najas flexilis*)	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, October 2015[4]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie	The Proposed Development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and no potential for direct effect to the QIs designated as part of the SAC was identified. The potential for indirect effects on this European Site has also been considered. The SAC is located approx. 9.9km to the west of the Proposed Development site. The QIs for which this site is designated for are

[4] *NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Connemara Bog Complex SAC 002034. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.*

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
	› [3110] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*) › [3130] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or *Isoeto-Nanojuncetea* › [3160] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds › [3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation › [4010] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* › [4030] European dry heaths › [6410] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) › [7130] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) › [7140] Transition mires and quaking bogs › [7150] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion › [7230] Alkaline fens		terrestrial, groundwater dependant, aquatic and coastal/marine in nature. The Proposed Development site and this SAC are partially located within the same hydrological sub-catchment (Knock[Furbo]_SC_010), however, no surface water connectivity exists between the Proposed Development site and this SAC. Both the SAC and the Proposed Development site are underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body. However, despite being underlain by the same groundwater body and partially sharing the same sub-catchment, there is no potential for hydrological connectivity due to the distance between sites and the nature of the groundwater body comprising of short flow paths and a tendency for groundwater to flow southwards (Geological Survey Ireland, 2004). As such, due to the intervening distance of approx. 10km, and the lack of a hydrological connection, there is no potential for indirect effects in the form of water/ habitat deterioration to the aquatic or groundwater influenced QI habitats and species associated with this SAC resulting from pollution during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. No significant suitable supporting habitat for QI species such as otter (*Lutra lutra*) were recorded within or directly adjacent to the Proposed Development site. In addition, Devil's-Bit Scabious (*Succisa prantensis*), which is the food plant upon which the larval stage of Marsh Fritillary butterfly (*Euphydryas aurinia*) depends, and as such a key habitat requirement for this species, was not recorded within the Proposed Development site. As such, there is no potential for indirect effects to any QI species in the form of *ex-situ* habitat loss, disturbance

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
	› [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles		or displacement during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. Therefore, no source-pathway-receptor chain has been identified for indirect effects to the QIs of Connemara Bog Complex SAC. Potential for direct or indirect impact on the European Site can be excluded. **No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence and is not considered further in this assessment.**
Ross Lake and Woods SAC [001312] **Distance:** 12.5km	› [1303] Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) › [3140] Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp.	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, October 2018[5]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie.	The Proposed Development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and no potential for direct effect to the QIs designated as part of the SAC has been identified. The potential for indirect effects on this European Site has also been considered. The QIs for which this SAC is designated are terrestrial, and aquatic in nature and are located 12.5km north of the Proposed Development site. Due to the terrestrial nature of the QI species LHS bat for which the site is designated and the distance from the SAC, it can be

[5] *NPWS (2018) Conservation Objectives: Ross Lake and Woods SAC 001312. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.*

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
			determined that the Proposed Development site lies outside the core foraging range of 2.5km for this QI species, (NPWS, 2017) and therefore no potential pathway for indirect effects exists. Furthermore, this species was not recorded during the bat surveys undertaken to inform this assessment. No surface water connectivity exists between the Proposed Development site and this SAC. The Proposed Development site is underlain by a different groundwater body (Spiddal) than the Ross Lake and Woods SAC (Ross Lake). Due to the lack of hydrological and groundwater connectivity, paired with the large distance between this SAC and the Proposed Development site, no source-pathway-receptor-chain for likely significant effect has been identified. **No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence and is not considered further in this assessment.**
East Burren Complex SAC [001926] **Distance:** 13.3km	› [1065] Marsh Fritillary (Euphydryas aurinia) › [1303] Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) › [1355] Otter (Lutra lutra)	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, January 2022[6]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie.	The Proposed Development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and no potential for direct effect to the QIs designated as part of the SAC has been identified.

[6] *NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: East Burren Complex SAC 001926. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
	› [3140] Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. › [3180] Turloughs › [3260] Watercourses of plain to montanane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation › [4060] Alpine and Boreal heaths › [5130] Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands › [6130] Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae › [6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) › [6510] Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis) › [7210] Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae › [7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) › [7230] Alkaline fens		The potential for indirect effects on this European Site has also been considered. In relation to the aquatic and groundwater dependant terrestrial Qualifying Interests, there is no surface water connectivity between the sites and both sites are underlain by different groundwater bodies (Spiddal and Ballyvaughan Uplands/Burren). Due to the lack of hydrological and groundwater connectivity between the sites paired with the distance between the Proposed Development site and this SAC, no complete source-pathway-receptor-chain for likely significant effect has been identified. Regarding the terrestrial QI habitats for which this SAC is designated, given the significant distance between the Proposed Development site and this SAC likely significant effects on these QI habitats can also be excluded. No signs of otter activity or significant suitable supporting habitat otter (*Lutra lutra*) were recorded, within or directly adjacent to, the Proposed Development site. In addition, Devil's-Bit Scabious (*Succisa prantensis*), which is the food plant upon which the larval stage of Marsh Fritillary butterfly (*Euphydryas aurinia*) depends, and as such a key habitat requirement for this species, was not recorded within the Proposed Development site. Finally, with regards to Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), this species was not recorded during the bat surveys undertaken to inform this assessment. Furthermore, given the significant distance which exists between the Proposed Development site and this SAC (approx. 13.3km) it can be determined that the Site lies outside the core foraging range (2.5km)

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
	› [8240] Limestone pavements › [8310] Caves not open to the public › [91E0] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)		for this species. As such, there is no potential for indirect effects to any QI species in the form of ex-situ habitat loss, disturbance or displacement during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. **No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence and is not considered further in this assessment.**
Moneen Mountain SAC [000054] **Distance:** 14.4km	› [1065] Marsh Fritillary (Euphydryas aurinia) › [1303] Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) › [3180] Turloughs › [4060] Alpine and Boreal heaths › [5130] Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands › [6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates › (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, December 2021[7]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie.	The Proposed Development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and no potential for direct effect to the QIs designated as part of the SAC has been identified. The potential for indirect effects on this European Site has also been considered. The QIs for which the site is designated are terrestrial, groundwater dependant terrestrial and aquatic in nature and are located 14.4km south of the Proposed Development boundary. Devil's-Bit Scabious (*Succisa prantensis*), which is the food plant upon which the larval stage of Marsh Fritillary butterfly (*Euphydryas aurinia*) depends, and as such a key habitat requirement for this species, was not recorded

[7] *NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Moneen Mountain SAC 000054. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
	› [7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) › [8240] Limestone pavements		within the Proposed Development site. Furthermore, with regards to Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), this species was not recorded during the bat surveys undertaken to inform this assessment. Given the significant distance which exists between the Proposed Development site and this SAC (approx. 14.4km) it can be determined that the Site lies outside the core foraging range (2.5km) for this species. As such, there is no potential for indirect effects to any QI species in the form of ex-situ habitat loss, disturbance or displacement during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. In relation to the terrestrial QI habitats for which the site is designated, the distance from the SAC means that there is no potential pathway for indirect effects on these QIs. In relation to the aquatic and groundwater dependant terrestrial Qualifying Interests, there is no surface water connectivity between sites and both sites are underlain by different groundwater bodies (Spiddal and Ballyvaughan Uplands/Burren). Due to the lack of hydrological connectivity between sites paired with the distance between sites, no complete source-pathway-receptor-chain for likely significant effects has been identified. **No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence and is not considered further in this assessment.**

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC [000020] **Distance:** 14.8km	› [1170] Reefs › [1220] Perennial vegetation of stony banks › [1395] Petalwort (Petalophyllum ralfsii) › [2130] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* › [3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation › [4060] Alpine and Boreal heaths › [5130] Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands › [6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia)(*important orchid sites) › [6510] Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, sanguisorba officnalis)	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 2, March 2026[8]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie.	The Proposed Development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and no potential for direct effect to the QIs designated as part of the SAC has been identified. The potential for indirect effects on this European Site has also been considered. The QIs for which the site is designated are terrestrial, groundwater dependant terrestrial, aquatic and coastal/marine in nature and are located 14.7km south of the Proposed Development boundary. In terms of terrestrial QIs, the significant distance that exists between the Proposed Development site and the SAC, allows the potential for indirect effects to be excluded. In relation to the aquatic, groundwater dependant terrestrial and coastal/marine QIs, there is no surface water connectivity between sites and both sites are underlain by different groundwater bodies (Spiddal and Slieve Elva). Due to the lack of hydrological connectivity between the sites paired with the distance between the sites, no complete source-pathway-receptor-chain has been identified. **No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation,**

[8] *NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives: Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC 000020. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
	› [7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) › [8240] Limestone pavements › [8330] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves		**individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence and is not considered further in this assessment.**
Special Protection Area (SPA)			
Inner Galway Bay SPA [004031] **Distance:** 0.9km **Downstream Hydrological distance via Knocknacarragh stream**: approx. 1.9km	› [A003] Great Northern Diver (Gavia immer) › [A017] Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) › [A028] Grey Heron (Ardea cinerea) › [A046] Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) › [A050] Wigeon (Anas Penelope) › [A052] Teal (Anas crecca) › [A056] Shoveler (Anas clypeata) › [A069] Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator) › [A137] Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula)	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, May 2013[9]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie.	The Proposed Development is located outside the boundary of this SPA and no potential for direct effect to the SCIs designated as part of the SPA has been identified. The potential for indirect effects on this European Site has also been considered. Both the Proposed Development site and this SPA lie within the Knock [Furbo]_SC_010 sub catchment. Potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Development site and Inner Galway Bay SPA exists via the Knocknacarragh stream (EPA code: 31K16), which is culverted to the north of the Proposed Development site. The Knocknacarragh stream flows in a south-westerly direction and discharges into Galway Bay, constituting a hydrological connection with this SPA approx. 1.9km downstream of the Proposed Development site. Additionally, both the Proposed Development site

[9] *NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Inner Galway Bay SPA 004031. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.*

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
	• [A140] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) • [A142] Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) • [A149] Dunlin (Calidris alpina alpina) • [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) • [A160] Curlew (Numenius arquata) • [A162] Redshank (Tringa tetanus) • [A169] Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) • [A179] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) • [A182] Common Gull (Larus canus) • [A191] Sandwich Tern (Sterna sandvicensis) • [A193] Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) • [A999] Wetlands		and this SPA are partially underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body. This groundwater body has short groundwater flow paths of up to 100m, flowing into nearby streams and flow directions following topography generally south (GSI 2004). Taking a precautionary approach, there is the potential for pollutants to percolate to groundwaters as a result of ground excavations during construction phases. As such, a potential pathway for indirect effects on SCI habitat [A999] Wetlands, (which all SCI bird species designated as part of this SPA are dependent on) in the form of groundwater and surface water was identified. Surveys undertaken within the Proposed Development site recorded two invasive species which are listed on the First Schedule of the European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024 (S.I. 374 of 2024) and/or Third Schedule of the European Communities Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011): Three-cornered leek (*Allium triquetrum*) and Sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*). In the absence of mitigation or treatment of these invasive species, the proposed works involved in the construction of the Proposed Development (excavations, earthworks and movement of excavated materials etc.) have the potential to exacerbate the spread of these species beyond the site boundary, including downstream to Inner Galway Bay SPA, via the surface water network or drainage network. The introduction of invasive species into Inner Galway Bay SPA, as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development, could result in degradation of the existing wetland habitats present, upon which the SCI species depend, and therefore undermine the conservation objectives for this SPA.

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
			Grasslands occur in the south of the Proposed Development site. Individual curlew and common gull were infrequently recorded foraging within the Proposed Development site and wider EIAR Study Area in 2024/2025 during dedicated winter bird surveys (see bird survey results in Section 3.3.2 above). It is highly likely the SCI species recorded on site were opportunists and are therefore not dependent on the habitats within the Proposed Development site. The Proposed Development site is surrounded by urban areas and no other SCI bird species were recorded utilizing the habitats during the bird surveys conducted during the 2024/2025 season. Despite the fact that the Proposed Development site is located within the core foraging range for both Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) and Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) (Summers and Critchley, 1990, Lewis et. al. 2019), neither of these SCI species were recorded during surveys undertaken. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Proposed Development site does not provide significant suitable supporting habitat for SCI bird species and significant effects as a result of ex-situ habitat loss and/or disturbance/ displacement can be excluded. A complete source pathway receptor chain for likely significant effect has been identified via surface and ground water pollution to SCI supporting habitat, [A999] Wetlands, as well as the potential spread of invasive species which could result in the degradation of supporting wetland habitat, during construction of the Proposed Development. **Therefore, the European Site is located within the Likely Zone of Influence and is considered further in this assessment.**

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
Lough Corrib SPA [004042] **Distance:** 3.9km	› [A051] Gadwall (Anas strepera) › [A056] Shoveler (Anas clypeata) › [A059] Pochard (Aythya farina) › [A061] Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula) › [A065] Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra) › [A082] Hen Harrier (Circus cyaneus) › [A125] Coot (Fulica atra) › [A140] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) › [A179] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) › [A182] Common Gull (Larus canus) › [A193] Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) › [A194] Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea) › [A395] Greenland White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons flavirostris) › [A999] Wetlands	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, January 2023[10]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie.	The Proposed Development is located outside the boundary of this SPA and no potential for direct effect to the SCIs designated as part of the SPA has been identified. The potential for indirect effects on this European Site have also been considered. The Proposed Development site is located approx. 3.9km from this SPA. This SPA is located within the Corrib_SC_010 hydrological sub-catchment and underlain by multiple groundwater bodies, none of which overlap with the Proposed Development site (Spiddal). Therefore, no hydrological connectivity exists between this SPA and the Proposed Development site. Therefore, there is no potential for direct or indirect effects on SCIs designated as part of this SPA due to deterioration to water quality associated with the construction phases of the Proposed Development. Furthermore, a small, isolated drainage ditch was identified beyond the boundary of the Proposed Development site. No bird species were recorded utilizing this habitat on any occasion and no other wetland habitats exist within or directly adjacent to the Proposed Development site. No water was recorded at this small habitat on multiple occasions throughout 2024 and 2025. There is no potential for direct or indirect effects on the SCI habitat Wetland as a result of the Proposed Development.

[10] *NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: Lough Corrib SPA 004042. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
			No significant suitable supporting habitat for waterbirds exists within the Proposed Development site. Grassland habitats recorded in the Proposed Development site have some potential to provide suitable supporting habitat for SCI species such as Greenland white fronted goose which are known to forage/graze on semi-natural and improved grasslands (SNH, 2016). No Greenland White-fronted geese were recorded within the Proposed Development site during the surveys undertaken. One Common gull was recorded within the wider EIAR Study Area, but not within the Proposed Development site, during surveys undertaken. As significant numbers of SCI birds were not recorded on site during the suite of bird survesy undertaken, it can be concluded that the habitats present on site do not constitute a significant ex-situ foraging resource for these species. Therefore, likely significant effects on these SCI species, as a result of ex-situ habitat loss and/or disturbance/ displacement during construction can be excluded. **No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence and is not considered further in this assessment.**

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
Cregganna Marsh SPA [004142] **Distance:** 11.1km	› [A395] Greenland White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons flavirostris)	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, January 2023[11]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie.	The proposed works are located outside the boundary of this SPA and there is no potential for direct effect. The Proposed Development area is located 11.1km west of Cregganna Marsh SPA, this places the Proposed Development site outside the core foraging range of the Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) (5-8km according to SNH, 2016). Furthermore, no hydrological connection between this SPA and the Proposed Development site exists. Due to the distance between the sites, there is no potential source-pathway receptor chain for direct or indirect effects on the Special Conservation Interest species for which the SPA has been designated as a result of disturbance. **No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.**

[11] *NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: Cregganna Marsh SPA 004142. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage*

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
Connemara Bog Complex SPA [004181] **Distance:** 14.2km	› [A017] Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) › [A098] Merlin (Falco columbarius) › [A140] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) › [A182] Common Gull (Larus canus)	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, January 2023[12]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie.	The proposed works are located outside the boundary of this SPA and there is no potential for direct effect. The Proposed Development is located 14.2km east of Connemara Bog Complex SPA, this places the Proposed Development site outside the core foraging range of Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) (5.2km according to Thaxter *et al.,* 2012), Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) (5km according to SNH, 2016), and Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) (3km according to SNH, 2016). However, the site is within the core foraging range of Common Gull (*Larus canus*) (25km according to Thaxter *et al.,* 2012) which may utilise agricultural lands for opportunistic foraging. As described in Section 3.3.2 above, only one Common gull was recorded within the boundary of the Proposed Development site, during the suite of bird surveys undertaken to inform this assessment. Therefore, the habitats within the Proposed Development site do not provide significant suitable supporting habiat for Common gull. As significant numbers of SCI birds were not recorded on site during the suite of bird surveys undertaken, it can be concluded that the habitats present on site do not constitute significant ex-situ foraging resource for these species. Therefore, likely significant effects on these

[12] *NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: Connemara Bog Complex SPA 004181. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*

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European Sites and distance from Proposed Development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests (QIs/SCIs) for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 1st July 2026	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain
			SCI species, as a result of ex-situ habitat loss and/or disturbance/ displacement during construction can be excluded. **No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.**

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4.2 Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening Conclusion

It cannot be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the following European sites:

- Galway Bay Complex SAC [000268]
- Inner Galway Bay SPA [004031]

As a result, an Appropriate Assessment is required, and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared in respect of the Proposed Development.

5. STAGE 2- NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT (NIS)

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The potential for likely significant effects on the following European Sites in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects, was identified in the preceding section:

- Galway Bay Complex SAC [000268]
- Inner Galway Bay SPA [004031]

The following sections consider each European Site individually to:

1. Determine which individual qualifying features have the potential to be adversely affected by the Proposed Development.
2. Provide information with regard to the Conservation Objectives and site-specific pressures and threats for those qualifying features that have the potential to be adversely effected.

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5.1 Identification of relevant Qualifying Features and Desk Study

5.1.1 Galway Bay Complex SAC

The potential for likely significant effects on this SAC was identified in Section 4.1 above. The identified pathways for effect include the following:

- The construction and operational phase of the Proposed Development may result in the deterioration of water quality in Galway Bay SAC via pollution to groundwaters through the percolation of polluting materials through the bedrock underlying the site and via surface waters, adversely impacting the aquatic or groundwater influenced QI habitats and species within the SAC, in the absence of mitigation.
- The construction phase of the Proposed Development may result in the degradation of QI habitats in Galway Bay SAC via the downstream spread or introduction of the invasive species recorded within and in close proximity to the Proposed Development site, via surface waters or the local drainage network, in the absence of mitigation.

Table 5-1 below lists the qualifying features of this European Site and determines, in the light of their Conservation Objectives, whether there is any complete source-pathway-receptor chain, by which adverse effects may occur.

5.1.1.1 Identification of Individual Qualifying Features with the Potential to be Affected

Table 5-1 Assessment of Qualifying features potentially affected

Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
[1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide in Galway Bay Complex SAC.	Due to the proximity of the development site to Galway Bay Complex SAC (0.7km), a potential pathway for indirect effects on the following marine QI habitat: Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide was identified in the form of deterioration of water quality and supporting habitats for aquatic fauna.	**Yes**

[13] *NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives: Galway Bay Complex SAC 000268. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
	Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	As per Map 3 in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS 2026), this marine QI Habitat: Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide is mapped approx. 0.9km south of the Proposed Development site. There is potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Development site and Galway Bay Complex SAC in the form of surface and groundwater connection. The Knocknacarragh stream (EPA Code: 31K16) flows culverted to the north-west of the Proposed Development site, in a south-westerly direction, before discharging into Rusheen Bay, which is designated as part of Galway Bay Complex SAC approx. 1.4km downstream. Further, the Proposed Development site and SAC are located within the same hydrological sub-catchment (Knock [Furbo]_SC_010) and are both underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body. As stated by Geological Survey Ireland (2004), flow paths are short, up to 100m, with groundwater discharging to nearby streams. Flow direction is generally south. Water level data indicates that the water table is from 0-6 m below ground level. As such, the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development may result in the deterioration of water quality in the SAC via pollution to groundwaters through the percolation of polluting materials through the bedrock underlying the site, and to surface waters, adversely impacting the water quality/ habitat quality and supporting habitats for aquatic fauna in this QI habitat: Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide within the SAC, in the absence of mitigation. Given the nature of this habitat, which is inundated by seawater at high tide, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive in this high-saline environment, if they were to be transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **A complete source-pathway-receptor chain for adverse effects on this habitat was identified and it is assessed further in this NIS.**	

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
[1150] Coastal lagoons*	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Coastal lagoons in Galway Bay Complex SAC. Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	Due to the proximity of the development site to Galway Bay Complex SAC (0.7km), a potential pathway for indirect effects on the following marine QI habitat: Coastal lagoons was identified in the form of deterioration of water quality and supporting habitats for aquatic fauna. As per Map 4 in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS 2026), this marine QI Habitat: Coastal lagoons is mapped approx 3.4km east of the Proposed Development site. Further, as stated in the SSCO Document (NPWS 2026), there may be more, as yet unmapped, lagoons within this SAC. There is potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Development site and Galway Bay Complex SAC in the form of surface and groundwater connection. The Knocknacarragh stream (EPA Code: 31K16) flows culverted in the northwest of the Proposed Development site, in a south-westerly direction, before discharging into Rusheen Bay, which is designated as part of Galway Bay Complex SAC approx 1.4km downstream. Further, the Proposed Development site and SAC are located within the same hydrological sub-catchment (Knock [Furbo]_SC_010) and are both underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body. As stated by Geological Survey Ireland (2004), flow paths are short, up to 100m, with groundwater discharging to nearby streams. Flow direction is generally south. Water level data indicates that the water table is from 0-6 m below ground level. As such, the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development may result in the deterioration of water quality in the SAC via pollution to groundwaters through the percolation of polluting materials through the bedrock underlying the site, and to surface waters, adversely impacting the water quality/ habitat quality and supporting habitats for aquatic fauna in this QI habitat: Coastal Lagoons within the SAC, in the absence of mitigation. Given the marine nature of this habitat, and the intervening distance between this QI habitat and the Proposed Development site, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive in this high-saline environment, if they were to be transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks.	Yes

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
		Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **A complete source-pathway-receptor chain for adverse effects on this habitat was identified and it is assessed further in this NIS.**	
[1160] Large shallow inlets and bays	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Large shallow inlets and bays in Galway Bay Complex SAC. Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	Due to the proximity of the development site to Galway Bay Complex SAC (0.7km), a potential pathway for indirect effects on the following marine QI habitat: Large shallow inlets and bays was identified in the form of deterioration of water quality and supporting habitats for aquatic fauna. As per Map 5 in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS 2026), this marine QI Habitat: Large shallow inlets and bays is mapped approx. 0.9km southwest of the Proposed Development site. There is potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Development site and Galway Bay Complex SAC in the form of surface and groundwater connection. The Knocknacarragh stream (EPA Code: 31K16) flows culverted in the northwest of the Proposed Development site, in a south-westerly direction, before discharging into Rusheen Bay, which is designated as part of Galway Bay Complex SAC approx 1.4km downstream. Further, the Proposed Development site and SAC are located within the same hydrological sub-catchment (Knock [Furbo]_SC_010) and are both underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body. As stated by Geological Survey Ireland (2004), flow paths are short, up to 100m, with groundwater discharging to nearby streams and water level data indicates that the water table is from 0-6 m below ground level. As such, the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development may result in the deterioration of water quality in the SAC via pollution to groundwaters through the percolation of polluting materials through the bedrock underlying the site, and to surface waters, adversely impacting the water quality/ habitat quality and supporting habitats for aquatic fauna in this QI habitat: Large shallow inlets and bays within the SAC, in the absence of mitigation.	**Yes**

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
		Given the marine nature of this habitat, and the intervening distance between this QI habitat and the Proposed Development site, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive in this high-saline environment, if they were to be transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **A complete source-pathway-receptor chain for adverse effects on this habitat was identified and it is assessed further in this NIS.**	
[1170] Reefs	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs in Galway Bay Complex SAC. Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	Due to the proximity of the development site to Galway Bay Complex SAC (0.8km), a potential pathway for indirect effects on the following marine QI habitat: Reefs was identified in the form of deterioration of water quality and supporting habitats for aquatic fauna. As per Map 6 in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS, 2026), this marine QI Habitat: Reefs is mapped approx. 1.9km southwest of the Proposed Development site. There is potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Development site and Galway Bay Complex SAC in the form of surface and groundwater connection. The Knocknacarragh stream (EPA Code: 31K16) flows culverted in the northwest of the Proposed Development site, in a south-westerly direction, before discharging into Rusheen Bay, which is designated as part of Galway Bay Complex SAC approx 1.4km downstream. Further, the Proposed Development site and SAC are located within the same hydrological sub-catchment (Knock [Furbo]_SC_010) and are both underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body. As stated by Geological Survey Ireland (2004), flow paths are short, up to 100 m, with groundwater discharging to nearby streams and water level data indicates that the water table is from 0-6 m below ground level. As such, the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development may result in the deterioration of water quality in the SAC via pollution to groundwaters through the percolation of polluting materials through the bedrock underlying the site, and to surface	**Yes**

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
		waters, adversely impacting the water quality/ habitat quality and supporting habitats for aquatic fauna in this QI habitat: Reefs within the SAC, in the absence of mitigation. Given the marine nature of this habitat, and the intervening distance between this QI habitat and the Proposed Development site, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive in this high-saline environment, if they were to be transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **A complete source-pathway-receptor chain for adverse effects on this habitat was identified and it is assessed further in this NIS.**	
[1220] Perennial vegetation of stony banks	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Perennial vegetation of stony banks in Galway Bay Complex SAC. Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.8km north of Galway Bay Complex SAC. As per Map 8 in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS, 2026), this terrestrial QI Habitat: Perennial vegetation of stony banks is mapped approx 2km southwest of the Proposed Development site. As stated in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS, 2026), the current area of this terrestrial QI Habitat: Perennial vegetation of stony banks is unknown. Given the coastal terrestrial nature of this habitat, and buffering distance that exists between the Proposed Development site and this QI habitat, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive being transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **No complete source- pathway- receptor chain for any effect on this habitat as a result of the Proposed Development was identified. No further assessment is required.**	**No**

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
[1230] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts in Galway Bay Complex SAC. Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.8km north of Galway Bay Complex SAC. As per Map 13 in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS, 2026), this terrestrial QI Habitat: Perennial vegetation of stony banks is mapped approx 1.6km southwest of the Proposed Development site. As stated in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS, 2026), the mapped length of this terrestrial QI Habitat: Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts within the SAC is likely to be underestimated. Given the coastal terrestrial nature of this habitat, and buffering distance that exists between the Proposed Development site and this QI habitat, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive being transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **No complete source- pathway- receptor chain for any effect on this habitat as a result of the Proposed Development was identified. No further assessment is required.**	**No**
[1310] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand in Galway Bay Complex SAC Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.8km to the north of the Galway Bay Complex SAC. As per Map 9 in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS, 2026), this terrestrial QI Habitat: Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand is mapped approx 6.7km southeast of the Proposed Development site. As stated in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS, 2026), the current area of this terrestrial QI Habitat: Salicornia and other annuals colonising mid and sand is unknown. The potential for adverse effects on this habitat can be ruled out due to the terrestrial nature of the habitat, the buffering distance of approx. 6.7km from the Proposed Development site, as	**No**

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
		per Map 9 of the Conservation Objectives document, and the absence of a complete source-pathway-receptor chain. Given the nature of this habitat, which is subject to inundation by seawater at high tide, and the buffering distance of 6.7km from the Proposed Development site, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive in this high-saline environment, if they were to be transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **No complete source- pathway- receptor chain for any effect on this habitat as a result of the Proposed Development was identified. No further assessment is required.**	
[1355] Otter *Lutra lutra*	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Otter in Galway Bay Complex SAC Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.8km to the north of Galway Bay Complex SAC. No signs of otter were recorded during the surveys carried out to inform this assessment and no suitable supporting habitat exists within the boundary of the Proposed Development site. Nevertheless, as per Map 11 of the CO document for this SAC (NPWS 2026) designated QI species otter utilise Galway Bay. The Proposed Development site and this SAC are located within the same hydrological sub-catchment (Knock [Furbo]_SC_010). There is potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Development site and the Galway Bay Complex SAC in the form of surface water connection. The Knocknacarragh stream (EPA Code: 31K16) flows culverted in the northwest of the Proposed Development site. This watercourse flows 1.4km downstream (d/s), in a south-westerly direction, into Rusheen Bay, which is designated as part of Galway Bay Complex SAC. The Proposed Development site is underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body. As stated by Geological Survey Ireland (2004), flow paths are short, up to 100m, with groundwater	**Yes**

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
		discharging to nearby streams. Flow direction is generally south. Water level data indicates that the water table is from 0-6 m below ground level. As such, given the scale of the works proposed, the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development have potential to result in the deterioration of water quality in the SAC via pollution to groundwaters through the percolation of polluting materials through the bedrock underlying the site, and via surface waters, potentially adversely affecting the QI species otter as a result of habitat degradation or reduction in fish prey availability. **A complete source-pathway-receptor chain for adverse effects on this species was identified and it is assessed further in this NIS.**	
[1365] Harbour Seal *Phoca vitulina*	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Harbour Seal in Galway Bay Complex SAC Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.8km to the north of Galway Bay Complex SAC. As per Map 12 of the CO document (NPWS, 2026) Galway Bay Complex SAC provides suitable supporting habitat for resting, breeding and moulting harbour seals designated as part of this SAC. The Proposed Development site and this SAC are located within the same hydrological sub-catchment (Knock [Furbo]_SC_010). There is potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Development site and the Galway Bay Complex SAC in the form of surface water connection. The Knocknacarragh stream (EPA Code: 31K16) flows culverted in the northwest of the Proposed Development site. This watercourse flows 1.4km downstream (d/s), in a south-westerly direction, into Rusheen Bay, which is designated as part of Galway Bay Complex SAC. The Proposed Development site is underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body. As stated by Geological Survey Ireland (2004), flow paths are short, up to 100m, with groundwater discharging to nearby streams. Flow direction is generally south. Water level data indicates that the water table is from 0-6 m below ground level. As such, taking a precautionary approach, given the scale of the works proposed, the construction and operational phases of the Proposed	**Yes**

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
		Development have potential to result in the deterioration of water quality in the SAC via pollution to groundwaters through the percolation of polluting materials through the bedrock underlying the site, and via surface waters, which has potential to adversely affect the QI species harbour seal. Given the distance of approx 3.8km to the nearest mapped resting site, approx 5.8km to the nearest mapped breeding site, and approx 6.7km to the nearest mapped moulting site, and the lack of supporting habitats present on the site of the Proposed Development, there is no potential for ex-situ habitat loss, and/ or disturbance or displacement related effects on this QI Species as a result of the construction or operation of the Proposed Development. **A complete source-pathway-receptor chain for adverse effects on this species was identified and it is assessed further in this NIS.**	
[1330] Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) in Galway Bay Complex SAC Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.8km to the north of the Galway Bay Complex SAC. As per Map 9 in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS, 2026), this terrestrial QI Habitat: Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) is mapped approx. 1.7km southwest of the Proposed Development site. Given the coastal terrestrial nature of this habitat which would be subject to inundation by seawater at times, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive in this high-saline environment, if they were to be transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **No complete source- pathway- receptor chain for any effect on this habitat as a result of the Proposed Development was identified. No further assessment is required.**	**No**

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
[1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*)	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) in Galway Bay Complex SAC. Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.8km to the north of the Galway Bay Complex SAC. As per Map 9 in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS 2026), this terrestrial QI Habitat: Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi)* is mapped approx 1.5km southwest of the Proposed Development site. Given the coastal terrestrial nature of this habitat which would be subject to inundation by seawater at times, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive in this high-saline environment, if they were to be transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **No complete source- pathway- receptor chain for any effect on this habitat as a result of the Proposed Development was identified. No further assessment is required.**	**No**
[3180] Turloughs*	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Turloughs in Galway Bay Complex SAC. Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.8km to the north of the Galway Bay Complex SAC. As per Map 10 in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS 2026), this QI Habitat: Turlough is mapped approx. 10.6km northwest of the Proposed Development site. The Proposed Development site is situated within a different groundwater body (Spiddal) than this QI habitat (Clarinbridge). The potential for adverse effects on this habitat can be ruled out due to the buffering distance of approx. 10.6km from the Proposed Development site, as per Map 10 of the Conservation Objectives document, the absence of hydrological connectivity, and the absence of a complete source-pathway-receptor chain.	**No**

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
		Given the terrestrial nature of this habitat and the buffering distance of 10.6km from the Proposed Development site, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive being transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **No complete source- pathway- receptor chain for any effect on this habitat as a result of the Proposed Development was identified. No further assessment is required.**	
[5130] *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands in Galway Bay Complex SAC. Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.8km to the north of the Galway Bay Complex SAC. As per Map 10 in the Site-Specific Conservation Document (NPWS 2026), this terrestrial QI Habitat: *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands is mapped approx. 11.8km southeast of the Proposed Development site. The potential for adverse effects on this habitat can be ruled out due to the terrestrial nature of the habitat, the buffering distance of approx. 11.8km from the Proposed Development site, as per Map 10 of the Conservation Objectives document, and the absence of a complete source-pathway-receptor chain. Given the terrestrial nature of this habitat and the buffering distance of 11.8km from the Proposed Development site, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive being transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **No complete source- pathway- receptor chain for any effect on this habitat as a result of the Proposed Development was identified. No further assessment is required.**	**No**

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
[6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*) (*important orchid sites)	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia) in Galway Bay Complex. Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.8km to the north of the Galway Bay Complex SAC. As stated in the Site-Specific Conservation Document for this SAC (NPWS 2026), the current area for this terrestrial QI Habitat: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*) (*important orchid sites) is unknown. Further, areas are likely to be small and often in mosaic with other habitats such as limestone pavement and scrub. This QI habitat type was not recorded within or adjacent to the Proposed Development site, during surveys undertaken to inform this assessment. Given the terrestrial nature of this habitat, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive being transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **No complete source- pathway- receptor chain for any effect on this habitat as a result of the Proposed Development was identified. No further assessment is required.**	**No**
[7210] Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae* in Galway Bay Complex SAC. Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.8km to the north of the Galway Bay Complex SAC. As stated in the Site-Specific Conservation Document for this SAC (NPWS 2026) the full extent of this QI habitat: Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae* within the SAC is currently unknown. Further, mapped fen vegetation occurs in wetland areas to the east of Oranmore. It has also been recorded in Ballindereen Lough, mapped approx 15.5km southeast from the Proposed Development site, as per Map 10 in the Site-Specific Conservation Document for this SAC (NPWS 2026).	**No**

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
		Given the terrestrial nature of this habitat, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive being transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **No complete source- pathway- receptor chain for any effect on this habitat as a result of the Proposed Development was identified. No further assessment is required.**	
[7230] Alkaline fens	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Alkaline fens in Galway Bay Complex SAC. Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.8km to the north of the Galway Bay Complex SAC. As stated in the Site-Specific Conservation Document for this SAC (NPWS 2026) the full extent of this QI habitat: Alkaline fens within the SAC is currently unknown. Further, fen vegetation occurs in wetland areas to the east of Oranmore. It has also been recorded in Ballindereen Lough, mapped approx 15.5km southeast from the Proposed Development site, as per Map 10 in the Site-Specific Conservation Document for this SAC (NPWS 2026). Given the terrestrial nature of this habitat, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive being transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **No complete source- pathway- receptor chain for any effect on this habitat as a result of the Proposed Development was identified. No further assessment is required.**	**No**
[8240] Limestone pavements*	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements in Galway Bay Complex SAC.	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.8km to the north of the Galway Bay Complex SAC.	**No**

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026[13]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
	Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 2, June 2026).	As stated in the Site-Specific Conservation Document for this SAC (NPWS, 2026), limestone pavement habitat occurs in association with other Annex I habitats in Galway Bay Complex SAC, e.g. Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands (5130) and Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) (6210). Other habitats include species-rich heath and scrub. Due to their intricate association and overlapping nature, these habitats cannot easily be mapped or considered separately. The total area of limestone pavements within Galway Bay Complex SAC has not been surveyed in detail but based on Wilson and Fernandez (2013) is estimated to be approximately 125.87ha as per Map 14 of the SSCO document (NPWS, 2026). Given the terrestrial nature of this habitat, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive being transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. **No complete source- pathway- receptor chain for any effect on this habitat as a result of the Proposed Development was identified. No further assessment is required.**	

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5.1.1.2 Site Specific Pressures and Threats

As per the Natura 2000 Data Form, the site-specific threats, pressures and activities with potential to impact on the European Site were reviewed and considered in relation to the Proposed Development. These are provided in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2 Site-specific threats, pressures and activities

Negative Impacts			
Rank	Threats and Pressures		Inside/Outside
High	D03	Shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions	Inside
High	D03.01.04	Industrial ports	Inside
High	H01.05	Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to agricultural and forestry activities	Both
High	H01.08	Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to household sewage and waste waters	Both
High	J02.12.01	Sea defence or coast protection works, tidal barrages	Inside
Low	D01.01	Paths, tracks, cycling tracks	Inside
Low	D03.01.01	Slipways	Inside
Low	D03.01.01	Slipways	Inside
Low	E03.03	Disposal of inert materials	Inside
Low	F02.03.01	Bait digging/collection	Inside
Low	G01.01.02	Non-motorised nautical sports	Inside
Low	G02.01	Golf course	Inside
Low	J02.02.02	Estuarine and coastal dredging	Inside
Low	J02.05.01	Modification of water flow (tidal & marine currents)	Both
Medium	A02.01	Agricultural intensification	Inside
Medium	A04.02.01	Non-intensive cattle grazing	Inside
Medium	A04.02.02	Non-intensive sheep grazing	Inside
Medium	C01.01	Sand and gravel extraction	Inside
Medium	C01.01.02	Removal of beach materials	Inside
Medium	D02.02	Pipelines	Inside
Medium	F01	Marine and Freshwater Aquaculture	Both
Medium	F06	Hunting, fishing or collecting activities not referred to above	Inside

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Negative Impacts			
Rank	Threats and Pressures		Inside/Outside
Medium	I01	Invasive non-native species	Both
Medium	J02.01.02	Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh	Inside
Medium	J02.01.02	Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh	Inside

Potential pathways for effect with regard to site-specific threats, pressures and activities have been identified in relation to potential for water quality i.e. 'Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to household sewage and waste waters'.

5.1.1.3 Species Specific Information

5.1.1.3.1 *[1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide*

Description from SSCO document

Tidal mudflats and sandflats habitat is comprised of the intertidal section of coastlines where sands and muds dominate. These ecosystems are dynamic and rely on a balance of both natural accretion and erosion. Site specific ranges of salinity, temperature, oxygen level, nutrient levels, riverine influence level and sediment sizes determine biological community within these habitats. The varying biological community determined by the substrate and environmental factors create species assemblages comprised of molluscs, crustaceans, polychaetes and oligochaetes. This habitat is currently experiencing a deteriorating trend since 2013 due to pressures from agricultural, forestry and wastewater sources, as well as marine aquaculture impacts (NPWS, 2019).

The habitat area was estimated to be 744ha according to the Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCO) document (NPWS, 2026). Conserving the community types: Intertidal sandy mud community complex; and Intertidal sand community complex in a natural condition is necessary to support the natural structure and function of this habitat. Potential for indirect impacts on this Qualifying Interest exists via potential for deterioration in water quality associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. The targets and attributes for this QI habitat is shown below in Table 5-3.

Targets and Attributes

Table 5-3 Targets and Attributes for [1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats

Attribute	Target	Potential for Proposed Development to Undermine Conservation Objective Target
Habitat area	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes.	No – The Proposed Development will not involve activities or operations which would permanently remove this QI habitat from within the SAC

Attribute	Target	Potential for Proposed Development to Undermine Conservation Objective Target
Community distribution	Conserve the following community types in a natural condition: Intertidal sandy mud community complex; and Intertidal sand community complex	No – The Proposed Development will not involve any activities or operations which could result in disturbance to the community groups associated with this QI habitat

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5.1.1.3.2 *[1150] Coastal lagoons*

Description from SSCO document

Lagoons are areas of open coastal water of varying salinity, which can either be wholly or partially separated from the sea via features such as sand banks, shingle, or occasionally by rocks. In Ireland five morphological lagoon types, artificial lagoons (of natural origin), sedimentary lagoons, rock/peat lagoon, karst lagoons, and saltmarsh lagoons. Pressures such as eutrophication, modification of hydrological flow, and drainage have been identified as the reason for the Status of Lagoon habitats in Ireland to be "Bad", with the overall trend assessed as deteriorating, a decline since 2013 (NPWS, 2019).

The habitat area was estimated to be 76.67ha according to the Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCO) document (NPWS, 2026), with a distribution map (Map 4, in the SSCO document) of this habitat within the SAC provided. Potential for indirect impacts on this Qualifying Interest exists via potential for deterioration in water quality associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. The targets and attributes for this QI habitat is shown below in Table 5-4.

Targets and Attributes

Table 5-4 Targets and Attributes for [1150] Coastal lagoons

Attribute	Target	Potential for Proposed Development to Undermine Conservation Objective Target
Habitat area	Area stable, subject to slight natural variation. Favourable reference area 76.7ha. See map 4	No- the Proposed Development will not affect the area of this QI habitat within the SAC
Habitat distribution	No decline, subject to natural processes. See map 4 for mapped lagoons	No – the Proposed Development will not result in any decline to the distribution of this QI habitat within the SAC
Salinity regime	Median annual salinity and temporal variation within natural ranges	No – The Proposed Development will not result in any changes to the salinity regime associated

Attribute	Target	Potential for Proposed Development to Undermine Conservation Objective Target
		with this QI habitat in the SAC
Hydrological regime	Annual water level fluctuations and minima within natural ranges	No- the Proposed Development will not result in any changes to the hydrological regime associated with this QI habitat in the SAC
Barrier: connectivity between lagoon and sea	Appropriate hydrological connections between lagoons and sea, including where necessary, appropriate management	No – the Proposed Development will not result in any changes to the connectivity between lagoon and sea within the SAC
Water quality: Chlorophyll *a*	Annual median chlorophyll *a* within natural ranges and less than 5µg/L	**Yes –** the Proposed Development has the potential to result in the deterioration of water quality in downstream QI habitats in Galway Bay SAC via pollution to ground and surface waters during construction, in the absence of mitigation
Water quality: Molybdate Reactive Phosphorus (MRP)	Annual median MRP within natural ranges 0.1mg/L	**Yes –** the Proposed Development has the potential to result in the deterioration of water quality in downstream QI habitats in Galway Bay SAC via pollution to ground and surface waters during construction, in the absence of mitigation
Water quality: Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN)	Annual median DIN within natural ranges and less than 0.15mg/L	**Yes** – the Proposed Development has the potential to result in the deterioration of water quality in downstream QI habitats in Galway Bay SAC via pollution to ground and surface waters during construction, in the absence of mitigation
Depth of macrophyte colonisation	Macrophyte colonisation to at least 2m depth	No- The Proposed Development will not result in any changes to the depth of macrophyte colonisation associated with this QI habitat in the SAC

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Attribute	Target	Potential for Proposed Development to Undermine Conservation Objective Target
Typical plant species	Maintain number and extent of listed lagoonal specialists, subject to natural variation	No- The Proposed Development will not result in any composition or extent of typical plant species associated with this QI habitat in the SAC
Typical animal species	Maintain listed lagoon specialists, subject to natural variation	No- The Proposed Development will not result in any composition of typical animal species associated with this QI habitat in the SAC
Negative indicator species	Negative indicator species absent or under control	No – The Proposed Development will not result in the introduction of negative indicator species to this QI habitat in the SAC

5.1.1.3.3 *[1160] Large shallow inlets and bays*

Description from SSCO document

Large shallow inlets and bays are coastal features which cut into coastlines with limited freshwater influence. Large shallow inlets and bays exhibit a wide diversity of habitats and species which is determined by each areas unique location, level of exposure, geology and sediment composition, thus dictating the present constituent habitat communities. Pressures on this habitat such as nutrient enrichment, dredging and invasive alien species have been identified as the cause for the Overall Status for this habitat as Bad and a deteriorating trend since 2013 (NPWS, 2019).

The habitat area was estimated to be 10,824.50ha according to the Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCO) document (NPWS, 2026), with a distribution map (Map 3, of the SSCO document) of this habitat within the SAC provided. The Annex I habitat Large shallow inlets and bays is a large physiographic feature that may wholly or partly incorporate other Annex I habitats including mudflats and sandflats and reefs within its area. Potential for indirect impacts on this Qualifying Interest exists via potential for deterioration in water quality associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. The targets and attributes for this QI habitat is shown below in Table 5-5.

Targets and Attributes

Table 5-5 Targets and Attributes for [1160] Large shallow inlets and bays

Attribute	Target	Potential for Proposed Development to Undermine Conservation Objective Target
Habitat area	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes. See map 5	No – The Proposed Development will not involve

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Attribute	Target	Potential for Proposed Development to Undermine Conservation Objective Target
		activities or operations which would permanently remove this QI habitat from within the SAC
Community extent	Maintain the extent of the *Zostera*-dominated community complex and the maërl-dominated community, subject to natural processes. See map 7	No – The Proposed Development will not involve any activities or operations which could result in disturbance to the community groups associated with this QI habitat
Community structure: *Zostera* density	Conserve the high quality of Zostera-dominated communities, subject to natural processes	No – The Proposed Development will not involve any activities or operations which could result in disturbance to the community groups associated with this QI habitat
Community structure	Conserve the high quality of the maërl-dominated community, subject to natural processes	No – The Proposed Development will not involve any activities or operations which could result in disturbance to the community groups associated with this QI habitat
Community distribution	Conserve the following community types in a natural condition: Intertidal sandy mud community complex; Intertidal sand community complex; Fine to medium sand with bivalves' community complex; Sandy mud to mixed sediment community complex; Mixed sediment dominated by *Mytilidae* community complex; Shingle; Fucoid-dominated community complex; *Laminaria*-dominated community complex; and Shallow sponge-dominated community complex. See map 7	No – The Proposed Development will not involve any activities or operations which could result in disturbance to the community groups associated with this QI habitat

5.1.1.3.4 *[1170] Reefs*

Description from SSCO document

Reefs are marine features comprised of hard substrate which allows for the colonisation of flora and faunal species. In Irish waters reef habitat ranges from intertidal waters to depths of 4,500m and are found more than 400km from the Irish coast. Species assemblages which colonise reefs are determined by the physical processes which a reef experiences. Fishing methods which physically damage the seafloor have been identified as the main pressure upon this habitat.

Currently the Overall Status is Inadequate but is showing a stable trend (NPWS, 2019).

The habitat area was estimated to be 2,772.70ha according to the Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCO) document (NPWS, 2026), with a distribution map (Map 6, of the SSCO document) of this habitat within the SAC provided. The Annex I habitat Reefs is found within a large physiographic feature that may wholly or partly be incorporated with other Annex I habitats including mudflats and

sandflats and Large shallow inlets and bays within its area. Potential for indirect impacts on this Qualifying Interest exists via potential for deterioration in water quality associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. The targets and attributes for this QI habitat is shown below in Table 5-6.

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Targets and Attributes

Table 5-6 Targets and Attributes for [1170] Reefs

Attribute	Target	Potential for Proposed Development to Undermine Conservation Objective Target
Distribution	The distribution of reefs is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes. See map 6 for mapped distribution	No – The Proposed Development will not involve activities or operations which would permanently remove this QI habitat from within the SAC
Habitat area	The permanent habitat area is stable, subject to natural processes. See map 6	No – The Proposed Development will not involve activities or operations which would permanently remove this QI habitat from within the SAC
Community extent	Maintain the extent of the *Mytilus*-dominated reef community, subject to natural processes. See map 7	No – The Proposed Development will not involve any activities or operations which could result in disturbance to the community groups associated with this QI habitat
Community structure: *Mytilus* density	Conserve the high quality of the *Mytilus*-dominated reef community, subject to natural processes	No – The Proposed Development will not involve any activities or operations which could result in disturbance to the community groups associated with this QI habitat
Community structure	Conserve the following community types in a natural condition: Fucoid-dominated community complex; *Laminaria*-dominated community complex; and Shallow sponge-dominated community complex See map 7	No – The Proposed Development will not involve any activities or operations which could result in disturbance to the community groups associated with this QI habitat

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5.1.1.3.5 [1355] Otter (Lutra lutra)

Description from SSCO document

Ireland remains as one of the strongholds for European otter (*Lutra lutra*) populations within Europe. The most recent survey data illustrates that there continues to be widespread distribution of Otter in Ireland, recorded in every county in a wide variety of habitat types such as along rivers, lakes and coasts with abundant prey option and natural features which provide cover. Otter habitation requires necessities of aquatic prey and places of safe refuge for rest and breeding. The Overall Status for Otter is considered to be Favourable, unchanged since 2013, with a positive trend (NPWS, 2019).

The habitat area within the SAC was calculated as 262ha terrestrial habitat (above high-water mark, 14ha along riverbanks/around ponds), 2040ha of marine habitat, 4km of freshwater (river) habitat, and 21ha of freshwater (lake/lagoon) habitat according to the Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCO) document (NPWS, 2026), with a distribution map (Map 11, of the SSCO document) of this habitat within the SAC provided. The immediate area near the Proposed Development site does not provide a suitable habitat for Otter. Potential for indirect impacts on this Qualifying Interest exists via potential for deterioration in water quality associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. The targets and attributes for this QI habitat is shown below in Table 5-7.

Targets and Attributes

Table 5-7 Targets and Attributes for [1355] Otter (Lutra lutra)

Attribute	Target	Potential for Proposed Development to Undermine Conservation Objective Target
Distribution	No significant decline	**Yes-** The Proposed Development could, in the absence of mitigation, result in a deterioration in water quality and habitat degradation as a result of silt-laden run-off and other pollutants which could undermine this target (via reduced prey availability)
Extent of terrestrial habitat	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 262ha above high-water mark (HWM); 14ha along riverbanks/around ponds	No – The Proposed Development will not result in any reduction in terrestrial otter habitat
Extent of marine habitat	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 2040ha	No – The Proposed Development will not result in any reduction in marine otter habitat
Extent of freshwater (river) habitat	No significant decline. Length mapped and calculated as 4km	No – The Proposed Development will not result in any reduction in freshwater (river) otter habitat
Extent of freshwater	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 21ha	No – The Proposed Development will not result

Attribute	Target	Potential for Proposed Development to Undermine Conservation Objective Target
(lake/lagoon) habitat		in any reduction in lake/ lagoon otter habitat
Couching sites and holts	No significant decline	No – The Proposed Development will not result in any loss of couching or holt sites
Fish biomass available	No significant decline	**Yes** - The Proposed Development could, in the absence of mitigation, result in a deterioration in water quality and habitat degradation as a result of silt-laden run-off and other pollutants which could undermine this target (via reduced prey availability)
Barriers to connectivity	No significant increase.	No- The Proposed Development will not result in any increase of barriers to connectivity

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5.1.1.3.6 *[1365] Harbour seal (Phoca vitulina)*

Description from SSCO document

Harbour Seals inhabit estuarine, coastal and fully marine water throughout Irelands coastline and adjacent "*haul-out sites*" which Seals use to breed, moult, rest and engage in social activity. These areas are often found in enclosed sheltered bays; however, Seals also utilise offshore islands and rocky skerries. Within Irish waters the identified pressures on this species include commercial vessel-based activities i.e., local/regional prey removal by fisheries or by-catch in fisheries, or geophysical seismic exploration, and localised human disturbance at haul-out sites. The Overall Status of the harbour seal in Ireland is considered to be Favourable (NPWS, 2019).

A distribution map is available for this species is fund within the SSCO document (Map 12, of the SSCO document) (NPWS, 2026). The immediate area near the Proposed Development site does not provide a suitable habitat for Harbour seal. Potential for indirect impacts on this Qualifying Interest exists via potential for deterioration in water quality associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. The targets and attributes for this QI habitat is shown below in Table 5-8.

Targets and Attributes

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Table 5-8 Targets and Attributes for [1365] Harbour seal (Phoca vitulina)

Attribute	Target	Potential for Proposed Development to Undermine Conservation Objective Target
Access to suitable habitat	Species range within the site should not be restricted by artificial barriers to site use.	No – The Proposed Development will not involve any activities or operations which could result in the permanent exclusion of harbour seal from part of its range within the site, or permanently prevent access for the species to suitable habitat within the SAC
Breeding behaviour	Conserve breeding sites in a natural condition.	No – The Proposed Development will not involve any activities or operations which could result in disturbance or displacement effects to breeding harbour seals within the SAC
Moulting behaviour	Conserve moult haul-out sites in a natural condition.	No – The Proposed Development will not involve any activities or operations which could result in disturbance or displacement effects to moulting harbour seals within the SAC
Resting behaviour	Conserve resting haul-out sites in a natural condition.	No – The Proposed Development will not involve any activities or operations which could result in disturbance or displacement effects to resting harbour seals within the SAC
Disturbance	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the harbour seal population at the site	No – The Proposed Development will not result in any increase in human activity levels within the boundary of the SAC which could affect the QI harbour seal population

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5.1.2 Inner Galway Bay SPA [004031]

The potential for likely significant effects on this SAC were identified in Section 4.1 above. The identified pathways for effect include the following:

- The construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development may result in the deterioration of water quality within Inner Galway Bay SPA, via pollution to groundwaters through the percolation of polluting materials through the bedrock underlying the site and to surface waters, adversely impacting the water quality/ habitat quality and supporting habitats for SCIs designated as part of this SPA.
- The construction phase of the Proposed Development may result in the degradation of the QI [A999] Wetlands] in Inner Galway Bay SPA via the downstream spread or introduction of the invasive species recorded within and in close proximity to the Proposed Development site, via surface waters or the local drainage network, in the absence of mitigation.

Table 5-9 below lists the qualifying features of this European Site and determines, in the light of their Conservation Objectives, whether there is any complete source-pathway-receptor chain, by which adverse effects may occur.

5.1.2.1 Identification of Individual Qualifying Features with the Potential to be Affected

Table 5-9. Assessment of Qualifying features potentially affected

Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 1, May 2013[14]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
- [A003] Great Northern Diver (*Gavia immer*) - [A017] Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) - [A028] Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) - [A046] Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*)	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Special Conservation interest species within the Inner Galway Bay SPA Conservation Objectives documents (NPWS, Version 1, May 2013).	The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.9km to the north of the Inner Galway Bay SPA. The potential for *ex-situ* habitat loss effects on SCI bird species has been excluded at the Appropriate Assessment Screening Stage (refer to Section 4.1).	**Yes**

[14] *NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Inner Galway Bay SPA 004031. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.*

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 1, May 2013[14]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
› [A050] Wigeon (Anas Penelope) › [A052] Teal (*Anas crecca*) › [A056] Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) › [A069] Red-breasted (*Merganser Mergus serrator*) › [A137] Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) › [A140] Golden Plover *(Pluvialis apricaria*) › [A142] Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) › [A149] Dunlin Calidris (*alpina alpina*) › [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) › [A160] Curlew (*Numenius Arquata*) › [A162] Redshank (*Tringa tetanus*) › [A169] Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) › [A179] Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) › [A182] Common Gull (*Larus canus*) › [A191] Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*)		There is potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Development site and this SPA in the form of surface and groundwater connection. The Knocknacarragh stream (EPA Code: 31K16) flows culverted approximately 85m from the northern boundary of the Proposed Development site, in a south-westerly direction, before discharging into Rusheen Bay, which is designated as part of Inner Galway Bay SPA approx 1.4km downstream. The Proposed Development site and SPA are located within/adjacent to the hydrological sub-catchment (Knock [Furbo]_SC_010) and are both underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body. Given the coastal terrestrial nature of wetland habitat, and buffering distance that exists between the Proposed Development site and this supporting wetland habitat, it is unlikely that the invasive species recorded on site (Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn) could survive being transferred downstream via surface waters or the local drainage networks. Therefore, the potential for this QI habitat to be degraded as a result of the introduction of invasive species during the construction phase of the Proposed Development can be excluded. Any potential pathways for indirect effects identified in the form of deterioration of water quality and supporting wetland habitat within this SPA has been assessed below under Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]. **A complete source-pathway-receptor chain for adverse effects on wetlands was identified and it is assessed further in this NIS.**	

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Qualifying feature	Conservation Objective (NPWS, Version 1, May 2013[14]),	Rationale	Potential for Adverse Effects Y/N
› [A193] Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) › [A999] Wetlands			

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5.1.2.2 Site Specific Pressures and Threats

As per the Natura 2000 Data Form, the site-specific threats, pressures and activities with potential to impact on the European Site were reviewed and considered in relation to the Proposed Development. These are provided in Table 5-10.

Table 5-10 Site-specific threats, pressures and activities

Negative Impacts			
Rank	Threats and Pressures		Inside/Outside
Medium	G01.02	Walking, horse riding, and non-motorised vehicles	inside
Medium	J02.12	Dykes, embankments, artificial beaches, general	inside
Medium	E02	Industrial or commercial areas	inside
Low	F03.01	Hunting	inside
Medium	F01	Marine and Freshwater Aquaculture	inside
High	J02.01.02	Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh	inside
Medium	G01.01	Nautical sports	inside
Low	A04	Grazing	inside
High	E01	Urbanised areas, human habitation	outside
High	E03	Discharges	inside
Medium	F02.03	Leisure fishing	inside
Medium	D01.02	Roads, motorways	outside
Medium	A08	Fertilisation	outside

Potential pathways for effect with regard to site-specific threats, pressures and activities have been identified in relation to potential for 'Urbanisation, residential and commercial development'- i.e. 'Urbanised areas, human habitation, Discharges'.

5.1.2.3 Species Specific Information

5.1.2.3.1 *[A999] Wetlands*

Description from SSCO document

According to the Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCO) document (NPWS, 2013), wetland habitat area was estimated as 13,267ha within this SPA. Potential for indirect impacts on this Special Conservation Interest habitat exists via potential for deterioration in water quality associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. Therefore, a potential pathway for indirect effects on all Special Conservation Interest bird species has been identified via impacts on their supporting wetland habitat due to deterioration of water quality. All SCI bird species are considered

here under the Special Conservation Interest habitat [A999] Wetlands. The targets and attributes for this QI habitat is shown below in Table 5-11.

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Targets and Attributes

Table 5-11 Targets and Attributes for [A999] Wetlands

Attribute	Target	Potential for Proposed Development to Undermine Conservation Objective Target
Habitat area	The permanent area occupied by the wetland habitat should be stable and not significantly less than the area of 13,267ha, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	**Yes**- In the absence of mitigation, the Proposed Development has the potential to result in a deterioration of the quality of downstream wetland habitat associated with the SPA via pollution to ground and surface waters during construction

6. ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS & ASSOCIATED MITIGATION

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This section of the NIS assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the identified relevant Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests. This assessment is undertaken in the absence of any mitigation and in respect of the conservation objectives of the relevant European Sites. The Conservation Objectives for each of the European Sites assessed were reviewed on the 2nd July 2026. The Conservation Objectives for these sites are available at the following locations:

- Galway Bay Complex SAC [000268] - https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000268.pdf
- Inner Galway Bay SPA [004031] - https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004031.pdf

Following the initial impact assessment, mitigation is prescribed where necessary to avoid adverse effects on the Conservation Objectives of the relevant QIs/SCIs.

6.1 Potential for Direct Effects on the European Sites

The Proposed Development site lies entirely outside of the boundary of any European Site. As such, there is no potential for direct effects on the Qualifying Features of Galway Bay Complex SAC and/or Inner Galway Bay SPA or any other European Site.

No Annex I habitats were recorded within the Proposed Development site. Further, no QI habitats associated with Galway Bay Complex SAC were identified within the boundary of the Proposed Development site during the surveys undertaken. As fully described in Section 3.4.2 above, the habitats identified within the boundary of the Proposed Development site include Dry calcareous and neutral grassland (GS1), Treeline (WL2), Hedgerow (WL1), Stone walls and other stonework (BL1), Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3), Scrub (WS1), Recolonising Bare Ground (ED3), Spoil and bare ground (ED2), Wet grassland (GS4) and Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2), none of which correspond to any habitats listed under Annex I of the Habitats Directive.

No significant suitable supporting habitat for any QI species or SCI bird species associated with any European Site was recorded within or directly adjacent to the Proposed Development site. Therefore, there is no potential for direct effects on any European Site as a result of the Proposed Development.

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6.2 Potential for Indirect Effects on the European Sites

6.2.1 Deterioration to Water Quality via Surface water and Groundwater

The Proposed Development site, Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA are all located within the same hydrological sub-catchment (Knock [Furbo]_SC_010) and partially underlain by the same ground water body (Spiddal groundwater body). There is potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Development site, Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA in the form of surface water connection. Further, the Knocknacarragh stream (EPA Code: 31K16) is culverted in proximity to the Proposed Development site. This watercourse flows 1.4km downstream (d/s), in a south-westerly direction, into Rusheen Bay, which is designated as part of Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA. Taking a precautionary approach, there is potential for indirect effects to the aquatic influenced QI species and habitats associated with this SAC and the SCIs associated with this SPA.

Following a precautionary approach, the construction phase of the Proposed Development may result in the deterioration of water quality in the Knocknacarragh stream which flows into Rusheen Bay (which is designated as part of Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA) via pollution to water quality from pollutants entering surface water runoff. There is also potential for deterioration of groundwater quality through the percolation of polluting materials through the bedrock underlying the site.

Therefore, a potential pathway for indirect effects on the aquatic Qualifying Interests (QIs) of Galway Bay Complex SAC and the Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of Inner Galway Bay SPA was identified in the form of deterioration of water quality and supporting habitats for aquatic fauna via pollution to water quality during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. In the absence of mitigation, this may result in adverse effects on the surface water and groundwater influenced QI/SCI habitats and species for which Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA are designated for.

The QIs/ SCIs of the relevant European Sites, on which a potential pathway for adverse effects due to deterioration of water quality has been identified, are listed below:

Galway Bay Complex SAC [000268]

- [1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
- [1150] Coastal lagoons
- [1160] Large shallow inlets and bays
- [1170] Reefs
- [1355] Otter (Lutra lutra)
- [1365] Harbour seal (Phoca vitulina)

Inner Galway Bay SPA [004031]

- [[A003] Great Northern Diver (Gavia immer)
- [A017] Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo)
- [A028] Grey Heron (Ardea cinerea)
- [A046] Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota)
- [A050] Wigeon (Anas Penelope)
- [A052] Teal (Anas crecca)
- [A056] Shoveler (Anas clypeata)

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- [A069] Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator)
- [A137] Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula)
- [A140] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria)
- [A142] Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus)
- [A149] Dunlin (Calidris alpina alpina)
- [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica)
- [A160] Curlew (Numenius arquata)
- [A162] Redshank (Tringa tetanus)
- [A169] Turnstone (Arenaria interpres)
- [A179] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus)
- [A182] Common Gull (Larus canus)
- [A191] Sandwich Tern (Sterna sandvicensis)
- [A193] Common Tern (Sterna hirundo)
- [A999] Wetlands

6.2.1.1 Construction Phase

The construction of the Proposed Development will involve excavations and earth moving which create the potential for pollution in various forms, i.e. the generation of suspended solids and the potential for spillage of fuels associated with the refuelling of excavation machinery. There is also a risk of the percolation of pollutants to ground water during the above activities. Taking a precautionary approach, and in the absence of mitigation, the works have potential to impact on water quality and therefore adversely affect the QIs/ SCI species and habitat associated with the above listed European Sites.

Excavation works are required to facilitate the construction and installation of new watermains, surface water drainage design and wastewater system, as well as the formation of foundations for construction of proposed residential and childcare buildings within the Proposed Development site.

Taking a highly precautionary approach, there is potential surface water and groundwater connectivity to the Knocknacarragh stream (31K16) watercourse located approx. 85m from the Proposed Development site. Additionally, there is potential hydrological connectivity to the sea via natural sloping topography and existing drainage in the surrounding urban landscape.

Taking a precautionary approach, during construction a potential pathway for indirect effects on the aquatic (surface water and groundwater) dependent QIs/ SCIs of the Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA was identified in the form of deterioration of water quality resulting from pollution, associated with the construction of the Proposed Development. As such, the construction phase of the Proposed Development may result in deterioration in water quality adversely affecting the qualifying features of Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA.

6.2.1.1.1 *Mitigations Measures*

To prevent potential pathways for pollution to water quality, a Construction and Environmental Management (CEMP) has been prepared by MKO and is attached as **Appendix 6.**

The CEMP measures have been incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development and are summarised in the following subsections. An experienced main contractor will be appointed for the civil works for the construction phase. The main contractor for the works will be required to comply with this CEMP and any revisions made to this document. The full CEMP is submitted as part of this application.

The mitigation measures described below in subsections, ensure that the Proposed Development does not prevent or obstruct any of the Qualifying Features from reaching favourable conservation status as per Article 1 of the EU Habitats Directive, ensuring that the Proposed Development does not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site.

Following the mitigation measure as prescribed below, the Proposed Development will not contribute to any effect on the hydrological regime in the area or to any water pollution effects.

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Pollution Prevention Control Measures

The following measures will be put in place to prevent the transportation of silt laden water or pollutants from entering any of the wider environments including watercourses/drains within or near the site:

- There are no watercourses on site and surface water will not be directly discharged into any external water bodies, surrounding land, or adjacent roadways. Any run-off generated on-site will undergo the necessary filtration process.
- The works will be managed to ensure there will be no silt-laden run-off beyond the site boundary. This will be achieved through the use of appropriate excavation techniques during the initial construction works. Where necessary, silt fencing will be installed downslope of the construction areas, particularly where drains or drainage pathways are present. These measures will serve as a protective measure to contain silt material within the site.
- Any requirement for temporary fills or stockpiles will be damped down or covered with polyethylene sheeting as required to avoid sediment release associated with heavy rainfall.
- Excavations will be carried out using a suitably sized excavator and, in all circumstances, excavation depths and volumes will be minimised where practically possible.
- Excavated spoil will be stockpiled and contained entirely within the confines of the site boundaries. Any stockpile areas will be surrounded with silt fencing, if deemed necessary to prevent runoff.
- The minimum number of soil/subsoils and bedrock material should be removed from site. Soil may be reused for landscaping elsewhere on the site. However, any excess construction material shall be removed from the area and sent to an authorized waste recovery facility.
- Works shall not take place at periods of high rainfall and shall be scaled back if or suspended if heavy rain is forecast during excavation works.
    - High rainfall' is defined as follows:
    - >10 mm/hr (i.e. high intensity local rainfall events);
    - >25 mm in a 24-hour period (heavy frontal rainfall lasting most of the day);
- In the event of encountering groundwaters during excavation, groundwater will be pumped out of the excavation using a pump equipped with a silt bag on the discharge pipe, if necessary, to capture any silty material prior to subsequent natural percolation to ground. The area surrounding the silt bag will be surrounded by silt fencing if deemed necessary.
- No wastewater will be discharged on-site during the construction phase. Toilet facilities will be provided in a prefabricated sanitary unit which will be placed in the construction compound. This unit will have an enclosed wastewater holding tank which will be fitted with a fill level alarm and will be emptied on an as needed basis by the appropriately licensed contractor.
- Good construction practices will be implemented at the site. This will ensure minimal risk. The Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) provides guidance on the control and management of water pollution from construction sites, as outlined in *Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites, guidance for consultants and contractors* (CIRIA, 2001). This guidance will be adhered to throughout the construction phase to ensure that surface water generated on site contains minimum sediment.

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Cement Based Products Control Measures

The complete washing out of concrete trucks will not be permitted at the site. Suppliers will be directed back to their own facility to complete the washout process. However, a washout area for chute cleaning will be provided at various locations in close proximity to the concrete pour locations.

The following mitigation measures are proposed to avoid release of cement leachate from the site:

- No batching of wet-cement products will occur on site.
- Ready-mixed supply of wet concrete products and where possible, emplacement of pre-cast elements, will take place. Where possible pre-cast elements for culverts and concrete works will be used.
- No washing out of any plant used in concrete transport or concreting operations will be allowed on-site.
- Where concrete is delivered on site, only chute cleaning will be permitted, using the smallest volume of water possible. No discharge of cement contaminated waters to the construction phase drainage system or directly to any artificial drain or watercourse will be allowed.
- Use weather forecasting to plan dry days for pouring concrete.
- Ensure pour site is free of standing water and plastic covers will be ready in case of sudden rainfall event.

Refuelling, Fuel and Hazardous Materials Storage

The following measures are proposed to avoid release of hydrocarbons at the site:

- Minimal refuelling or maintenance of construction vehicles or plant will take place on site. Where possible, off-site refuelling will occur at a controlled fuelling station;
- On-site re-fuelling will be undertaken using a double skinned bowser or a refuelling truck with spill kits kept onboard;
- All oils, fuels, paints and other chemicals will be stored in a secure bunded construction hardstand area. Refuelling and servicing of construction machinery will take place in a designated hardstand area which is also remote from any drainage systems. A response procedure will be put in place to deal with any accidental pollution events and spillage kits will be available and construction staff will be familiar with the emergency procedures and use of the equipment;
- A temporary drainage system shall be installed prior to the commencement of the construction works;
- All works shall be undertaken in accordance with the CIRIA document, 'Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites, guidance for consultants and contractors'
- All plant and machinery will be serviced before being mobilised to site;
- No plant maintenance will be completed on site, any broken down plant will be removed from site to be fixed;
- Concrete batching will take place off site, wash down and wash out of concrete trucks will take place off site and any excess concrete is not to be disposed of on site. Pumped concrete will be monitored to ensure there is no accidental discharge. Mixer washings are not to be discharged into surface water drains/sewers;
- Discharge from any vehicle wheel wash areas is to be directed to on-site settlement tanks/ponds, debris and sediment captured by vehicle wheel washes are to be disposed off-site at a licensed facility;
- Foul drainage discharge from the construction compound will be transported off site to a licensed facility until a connection to the public foul drainage network has been established.

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Environmental Emergency Response Procedure

An Emergency Response Plan has been prepared for the construction of the Proposed Development and is included in the CEMP which is appended to this NIS (**Appendix 6**). The Emergency Response Plan includes a procedure to be followed in the case of Environmental Emergencies, should they occur during construction. In the event of an oil/ fuel spillage, which are one of the main environmental risks that will exist at the Proposed Development site, the following procedure will be followed:

- Stop the source of the spill and raise the alarm to alert people working in the vicinity of any potential dangers.
- If applicable, eliminate any sources of ignition in the immediate vicinity of the incident
- Contain the spill using the spill control materials, track mats or other material as required. Do not spread or flush away the spill.
- If possible, cover or bund off any vulnerable areas where appropriate such as drains or sensitive habitats.
- If possible, clean up as much as possible using the spill control materials.
- Contain any used spill control material and dispose of used materials appropriately using a fully licensed waste contractor with the appropriate permits so that further contamination is limited.
- Notify the Environmental Manager immediately giving information on the location, type and extent of the spill so that they can take appropriate action.
- The Environmental Manager will inspect the site and will assist by providing any advice possible to ensure the necessary measures are in place to contain and clean up the spill and prevent further spillage from occurring.
- The Construction Manager will notify the appropriate regulatory body such as GCC and EPA etc. if deemed necessary.

Air Quality and Dust Control

The following measures will be implemented to reduce the effect of dust deposition:

- Any site roads with the potential to give rise to dust will be regularly watered, as required, during dry and/or windy conditions
- The designated public roads outside the site and along the main transport routes to the site will be regularly inspected by Site Management for cleanliness, and cleaned as necessary
- Material handling systems and material storage areas will be designed and laid out to minimise exposure to wind
- Water misting or bowsers will operate on-site as required to mitigate dust in dry weather conditions
- The transport of soils or other material, which has significant potential to generate dust, will be undertaken in tarpaulin-covered vehicles where necessary
- All vehicles leaving the construction areas of the site will rinse their wheels at a designated wheel wash area prior to entering the local road network.
- All construction related traffic will have speed restrictions on un-surfaced roads to 15 kph
- Daily inspection of construction sites to examine dust measures and their effectiveness.
- If deemed necessary, sections of the approach road will be swept using a truck mounted vacuum sweeper.

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6.2.1.2 Operational Phase

The operational phase of the Proposed Development will result in the production of foul waters and surface-water runoff which, if not adequately treated, has potential to result in indirect effects on surface and groundwater quality and, therefore, potential adverse effects on Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA.

6.2.1.2.1 *Mitigation*

Mitigation by Design

A Civil Works Design Report has been prepared by TOBIN (see **Appendix 7**) for the Proposed Development. This details the proposed surface water and wastewater drainage proposals for the Proposed Development which have been designed to ensure that there will be no deterioration of water quality as a result of the operational phase of the Proposed Development.

The drainage proposals are summarised in Section 2.2.2 of this NIS. The key points are outlined below.

Surface Water Drainage

The management of surface water for the Proposed Development has been designed to comply with the philosophies of nature-based SuDS and CIRIA guidelines as embodied in the recommendations of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) and with the requirements of Galway City Council. The surface water drainage design has incorporated a number of SuDS measures to both reduce the quantity and rate of surface water run-off discharging from the Proposed Development site during operation and to improve the overall quality of such discharges. The quantity of surface water run-off discharging from site will be reduced through the use of water butts, tree pits, rain gardens, permeable paving, drainage kerbs with infiltration trenches and attenuation storage systems. The rate of surface water run-off discharging from the Proposed Development site will be controlled through the use of a hydrobrake devices which will limit run-off to Greenfield rates. The quality of surface water run-off will be improved through the use of bypass separators prior to discharge in addition to the improvements in quality gained through the attenuation and controlled release measures previously described. The inclusion of these measures in the surface water drainage design will ensure that surface waters discharging from site are of a quality and volume that will not result in any adverse effects on downstream receiving surface waters or any European sites therein.

Foul Water Drainage

All wastewater generated from the Proposed Development will outfall, via gravity, to a wastewater network permitted by Galway City Council (Planning Reference 24/60370). From this the wastewater will discharge to an existing Uisce Éireann owned 375mm foul sewer line located west of the development along the southern arm junction of the adjacent roundabout and Altan road. The foul network for the Proposed Development has been designed using Causeway Flow Drainage modelling software. The pipework has been designed to provide six times the dry weather flow in accordance with Uisce Éireann Code of Practise and standard details. The proposed foul sewer design and layout is in accordance with the Irish Water Code of Practice for Wastewater Infrastructure and The Irish Water Infrastructure Standard Details. The predicted foul loading of the Proposed Development is 366P.E. A letter has been received from Uisce Éireann confirming that a water connection can be facilitated for the Proposed Development (see **Appendix 2**).

All foul water will be discharged to the public sewer and will be treated at the Galway Mutton Island Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) before ultimately discharging to the coastal waters of Galway Bay.

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According to the most recently published Annual Environmental Report for Galway Mutton Island WWTP[15], the WWTP was built with a design capacity of 170,000 P.E. and currently has a remaining capacity of 27,089 P.E. The discharge from the WWTP does not have an observable negative impact on the Water Framework Status or coastal/ transitional water quality of the receiving waters. Moreover, based on the results of effluent monitoring, it is fully compliant with the Emission Limit Values as set in its EPA discharge licence. In consideration of the remaining capacity which can accommodate the predicted foul loadings associated with the operation of the Proposed Development, and the available data regarding the WWTP's current compliance in operation, there is no potential for the Proposed Development to result in adverse effects on receiving waters or European sites contained therein, with respect to foul waters generated.

6.2.2 Habitat Degradation through the Spread/ Introduction of Invasive Species

Two invasive species, which are listed on the First Schedule of the European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024 (S.I. 374 of 2024) and/or Third Schedule of the European Communities Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011) were recorded in, or in close proximity to, the Proposed Development during surveys undertaken to inform this assessment. Therefore, the potential for the Proposed Development to result in the spread/ introduction of these invasive species to downstream European sites, namely Galway Bay SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA, via the surface water or local drainage network pathway was identified at the screening stage (see Section 4.1). This potential effect was further considered in Stage 2 of this assessment (See Section 5.1.1 and 5.1.2) and given the nature of the QI habitats associated with this SAC and SPA and the distance of the hydrological connection over which these invasive species would need to be carried, it was determined that there was no potential for this effect to occur. It should be noted that, during the preparation of the EIAR which accompanies the planning application, an Invasive Species Management Plan (ISMP) has been prepared for the Proposed Development to avoid the spread of invasive species to the local environment.

[15] Uisce Éireann (2025). Annual Environmental Report 2024- Galway City- D0050-01.

7. ASSESSMENT OF RESIDUAL ADVERSE EFFECTS

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The potential for residual adverse effects on each of the individual relevant Qualifying Features of the Screened In European Sites following the implementation of mitigation, is assessed in this section of the report.

Based on the above, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information, there is no potential for adverse effect on the identified QIs/SCIs and their associated targets and attributes, or on any European Site. Potential pathways for effect have been robustly blocked through measures to avoid impacts and the incorporation of best practice/mitigation measures into the project design.

Taking cognisance of measures to avoid impacts and best practice/mitigation measures incorporated into the project design which are considered in the preceding section, the Proposed Project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European Site.

The Proposed Project will not prevent the QIs/SCIs of European Sites from achieving/maintaining favourable conservation status in the future as defined in Article 1 of the EU Habitats Directive. A definition of Favourable Conservation Status is provided below:

> *'conservation status of a species means the sum of the influences acting on the species concerned that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its populations within the territory referred to in Article 2; The conservation status will be taken as 'favourable' 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, and
> - 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.'

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- 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

Based on the above, it can be concluded in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information that the Proposed Development will not adversely affect the Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests associated with any European Site.

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8. ASSESSMENT OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

A search and review in relation to plans and projects that may have the potential to result in cumulative and/or in-combination impacts on European Sites was conducted. This assessment focuses on the potential for cumulative in-combination effects on the European Sites where potential for adverse effects was identified in Section 4 of this report. This included a review of online Planning Registers, development plans and other available information and served to identify past and future plans and projects, their activities and their predicted environmental effects. A list of the plans and projects considered is provided in **Appendix 5.**

Assessment material for this in-combination impact assessment was compiled on the relevant developments within the vicinity of the Proposed Development and was verified on the in July 2026. The material was gathered through a search of relevant online Planning Registers, reviews of relevant documents, planning application details and planning drawings, and served to identify past and future projects, their activities and their environmental impacts. All relevant projects were considered in relation to the potential for in-combination effects. All relevant data was reviewed (e.g. individual EIARs, layouts, drawings etc.) for all relevant projects where available. The plans and projects considered include those listed in **Appendix 5.** These consisted mainly of small scale domestic and agricultural developments.

Following the detailed assessment provided in the preceding sections, it is concluded that, the Proposed Development will not result in any residual adverse effects on any of the European Sites, their integrity or their conservation objectives when considered on its own. There is therefore no potential for the Proposed Development to contribute to any cumulative adverse effects on any European Site when considered in-combination with other plans and projects.

In the review of the projects that was undertaken, no connection, that could potentially result in additional or cumulative impacts was identified. Neither was any potential for different (new) impacts resulting from the combination of the various projects and plans in association with the Proposed Development.

Taking into consideration the reported residual impacts from other plans and projects in the area and the predicted impacts with the current proposal, no residual cumulative impacts have been identified with regard to any European Site.

9. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

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This NIS has provided an assessment of all potential direct or indirect adverse effects on European Sites.

Where the potential for any adverse effect on any European Site has been identified, the pathway by which any such effect may occur has been robustly blocked through the use of avoidance, appropriate design and mitigation measures as set out within this report and its appendices. The measures ensure that the construction and operation of the Proposed Development does not adversely affect the integrity of European sites.

Therefore, it can be objectively concluded that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site.

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APPENDIX 1

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4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Introduction

This section of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) describes the Proposed Development and its component parts. This chapter also describes the key features of the environmental controls that will be used at the Proposed Development site during the construction phase and the management of site operations. This description sets the basis against which the EIAR has been carried out.

The Proposed Development covers an area of 2.9 hectares (ha) which comprises a mix of residential units (133 no in total), open spaces and all other site related infrastructure. The Proposed Development is a component of a larger residential development project (Proposed Project).

The Proposed Project involves the construction of 495 residential units together with associated infrastructure, open spaces and all other site related infrastructure. The wider masterplan was extensively discussed and refined in collaboration with Galway City Council (GCC). The master planning process, initiated in 2023 for the Knocknacarra District Centre (South) and the adjoining "Kingston lands" considered access, connectivity, permeability, and a balanced mix of uses across the broader area, ensuring that each subsequent application, including the present proposal, is informed by cohesive and coordinated design framework.

A planning application for 362 no. residential units and associated infrastructure on lands immediately to the east of the Proposed Development site was submitted to GCC in October 2025 (Planning Reference Number: 25/60320). Permission was granted by GCC on the 9th April 2026 and the application is currently under appeal with An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) under Planning Reference Number: ACP-324237-26). This development is referred to throughout this EIAR as the LRD East.

The Proposed Development will consist of the following:

- Provision of 133 no. residential units in 2 no. development areas with a mix of duplex and house types on a site area of 2.9 ha. The buildings range between 2 no. and 3 no. storeys in height. The development will comprise the following:
  - 51 no. 3-bed townhouses;
  - 6 no. 4-bed townhouses;
  - 1 no. 1-bed duplex apartments;
  - 1 no. 2-bed duplex houses;
  - 37 no. 2-bed ground floor duplex apartments;
  - 37 no. 3-bed duplex houses.
- Demolition of existing structures (388 m^2);
- Vehicular access to the proposed development from a permitted road (Planning Reference 24/60370);
- Upgrades to the permitted road (Planning Reference 24/60370);
- Pedestrian and cycle access to the adjacent Kingston Park (ACP Ref: 323873);
- Conversion and upgrade of an existing structure to a cafe (65.8 m^2);
- The provision of public open space;
- The provision of 192 no. bicycle parking spaces;
- The provision of 142 no. car parking spaces;
- Public lighting, bin stores, signage, services, 2 no. ground mounted substation kiosks, site landscaping and all ancillary site development and enabling works.

All elements of the Proposed Development have been assessed as part of this EIAR.

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4.2 Site Setting

4.2.1 Site Description

The site is located within the townland of Knocknacarra and is approximately 3 kilometres (km) west of Galway City Centre. Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM) coordinates for the centre of the site are X 526577, Y 724658.

The planning application (red line) boundary area measures 2.9 ha. The site comprises a mixture of low input agricultural grassland in the southern section as well as areas of hardstanding, stonewalls, hedgerows and agricultural buildings in the northern section. The surrounding area is urban in character, with several residential housing estates, as well as commercial buildings.

Construction access will be provided via Altán Road to the north of the site, which connects to the Western Distributor Road.

The Proposed Development site is located within the Galway Bay North hydrological catchment (Catchment 31), and the Knock [Furbo]_SC_010 hydrological sub-catchment. The Knocknacarragh stream (31K16) watercourse which is a 2nd order watercourse (part of the Knocknacarragh_010 system) is located approximately 85 metres (m) to the north of the Proposed Development site. This is not an open watercourse; it has been culverted in the past. According to the River Waterbodies Risk on EPA Maps, the Knocknacarragh_010 system is under review. Further, the River Waterbody Water Framework Directive (WFD) Status 2019-2024 awarded the Knocknacarragh_010 system a “Poor” Status. No Q-values have been recorded on the Knocknacarragh_010 system as per EPA maps.

The Proposed Development site is underlain by the Spiddal groundwater body. The Proposed Development ranges from ‘Extreme’ to ‘High’ groundwater vulnerability as per EPA maps. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) Status 2019-2024 for the Spiddal groundwater body was deemed ‘Good’.

The Proposed Development site is not located in any European Site (designated pursuant to the obligations under the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive). The Proposed Development site is located approximately 0.7km north of the Galway Bay Complex (SAC) and approximately 0.9km north of the Inner Galway Bay (SPA). The Proposed Development site is located 2.9km from Lough Corrib SAC and approximately 3.9km from Lough Corrib SPA. In this regard, an Appropriate Assessment Screening has been undertaken, and a Natura Impact Statement has been prepared to accompany the application, so as to enable GCC, as competent authority, to carry out an Appropriate Assessment.

As outlined in Chapter 12 Cultural Heritage, the Proposed Development site is located within a modern suburban area approximately 2.7km west of the Zone of Archaeological Potential surrounding the historic core of Galway city. The Proposed Development site is comprised largely of green field lands with a group of vernacular historical and modern farm buildings being located within its northern portion. There are no recorded archaeological sites located within the Proposed Development site. There is a recorded archaeological site located approximately 250m to the southwest and this comprises a ringfort (GA094-019) marked on the first edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey (OS) map.

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Plate 4-1: View from Centre of the site looking northwest



Plate 4-2: View from Centre of the site looking southwest towards existing residential houses.

Figure 4-1 below provides an overview of the Proposed Development site layout.



Notes:

- Do not scale from this drawing. Use figured dimensions in all cases.
- Verify dimensions on site and report any discrepancies to the Architect immediately.
- This drawing to be read in conjunction with the Architect 's Specification.
- © This drawing is copyright and may only be reproduced with the Architect 's permission.

Drawing Notes:

Unit Breakdown:

3-Detached Townhouses	0
3-Bedroom Townhouses	51
4-Bedroom Townhouses	6
4-Bedroom Detached Townhouse	0
1-Bedroom Duplex Apts.	1
2-Bedroom Duplex Houses	1
2-Bedroom Ground Floor Duplex Apts.	37
3-Bedroom Duplex Houses	37
Total	**133**

Public Open Space: 0.3664 Ha (13.9%)

Gross Site Area: 2.903 Ha

Local Centre / Café: 334sqm

Net Site Area (excl. main road area): 2.643 Ha

Density: 50.3 DPH

Parking @ 1 space / unit	133 spaces
Accessible Parking spaces	5 spaces
Visitor Parking	5 spaces
Total	**143 spaces**

Resident Bicycle Parking	113 spaces
Visitor Bicycle Parking	79 spaces
Total	**192 spaces**

Issues & Revisions

Rev.	Date	Drwn	Details of Issue / Revision
P3-S-01	22.06.26	HB	PLANNING

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Client Details:
Kingston Stables Ltd.

Project Details:
Residential Development @ Knocknacarra District Centre South, Knocknacarra, Galway
Phase 2 LRD West

Drawing Title:
Proposed Site Layout

Job No.	Sheet Size:	Scale @A1:	Status	Purpose of Issue
P23-180D	A1_Portrait	1 : 500	**P3**	**PLANNING**

Issue Date:	Drawn By:	Reviewed By:	Project - System - Spatial Zone - Level - Type - Originator - Role - Number	Revision
22/06/2026	HB	DP	**P23-180D-RAU-00-XX-XX-DR-AR-1003**	**P3-S-01**

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4.3 Proposed Site Development

Planning permission is sought by Kingston Stables Limited for development of a Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) for a 10-year planning permission, on a site which extends to 2.9 ha on lands located at Rahoon, Knocknacarra, Galway.

The proposed development will consist of the following:

- Provision of 133 no. residential units in 2 no. development areas with a mix of duplex and house types on a site area of 2.9 ha. The buildings range between 2 no. and 3 no. storeys in height. The development will comprise the following:
  - 51 no. 3-bed townhouses;
  - 6 no. 4-bed townhouses;
  - 1 no. 1-bed duplex apartments;
  - 1 no. 2-bed duplex houses;
  - 37 no. 2-bed ground floor duplex apartments;
  - 37 no. 3-bed duplex houses.
- Demolition of existing structures (388 m^2);
- Vehicular access to the proposed development from a permitted road (Planning Reference 24/60370 refers);
- Upgrades to the permitted road (Planning Reference 24/60370 refers);
- Pedestrian and cycle access to the adjacent proposed Kingston Park (ACP Ref: 323873);
- Conversion and upgrade of an existing structure to a cafe (65.8 m^2);
- The provision of public open space;
- The provision of 192 no. bicycle parking spaces;
- The provision of 143 no. car parking spaces;
- Public lighting, bin stores, signage, services, 2 no. ground mounted substation kiosks, site landscaping and all ancillary site development and enabling works.

4.3.1 Development Description

As outlined in the Urban Framework Plan Design Statement which has been prepared by Reddy's Architecture and is included in Appendix 4-4 of this EIAR, the Proposed Development (LRD West) will be comprised of a number of character areas.

Character Area One will be situated in the Altan Quarter which is in the northern section of the Proposed Development site. This area will be comprised of three-storey double-frontage duplex units, delivering the density required to meet the housing need.

The units front onto the primary street creating a strong street frontage with the units to the rear fronting onto the public open space. The rear terraces to the duplex units at both ground and first floor provide passive surveillance over the parking courts serving the duplex blocks.

Character Area Two (Kingston Quarter) will be situated in the southern section of the Proposed Development site. This quarter is defined by a formal orthogonal grid and a robust urban form. New terraced townhouses adjoin neighbouring homes at Kingston Gardens, following the pattern of existing development.

The proposed units have been set back from the existing houses at Kingston Gardens with all gardens in excess of the minimum requirements. Back-to-back separation distances have been increased in excess of the minimum requirements to prevent any overlooking.

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The design proposal itself takes inspiration from existing Galway terraces and local verncacular. Materials used for construction will be comprised of plaster, brick and metal cladding. The proposed materials are sensitively chosen for their aesthetics, appropriateness to the context, and for their durability and quality.

The Proposed Development has been designed with the changing needs of residents over time so people can continue living in their own homes. The proposed homes are integrated into a wider masterplan where an aquatic centre and retail will be provided as part of the masterplan with clear, safe routes from bike, car or public transport to the entrance of the homes. The overall masterplan is in line with the 15-minute city concept where residents can access all essential services and daily needs within a short walk or bike ride from their homes.

The proposed residential developments will be comprised of the following typologies:

- Duplex Type E – Altan Quarter
- Townhouse Type C – Kingston Quarter
- Townhouse Type D – Kingston Quarter
- Duplex Type A – Kingston Quarter

Proposed Elevations are outlined in the Urban Framework Plan Design Statement (Appendix 4-4) as well as the Drawing Pack which has been submitted with this application.

As outlined in the Urban Framework Plan Design Statement (Appendix 4-4), there are a number of existing buildings located within the Proposed Development site. These buildings are in various states of disrepair, and it is proposed to demolish them with the exception of one former residential house which will be renovated and converted into a Café. The proposed café has been designed to be positioned along the active travel route which traverses the site and is centrally located within the wider masterplan area. It is anticipated that the café will community hub, serving not only the residents of the Proposed Development during the operational phase but also the wider surrounding community.

4.4 Construction Management

4.4.1 Construction Timing and Phasing

It is expected that the construction works will take approximately 36 months to complete.

4.4.2 Working Hours

Normal construction working hours for the development and the concurrent works will be:

- 8am - 6pm, Monday to Friday;
- 9am - 1pm, Saturday; and
- Sunday and Public Holidays - no working

It may be necessary in exceptional circumstances to undertake certain activities outside of the construction core working hours. Any construction outside of the construction core working hours will need to be agreed in advance with GCC and scheduling of such works will have regard to nearby sensitive receptors.

4.4.3 Construction Phase Monitoring and Oversight

A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been prepared for the Proposed Development and is included in Appendix 4-1 of this EIAR. The CEMP includes details of waste management and outlines clearly the mitigation measures and monitoring proposals that are required to

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be adhered to in order to complete the works in an appropriate manner. In the event that planning permission is granted for the Proposed Development, the CEMP will be updated prior to the commencement of the development, to address the requirements of any relevant planning conditions, including any additional mitigation measures which are conditioned and will be submitted to the Planning Authority for approval.

Routine inspections of construction activities will be carried out on a daily and weekly basis by the Senior Project Manager, Senior Engineers and Foremen to ensure all controls to prevent environmental impact, relevant to the construction activities taking place at the time, are in place. Environmental inspections will ensure that the works are undertaken in compliance with this CEMP and all other planning application documents. Only suitably trained staff will undertake environmental site inspections.

4.5 Construction Methodologies

This section describes the construction methodologies that will be used for the Proposed Development. Further details are also provided in the CEMP included as Appendix 4-1 of this EIAR.

The proposed anticipated construction methodology is summarised under the following main headings:

- Site Establishment
- Perimeter Fencing
- Demolition Works
- Site Excavation
- Traffic Measures and Junction Upgrade Works
- Proposed Site Roads and Footpaths
- Services and Utilities
- Residential Unit Construction
- Landscaping Works

4.5.1 Site Establishment

Prior to the commencement of any construction, entrances to the Proposed Development site will need to be fully established with appropriate security gates. Access to the site during construction will be via Altán Road, which connects to the Western Distributor Road to the north of the site.

A site construction compound inclusive of a parking area for construction workers vehicles will be provided within the confines of the site. There will be no parking permitted for any vehicles associated with the Proposed Development construction phase on the adjacent public roads unless agree with the local authority prior to works inception. A designated section of the site will be fenced off as the construction compound.

4.5.2 Perimeter Fencing

Perimeter fencing will be provided around the site, where required. This will be in the form of Heras fencing, hoarding or similar, to provide a barrier against unauthorised access from public areas. A controlled access point in the form of a site entrance will be kept locked outside of normal working hours.

The fencing and hoarding will be maintained and painted or covered with graphics portraying project information. Due to the nature of the works and the construction traffic using the site entrance, appropriate signage will be provided along relevant footpaths and site entrances to alert pedestrians to the traffic exiting/entering the site. Appropriate signage will be installed within and outside the site to alert drivers to pedestrians crossing ahead. The contractor will be required to undertake the following.

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- A site-specific Health and Safety Plan will be in place for the proposed site. All site staff will be made aware of and adhere to the Health and Safety Plan,
- Operate a Site Induction Process for all site staff,
- Ensure all site staff will have current Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) training or 'Safe Pass' cards,
- Site hoarding will include Health and Safety warnings at appropriate intervals,
- Fire extinguishers and first aid supplies to be available in the work area,
- All adjacent roadways will be maintained in clean condition at all times,
- Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be worn at all times,
- Biometric turnstiles will be used at the site to prevent unauthorised access to the site.

4.5.3 Demolition Works

Demolition works will be carried out on existing derelict buildings and sheds during the construction phase. The total existing floor area set for demolition is 388 m^2.

The sequencing of the demolition works will be decided by the main contractor following detailed site survey of the buildings and surrounding area. Such a survey will provide detail on the:

- The condition of the buildings and demolition methods recommended.
- The location and removal methods for any toxic or hazardous materials.
- The type and location of adjoining and surrounding premises which may be affected by noise, vibration, dust and removal of the structures.

Demolition works at the Proposed Development site will primarily involve the following:

- Disconnection of services, if applicable;
- Soft strip of the buildings to be demolished;
- Complete structural demolition of the buildings;
- Grubbing up of the rising walls, foundations and redundant underground services within the footprint of the demolished structures.

4.5.4 Site Excavation

Soil Stripping and temporary stockpiling of soils and other excavated materials will be required around the site as the Proposed Development progresses. While these works occur, the following will apply:

- The area where excavations are planned will be surveyed and all existing services will be identified.
- All relevant bodies (i.e. ESB, Gas Networks Ireland, Eir, GCC, etc.,) will be contacted and all drawings for all existing services sought.
- All plant operators and general operatives will be inducted and informed as to the location of any services.
- All plant operators and general operatives will be inducted and informed as to the identification of invasive species.
- A tracked 360-degree excavator will be used to strip the topsoil, and a dumper will be used to move the excavated materials to the temporary stockpile location.
- All excavated material will be reused for future landscaping works or for backfill of excavations.
- All stockpiles will be covered in a sheet of polythene, as required, which will prevent the creation of nuisance dust, and will also prevent sediment runoff in times of heavy precipitation.
- In all circumstances, excavation depths and volumes will be minimised.
- All excavated spoil will be stockpiled and contained entirely within the confines of the site. Alternatively, spoil will be transported off site to a designated waste facility.

- Earthworks will only be carried out during periods of dry weather.

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4.5.5 Traffic Measures and Junction Upgrade Works

As outlined in the Traffic and Transport Assessment (Appendix 15-1) prepared by Tobins Consulting Engineers, vehicular access to the Proposed Development will be provided via Altán Road to the north of the site, which connects to the western Distributor Road. Operational vehicular and pedestrian access will be provided via Altán Road under GCC Planning Reference 24/60370.

Upgrades will include resurfacing which will have similar methodology to that outlined in Section 4.5.6 below.

All internal roads have been designed in accordance with the requirements of Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and the Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas.

4.5.6 Proposed Site Roads and Footpaths

Site Roads and Parking Areas

The construction methodology for the proposed access roads and parking areas is as follows:

- Excavation will take place until a competent stratum is reached.
- The competent stratum will be overlain with up to 500mm of granular fill and compacted.
- A layer of geogrid/geotextile may be required at the surface of the competent stratum.
- A final hard surface layer will be placed over the excavated road to provide a road profile to accommodate construction traffic.
- Prior to completion of the construction works on site, the finished asphalt road surface will be applied.

Footpaths

- Excavation will be required to reach the desired levels,
- Shuttering will be installed along the section where footpaths are to be installed,
- A layer of granular material (clause 804 or similar) will be placed within the shuttered area. This layer will then be compacted.
- Once the layer of aggregate material has been compacted to the desired level, concrete will be poured into the shuttered area. The concrete will be levelled with the appropriate falls and allowed to cure for the appropriate time period.
- Once the concrete has cured, the shuttering will be removed.
- Mitigation measures to control potential concrete runoff are outlined in Section 4.6 below.

4.5.7 Services and Utilities

Any underground services encountered during the works will be surveyed for level and where possible will be left in place. If there is a requirement to move the service, then the appropriate body (ESB, Gas Networks Ireland, etc.) will be contacted, and the appropriate procedure put in place. Backfill around any utility services will be with dead sand/pea shingle where appropriate. All works will be in compliance with required specifications.

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There are currently 2 no. Uisce Éireann (UÉ) owned watermain networks near the Proposed Development site boundary. A 315mm HDPE watermain runs along the Kingston Road at the southern boundary of the Proposed Development and a 150mm watermain runs along the western boundary along the southern arm junction of the adjacent Western Distributor Road roundabout and Altán Road.

It is proposed to connect the watermain for the Proposed Development off the watermain to be constructed as part of the permitted works which form part of the overall masterplan for the area. This watermain is a 150mm watermain which has been permitted by GCC (Planning Reference 24/60370), which in turn connects to an UÉ owned 150mm watermain that runs along the western boundary along the southern arm junction of the adjacent Western Distributor Road roundabout and Altán Road.

All wastewater generated from the Proposed Development will outfall, via gravity, to a wastewater network permitted by GCC (Planning Reference 24/60370). From here, the wastewater will discharge to an existing UÉ owned 375mm foul sewer line located west of the Proposed Development along the southern arm junction of the adjacent roundabout and Altán Road.

The proposed foul network is designed using Causeway Flow Drainage modelling software. Outputs from the foul sewer design, and long sections are attached in Appendix A of the Civil Works Design Report (Appendix 4-3). The proposed foul sewer network is graphically represented on the engineering drainage drawings which accompany this document as part of the planning submission.

All foul water will be discharged to the public sewer and will be treated at the Galway Mutton Island Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) before discharging to Galway Bay. The Mutton Island WWTP has a current capacity of 170,000P.E. (Uisce Eireann, 2025).

As outlined in the accompanying Civil Works Design Report (Appendix 4-3) the proposed storm water drainage infrastructure incorporates the philosophies of nature-based Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage surface water runoff quantity and quality.

The installation of services and connections to the residential units will be carried out as follows:

- The area where excavations are planned will be surveyed and all existing services will be identified.
- All relevant bodies (i.e., ESB, Gas Networks Ireland, Eir, GCC etc.) will be contacted and all drawings for all existing services sought.
- A traffic management plan will be produced if required for connection works to the existing service network.
- A road opening licence will be obtained where required for connection to existing services.
- All plant operators and general operatives will be inducted and informed as to the location of any services.
- A tracked 360-degree excavator or similar will be used to excavate the trench to the required dimensions.
- All excavated material will be removed to an authorised waste recovery facility or, if suitable, stockpiled and reused for backfilling and landscaping where appropriate.
- Once the trench has been excavated the ducting/pipework will then be placed in the trench as per specification.
- Once the service ducts/pipework has been installed couplers will be fitted as required and capped to prevent any dirt etc. entering the ducts/pipes.
- The as built location of the ducting/pipework will be surveyed using a total station/GPS.
- Backfill material will be carefully placed so as not to displace the ducting/pipework within the trench.
- The appropriate warning/marker tape will be installed above the ducts/pipes at the appropriate depths.

- The surface will be reinstated as per original specification or to the requirements of the site layout/Local Authority as appropriate.

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4.5.8 Residential Unit Construction

The residential dwellings along with the upgrade of an existing structure to a cafe will be constructed using the following methodology:

- The area where excavations are foundations are to be installed will be surveyed and all existing services will be identified.
- All relevant bodies (i.e. ESB, Bord Gáis, Eircom, GCC etc.) will be contacted and all drawings for all existing services sought.
- The area of each building will be marked out using ranging rods or wooden posts and the soil and overburden stripped and removed to nearby storage area for later use in landscaping.
- All plant operators and general operatives will be inducted and informed as to the location of any services.
- A tracked 360-degree excavator or similar will be used to excavate the area down to a competent stratum as approved by the Design Engineer and appropriately shuttered reinforced concrete will be laid over it.
- Foundations will be shuttered and cast with reinforced concrete as per the Design Engineer's specification.
- The pre-cast elements/block work/brick work walls will be built up from the foundation including a Damp Proof Course (DPC) and the floor slab constructed, having first located any ducts or trenches required by the follow on mechanical and electrical contractors.
- The block work will then be raised to wall plate level and the gables & internal partition walls formed. Scaffold will be erected around the outside of the buildings for these works.
- Any concrete floor slabs in the apartments or town houses will be lifted into position using an adequately sized mobile crane.
- The timber roof trusses will then be lifted into position using a teleporter or mobile crane depending on site conditions. The roof trusses will then be felted, battened, tiled and sealed against the weather.
- Windows, electrics, plumbing and all other building components and services will be installed in as timely a manner as is possible.
- Each building will be inspected and certified by the project design engineer at the appropriate stages of construction.

4.5.9 Landscaping Works

Prior to the completion of works on the Proposed Development site, the landscaping works will be carried out. This work will be carried out before the completion of works in order to ensure that the development will be an aesthetically pleasing place for residents to live. These works will involve the use of plant and machinery in order to carry out tasks such as earth moving. Materials which have been stockpiled for the task will be used as much as possible, and material will only be imported where it is required. During site preparation works, where topsoil is stripped prior to excavation, this material will be retained on site for use in landscaping.

Cunnane Stratton Reynolds have prepared detailed landscape drawings and a Landscape Design Rationale Report which can be found in Appendix 6-3 of the EIAR.

The Landscape Design Rationale Report and Chapter 6 Biodiversity of the EIAR outlines a number of biodiversity friendly measures which are as follows:

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- The use of native species will generally be preferred. However, a complimentary element of non-native species will also be used, where appropriate to achieve particular aims or requirements.
- The planting of predominantly pollinator friendly shrub and herbaceous species will integrate the scheme in line with the 'All Ireland Pollinator Plan'.
- Significant additional native tree planting mitigates necessary removals and ultimately will significantly increase the sites tree and vegetation cover overtime.
- Proposed tree planting includes a selection of native and naturalised trees such as alder, beech, birch, cherry, oak, pine, rowan, sycamore and whitebeam. The use of such trees will provide vertical scale and structure to the landscape over time, as well as ecological benefits.
- The proposed landscape plan aims to create a number of linear green corridors suitable for bat feeding.

4.6 Management of Construction Phase Activities

4.6.1 Environmental Management

All proposed construction activities on the site of the Proposed Development are outlined in the CEMP (Appendix 4-1). The CEMP includes details of drainage, overburden management and waste management. In the event planning permission is granted for the Proposed Development, the CEMP will be updated prior to the commencement of the development, to address the requirements of any relevant planning conditions, including any additional mitigation measures which are conditioned and developed though the detailed design to be submitted to the Planning Authority for approval.

4.6.2 Proposed Drainage Design

The management of surface water for the Proposed Development has been designed to comply with the philosophies of nature-based SuDS and CIRIA guidelines as embodied in the recommendations of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) and with the requirements of Galway City Council.

The surface water strategy incorporates attenuation of storm water to limit discharge from the site, although storage facilities and SuDS elements will be designed to allow infiltration or reduction of run-off volumes and rates where possible. The proposed storm water drainage system has been designed to cater for all surface water runoff from all hard surfaces in the Proposed Development including roadways, parking areas etc. All stormwater generated on site from roadways and parking areas will discharge via an Oil/Petrol Interceptor to remove possible hydrocarbons. The soakaway/ attenuation units are strategically located within the site. Where there is adequate infiltration, stormwater will discharge to soakaways/ attenuation. Otherwise, it will discharge at a controlled Greenfield runoff rate to existing 450 mm storm sewer network west of the Proposed Development.

By-pass separators will be installed prior to discharging to the existing storm sewer. The separators will be sized to cater for impermeable areas i.e. roads, car parking and footpath areas.

The following SuDS elements are applicable to the proposed scheme and layout:

- Water butts
- Tree pits
- Rain gardens
- Permeable paving
- Swales
- Drainage kerbs with infiltration trenches
- Soakaways/attenuation units.

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- Hydrobrake manholes to control the flow of surface water to allow the soakway/attenuation units to fill to their capacity (designed to largest stormwater required over 48-hour storm period with rainfall depths taken for the 100year return period +20 % for climate change).
- Hydrocarbon separation prior to the outfall to the exiting surface water network and immediately downstream of any hydrobrake manholes.

Storm-water attenuation for the Proposed Development has been sized in accordance with the requirements of the GDSDS. Run-off rates from the Proposed Development to the public system are in accordance with the GDSDS.

4.6.3 Protecting Water Quality

Prior to the commencement of any subsequent construction activities, the necessary mitigation measures will be put in place to ensure that no silt laden water runoff generated at the site will flow to nearby watercourses or drains thus ensuring the protection of surface water during the works. This will involve confirming the location of all existing services and delineating between drainage systems. Surface waters will be managed to ensure the prevention of run off from areas where excavation occur does not result in silt laden water entering the existing storm water network.

Particular emphasis will also be placed on hazardous materials management and prevention of spills or leaks of fuel oils to ensure watercourses and groundwater are not impacted. Section 5 of the CEMP provides an Emergency Response Plan for dealing with spillages which may result in adverse environmental effects.

Waters will not be discharged directly to any existing surface water sewers or drains. Particular emphasis will also be placed on hazardous materials entering the surface water management system as well as spill or leaks of fuel oils.

Excavation works have the potential to encounter sub-surface waters and ground water. In the event of encountering groundwaters during excavation, the excavation will be de-watered using a pump equipped with a silt bag on the discharge outlet. The pumped water will be discharged to either the existing surface water drainage system or to a suitably vegetated area within the site boundary. Where discharge to a vegetated area is required, the area will be enclosed with silt fencing, as necessary, to prevent sediment-laden runoff and ensure compliance with best practice environmental controls. In order to avoid hydrocarbons encountering groundwaters onsite, Section 3 of the CEMP presents mitigation measures to avoid the release of hydrocarbons onsite.

Surface and storm water generated during the operational phase will be captured by the proposed drainage network within the confines of the site boundary as outlined in Section 2 of the CEMP.

4.6.3.1 Prevention Pollution Control Measures

The following measures will be put in place to prevent the transportation of silt laden water or pollutants from entering any of the wider environments including watercourses/drains within or near the site:

- The site boundary will be fenced off with heras fencing (or similar) prior to works commencing to protect adjacent habitats and to prevent any egress of machinery outside of the site during construction activities.
- There are no watercourses on site and surface water will not be directly discharged into any external water bodies, surrounding land, or adjacent roadways. Any run-off generated on-site will undergo the necessary filtration process as previously outlined.
- The works will be managed to ensure there will be no silt-laden run-off beyond the site boundary. This will be achieved through the use of appropriate excavation

techniques during the initial construction works. Where necessary, silt fencing will be installed downslope of the construction areas, particularly where drains or drainage pathways are present. These measures will serve as a protective measure to contain silt material within the site.

- Any requirement for temporary fills or stockpiles will be damped down or covered with polyethylene sheeting as required to avoid sediment release associated with heavy rainfall.
- Excavations will be carried out using a suitably sized excavator and, in all circumstances, excavation depths and volumes will be minimised where practically possible.
- Excavated spoil will be stockpiled and contained entirely within the confines of the site boundaries. Any stockpile areas will be surrounded with silt fencing, if deemed necessary to prevent runoff.
- The minimum number of soil/subsoils and bedrock material should be removed from site. Soil may be reused for landscaping elsewhere on the site. However, any excess construction material shall be removed from the area and sent to an authorized waste recovery facility.
- Works shall not take place at periods of high rainfall and shall be scaled back if or suspended if heavy rain is forecast during excavation works.
    - High rainfall' is defined as follows:
    - >10 mm/hr (i.e. high intensity local rainfall events);
    - >25 mm in a 24-hour period (heavy frontal rainfall lasting most of the day);
- In the event of encountering groundwaters during excavation, groundwater will be pumped out of the excavation using a pump equipped with a silt bag on the discharge pipe, if necessary, to capture any silty material prior to subsequent natural percolation to ground. The area surrounding the silt bag will be surrounded by silt fencing if deemed necessary.
- No wastewater will be discharged on-site during the construction phase.
- Good construction practices will be implemented at the site. This will ensure minimal risk. The Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) provides guidance on the control and management of water pollution from construction sites, as outlined in Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites, guidance for consultants and contractors (CIRlA, 2001). This guidance will be adhered to throughout the construction phase to ensure that surface water generated on site contains minimum sediment.

Details of control measures which will be implemented at the site, if required, are included in the Plates below.

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Plate 4-3.Silt Bag with water being pumped through.



Plate 4-4. Silt Bag under inspection.

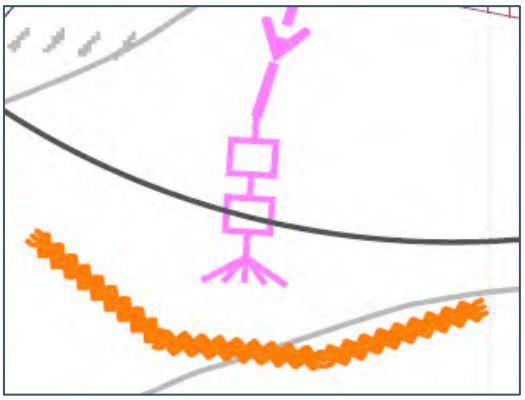


Plate 4-5. Silt Fence (orange) surrounding the discharge from Silt Bag (pink).



Plate 4-6. Embedded Silt Fence

(Note: Approximate locations for such a control measure cannot be provided as it cannot be identified where such measure may be adopted on site prior to commencement.)

4.6.3.2 Cement Based Products Control Measures

The complete washing out of concrete trucks will not be permitted at the site during the construction phase. Suppliers will be directed back to their own facility to complete the washout process. However, a washout area for chute cleaning will be provided at various locations in close proximity to the concrete pour locations.

The following mitigation measures are proposed to avoid release of cement leachate from the site:

- No batching of wet-cement products will occur on site.
- Ready-mixed supply of wet concrete products and where possible, emplacement of pre-cast elements, will take place. Where possible pre-cast elements for culverts and concrete works will be used.
- No washing out of any plant used in concrete transport or concreting operations will be allowed on-site.
- Where concrete is delivered on site, only chute cleaning will be permitted, using the smallest volume of water possible. No discharge of cement contaminated waters to the construction phase drainage system or directly to any artificial drain or watercourse will be allowed.

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- Use weather forecasting to plan dry days for pouring concrete.
- Ensure pour site is free of standing water and plastic covers will be ready in case of sudden rainfall event.

4.6.3.3 Refuelling, Fuel and Hazardous Materials Storage

The following measures are proposed to avoid release of hydrocarbons at the site:

- Minimal refuelling or maintenance of construction vehicles or plant will take place on site. Where possible, off-site refuelling will occur at a controlled fuelling station;
- On-site re-fuelling will be undertaken using a double skinned bowser or a refuelling truck with spill kits kept onboard;
- All oils, fuels, paints and other chemicals will be stored in a secure bunded construction hardstand area. Refuelling and servicing of construction machinery will take place in a designated hardstand area which is also remote from any drainage systems. A response procedure will be put in place to deal with any accidental pollution events and spillage kits will be available and construction staff will be familiar with the emergency procedures and use of the equipment;
- A temporary drainage system shall be installed prior to the commencement of the construction works;
- All works shall be undertaken in accordance with the CIRIA document, 'Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites, guidance for consultants and contractors'.
- All plant and machinery will be serviced before being mobilised to site;
- No plant maintenance will be completed on site, any broken down plant will be removed from site to be fixed;
- Concrete batching will take place off site, wash down and wash out of concrete trucks will take place off site and any excess concrete is not to be disposed of on site. Pumped concrete will be monitored to ensure there is no accidental discharge. Mixer washings are not to be discharged into surface water drains/sewers;
- Discharge from any vehicle wheel wash areas is to be directed to on-site settlement tanks/ponds, debris and sediment captured by vehicle wheel washes are to be disposed off-site at a licensed facility;
- Foul drainage discharge from the construction compound will be transported off site to a licensed facility until a connection to the public foul drainage network has been established.

4.6.4 Dust Control

Construction dust can be generated from many on-site activities such as excavation and backfilling. The extent of dust generation will depend on the type of activity undertaken, the location, the nature of the dust, i.e. soil, sand, etc and the weather. In addition, dust dispersion is influenced by external factors such as wind speed and direction and/or periods of dry weather. Construction traffic movements also have the potential to generate dust as they travel along the approach road. The measures below will also prevent construction debris arising on the public road network.

Proposed means to control dust include:

- Any site roads with the potential to give rise to dust will be regularly watered, as required, during dry and/or windy conditions.
- The designated public roads outside the site and along the main transport routes to the site will be regularly inspected by Site Management for cleanliness and cleaned as necessary.
- Material handling systems and material storage areas will be designed and laid out to minimise exposure to wind.

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- Water misting or bowsers will operate on-site as required to mitigate dust in dry weather conditions.
- The transport of soils or other material, which has significant potential to generate dust, will be undertaken in tarpaulin-covered vehicles where necessary.
- All vehicles leaving the construction areas of the site will rinse their wheels at a designated wheel wash area prior to entering the local road network.
- All construction related traffic will have speed restrictions on un-surfaced roads to 15 kph.
- Daily inspection of construction sites to examine dust measures and their effectiveness.
- When necessary, sections of the approach road will be swept using a truck mounted vacuum sweeper.

It is also proposed to carry out dust monitoring at the site during the construction phase. Monitoring will be carried out quarterly using the Bergerhoff method. This monitoring will ensure that the mitigation measures outlined above are functional and being implemented. The locations of dust monitoring gauges are outlined in Figure 3-1 of the CEMP (Appendix 4-1).

4.6.5 Noise Control

The operation of plant and machinery, including construction vehicles, is a source of potential noise impacts. Construction phase noise is typically assessed in light of guidance set out in British Standards Institution (BSI) (2014) BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014 Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites – Part 1: Noise , as well as the National Roads Authority (NRA) (now TII) (2014) Good Practice Guidance for the Treatment of Noise during the Planning of National Road Schemes. Although the NRA document is not directly relevant to the Proposed Works, it has seen increasing application to non-road projects in recent years in the absence of any specific Irish guidance.

All construction plant used on-site will be required to comply with maximum sound power levels set out in Directive 2000/14/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 May 2000 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the noise emission in the environment by equipment for use outdoors, implemented in Ireland by the European Communities (Noise Emission by Equipment For Use Outdoors) Regulations, 2001 (S.I. 632 of 2001) , as amended by the European Communities (Noise Emission by Equipment for Use Outdoors) (Amendment) Regulations, 2006 (S.I. 241 of 2006) .

Proposed measures to control noise include:

- Construction operations will in general be confined to the periods Monday-Friday 0800-1800 h and Saturday 0900-1300 h.
- Hooting will be prohibited onsite. Drivers of plant and vehicles will be instructed to avoiding hooting at all times.
- Plant used onsite during the construction phase will be maintained in a satisfactory condition and in accordance with manufacturer recommendations. In particular, exhaust silencers will be fitted and operating correctly at all times. Defective silencers will be immediately replaced.
- Queuing of trucks on public roads will be prohibited.
- Machinery not in active use will be shut down.
- A site representative will be appointed as a liaison officer with the local community.
- Any complaints of noise received during the construction phase will be logged in a register and investigated immediately. Details of follow-up action will be included in the register.
- Where it is proposed to import potentially noisy plant to the site, the potential impact of noise emissions will be assessed in advance.

- Guidance set out in BS 5228-1:2009 with respect to noise control will be applied throughout the construction phase.
- Advance notification will be given to residents immediately outside the site boundary when works are proposed within 50m of their dwellings.

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4.6.6 Vibration Control

Vibration standards can be considered in two varieties: those dealing with human comfort and those dealing with cosmetic or structural damage to buildings. For example, vibration is perceptible at around 0.5mm/s in the case of road traffic, however at higher magnitudes, this vibration may become an annoyance. Guidance relevant to the protection of building structures is contained in the following documents:

- British Standards Institution (BSI). (1993) BS 7385-2:1993 Evaluation and Measurement for Vibration in Buildings – Part 2: Guide to Damage Levels from Ground Borne Vibration. London: BSI[1].
- British Standards Institution (BSI). (2014) BS 5228-2:2009+A1:2014 Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites – Part 2: Vibration. London: BSI[2].

Vibration can be more difficult to control than noise, and there are few generalisations which can be made about its control. It should be borne in mind that vibration can cause disturbance by causing structures to vibrate and radiate noise in addition to perceptible movement. The following mitigation measures will be implemented at the site during the demolition and construction phases to control vibration levels:

- The hours of working should be planned, and account should be taken of the effects of vibration upon persons in areas surrounding site operations and upon persons working on site, taking into account the nature of land use in the areas concerned and the duration of work.
- Where reasonably practicable, low vibration working methods should be employed. Consideration should be given to use of the most suitable plant, reasonable hours of working for operations which might give rise to perceptible vibrations, and economy and speed of operations.
- Vibration should be controlled at source and the spread of vibration should be limited.
- Where reasonably practicable, plant and/or methods of work causing significant levels of vibration at sensitive premises should be replaced by other less intrusive plant and/or methods of working.
- Vibration from stationary plant (e.g. generators, pumps, compressors) can, in some instances, prove disturbing when located close to sensitive premises or when operating on connected structures. In these instances, equipment should be relocated or isolated using resilient mountings.
- Where processes could potentially give rise to significant levels of vibration, on-site vibration levels should be monitored regularly by a suitably qualified person appointed specifically for the purpose, particularly if changes in machinery or project designs are introduced. A method of vibration measurement should be agreed prior to commencement of site works.
- On those parts of a site where high levels of vibration are likely to be a hazard to persons working on the site, prominent warning notices should be displayed.

[1] ***British Standards Institution (BSI). (1993)*** BS 7385-2:1993 Evaluation and Measurement for Vibration in Buildings – Part 2: Guide to Damage Levels from Ground Borne Vibration***. London: BSI***
[2] ***British Standards Institution (BSI). (2014)*** BS 5228-2:2009+A1:2014 Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites – Part 2: Vibration***. London: BSI***

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- Offsite fabrication - In method statement/risk assessment the contractor will highlight any activity that may cause significant vibration levels and include measures in helping to mitigate these emission levels.
- Equipment is to be task specific.
- Best practice vibration control measures will be employed by the contractor.
- A designated member of staff will be appointed as the point of contact for any queries or complaints from nearby local residents.

4.6.7 Ecological Measures

As outlined in Chapter 6 Biodiversity of the EIAR, the following measures will assist in reducing the impact of habitat loss on local bats during construction:
The below mitigation strategy is proposed for works on the two buildings previously identified as bat roosts, to minimise the potential for direct harm to individual bats over the course of the works proposed, and to provide alternative roosting opportunities to local bats, during and post construction:

- Works will not be carried out during the bat activity season (April-September) within buildings where evidence of roosting bas was found (i.e. Stone Shed 1 and Stone Shed 2).
- Alternative new roosting locations will be provided as part of the proposed development site. One no. Rocket Bat Box and two no. pole-mounted woodcrete bat boxes will be erected in suitable locations around the perimeter of the Proposed Development site. The locations of these bat boxes will be cognisant of existing landscape features in the wider vicinity of the Proposed Development site which could be used by commuting and foraging bats and will also avoid areas of artificial lighting. At least two of these will be installed prior to building demolitions commencing.
- Bat boxes will have a southerly orientation and be positioned at least 2m from the ground (ideally 3m), and away from artificial lighting. They will be placed adjacent to existing vegetation features such as treelines and hedgerows, beyond the Proposed Development site boundary, to ensure they are close to existing flight paths and can avoid wide open spaces (Collins, 2023).
- The new bat boxes will be inspected annually under licence to monitor uptake and their condition.

4.6.8 Invasive Species Management

A multidisciplinary walkover survey was carried out on the 20th of March 2024, 24th of April 2024. An updated field survey was undertaken by Deepali Mooloo (B.Sc., M.Sc.) of MKO on the 23rd June 2026.

These field surveys were carried out in line with NRA (2009) guidelines (Ecological Surveying Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna during the Planning of National Road Schemes).

As outlined in the accompanying Invasive Species Management Plan (ISMP) (Appendix 6-2 of the EIAR), two invasive species listed on the Third Schedule of of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011) and First Schedule of the European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024 (S.I. 374 of 2024) were recorded within the Proposed Development site boundary.

Three-cornered leek (*Alium triquetrum*) was recorded in the Proposed Development Site. A small cluster of Three-cornered leek was recorded on the northern boundary of the Proposed Development site.

Sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) saplings, categorised as minor infestations, were also recorded at the northern extents of the Proposed Development site. Overall, the infestation of Sea buckthorn within the site is very small in scale, with only juvenile saplings recorded.

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The treatment and control of invasive alien species will follow best practice guidelines, including:

- National Roads Authority (NRA) (2010) Guidelines on the Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-native Invasive Plant Species on National Roads. Revision 1. Dublin: National Roads Authority.
- INNSA (2017) Code of Practice: Managing Japanese Knotweed. Invasive Non-Native Specialists Association.

4.6.8.1 Treatment and Management Methodologies

4.6.8.2 Preliminary Stages

A dedicated invasives species survey of the Proposed Development site will be carried out three months prior to commencement of works on site to determine if the species have spread further throughout the site. Surveys should be undertaken during the summer months (June - July) when the extent of infestation will be fully visible.

The treatment methodologies have been carefully considered and are proposed to eradicate Sea buckthorn and Three-corned leek and manage their spread further within the Proposed Development site. These treatment measures are considered as part of the planning application. An ecologist will be on site to supervise the treatment. The infested areas will be marked out with posts and hazard tape prior to any machinery ingress or works within or near this area.

4.6.8.3 Three- Cornered Leek

The following management is proposed in relation to Three-cornered Leek:

- An ecologist will be on site to supervise the treatment.
- The infested area will be marked out with posts and hazard tape prior to any machinery ingress or works within or near this area.
- Three-cornered leek can be controlled through chemical means.
    - Chemical treatment is the chosen treatment method. It is advised to treat the plant in-situ and avoid disturbance and the increased risk for spread and dispersal.
    - This plant can be treated with a Glyphosate based chemical herbicide on an annual basis. It is recommended that a Glyphosate-based herbicide will be applied as a spot treatment to individual plants, or by foliar and stem spray in early spring before the plant flowers which typically happens between April and June. It is best to manually break the leaves prior to applying the chemical to ensure it enters the leaf. Follow-up annual treatments are necessary as large numbers of shoots may re-appear the following year as may new seedlings.

- The timing of the treatment applied is vital for the eradication of three-cornered leek. The control methods must be implemented in March or April when the leaves of the three-cornered leek are fully formed. Control methods should not be carried out if plants have finished flowering and produced seed (from the outset of May) as the movement of plants at this stage in the plant's cycle can cause a further spread of the invasive species.
- Three-cornered leek produces vast amounts of seeds annually and these seeds can persist and remain dormant in the soil for years before germinating. Due to this, a

monitoring programme will be established to eradicate the invasive plant where the plants currently exist onsite. Therefore, it is key to undertake the control and treatment measures for a consecutive number of years to eradicate the seed bank and bulbs. The developer will appoint a suitably qualified ecologist to carry out post-construction monitoring for invasive species. The area will be surveyed by an ecologist in March/April, May and again in September for the presence of Three-cornered leek for a minimum of 3 years after the treatment to ensure no further spread is taking place.

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4.6.8.4 Sea Buckthorn

Mechanical/ physical removal of Sea buckthorn controls the spread of the invasive species by either damaging or removing the plant material via physical action, i.e., uprooting, felling, slashing, mowing, grubbing etc. Juvenile Sea buckthorn saplings were previously recorded in close proximity to the Proposed Development boundary and given its proximity it is proposed to eradicate this species from nearby lands on a precautionary basis. It is anticipated that the construction phase will span 3 years and as such it is likely to mature with time, in the absence of control measures being implemented.

The recommended treatment methodology for Sea buckthorn includes;

- Any juvenile new shoots of Sea buckthorn will be removed by hand pulling or manual removal using hand tools. The plant will be physically cut and dug up from the root either by hand or using an excavator to grub up the plant.
- Larger stumps will be cut and the stumps painted with Glyphosate herbicide.
- Following clearance of woody material, any necessary excavation of the ground will be undertaken. As sea-buckthorn can readily regenerate from root and rhizomatous material present in soil, any soil arising from areas infested with sea-buckthorn must be contained and disposed of appropriately.
- The vegetation material can be disposed of by burning or incineration.
- If for any reason, burning of plant material is not feasible on-site this material and the soil potentially contaminated within root or rhizome fragments must be gathered and disposed of off-site, to a waste disposal facility that has a pollution prevention and control permit or waste management licence. In order to move material potentially contaminated with Third or First Schedule invasive plant species, a licence is required to be obtained from NPWS. The conditions of the permit or licence of the waste disposal facility must allow the disposal of invasive plants at the site. Delivery should be agreed with the waste site in advance to make sure they can accept material containing invasive plants. When transporting invasive plant material and soil potentially contaminated with invasive plant material, any vehicle used must be covered or securely sheeted so that plant material cannot be accidentally dispersed during transportation.

4.6.8.5 Post Treatment Monitoring

Ongoing monitoring will be required within the Proposed Development site for all invasive species listed on the Third and First Schedules with suitable follow-up management implemented, in order to control new growth or re-establishment within the infested areas.

Following the initial removal, treatment and completion of the development, the treated areas will be re-surveyed annually and if necessary, re-treated until no growth of Three-cornered leek or Sea buckthorn is recorded for two consecutive years. If Three-cornered Leek or Sea buckthorn are found to be re-establishing, they shall be treated as per the measures outlined above and in Section 4 of the ISMP.

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4.6.8.6 Site Hygiene

The following measures will be adhered to throughout the duration of the proposed construction works:

- The Project Ecologist will give a Toolbox Talk to all staff in relation to Three-cornered leek and Sea buckthorn and their management on site.
- A designated bio-secure area/exclusion zone will be set up at the Three-cornered Leek and Sea buckthorn locations to prevent disturbance in these areas.
- Prior to leaving the invasive species exclusion zones, all boots and clothing will be thoroughly brushed down to remove any contaminated material prior to leaving the area.
- The contractor will assign a member of their team as Environmental Officer to ensure the management plan is adhered to throughout the proposed works.
- All works in relation to invasive species will be supervised by the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW).
- As a precautionary measure, machinery will be thoroughly cleaned down before entering the site to prevent potential spread of invasive species from elsewhere.
- Clean down will be carried out using brushes and shovels and power washing avoided insofar as possible. This is to prevent potentially contaminated run-off spreading outside the site.
- All measures prescribed in the invasive species management plan will be incorporated into the contractor's respective method statements for works.

To avoid the introduction of invasive species to the site the following best practice measures will be adhered to:

- Any material imported to the site will be screened for invasive species by a suitably qualified ecologist before transportation to the site.
- All machinery will be thoroughly cleaned down prior to arriving on the site to avoid the potential spread of invasive species from elsewhere.

4.6.9 Traffic Management

The construction stage of the Proposed Development will be complete in two phases and is scheduled to begin construction in 2027 with the construction phase lasting for a minimum of two years. It is envisaged that working hours will be 08:00am to 18:00pm Monday to Friday (08:00am to 13:00pm for Saturday) for construction personnel through each phase of the development however working hours will be confirmed on grant of planning by Galway City Council. Generally, construction workers will travel to site before the measured peak hour of 08:00 to 09:00, to be on site for a 08:00 start-time. It is envisaged that a very limited number of construction employees are likely to travel to the site during peak hours.

A number of mitigation measures are proposed during the construction phase to minimise the impact, the measures are as follows;

- A detailed haulage plan will be put in place to ensure minimal impact on the surrounding road network. Spoil removal from site will be kept to a minimum with a detailed site survey completed to ascertain where spoil can be distributed on the site.
- All deliveries and removals will be subject to stringent site rules governing the loading / off-loading times, location of loading / off loading, covering of loads and cleaning of vehicles exiting the site, etc.
- Delivery loads to and from the site and management of large deliveries on site to occur outside of peak periods.
- No vehicle will be allowed to stop or park on the access road to the Proposed Development site.

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- Ample parking will be provided within the site to cater for the staff and visitors during the construction phases of the Proposed Development.
- Construction traffic will be managed and scheduled to ensure no queueing occurs on either the internal road system or the main approach roads. The provision of an on-site vehicle staging area will facilitate waiting vehicles.
- Routine sweeping/cleaning of the road and footpaths in front of the site; and
- No uncontrolled runoff to the public road from dewatering/pumping carried out during construction activity.

There will be on-going monitoring of the impact of construction traffic on the wider roads network to ensure prompt action is taken in the event of an issue arising.

4.6.10 Archaeological Mitigation Measures

4.6.10.1.1 *Pre-Construction Investigations*

The northern area of the Proposed Development site has been subject to significant modern ground disturbance while the southern end remains as a largely undisturbed area of green field pastureland containing areas of bedrock outcrops and waterlogging. The lands have been assessed by a geophysical specialist (Dr. Ger Dowling) and were considered to be unsuitable for an archaeo-geophysical survey due to the presence of areas of prior ground disturbance, undulating terrain with bedrock outcrops, waterlogged conditions and the presence of overhead electricity cables.

A programme of archaeological test trenching, under licence by the National Monuments Service, will therefore be carried within the Proposed Development site in advance of the construction phase. This archaeological investigation will also include the compilation of a written and photographic record of the existing field boundaries within the Proposed Development site. In the event that any sub-surface archaeological deposits, features or objects are identified during test trenching, their locations will be recorded and securely cordoned off while the National Monuments Service are notified of the discovery and consulted to determine further mitigation measures, which may entail preservation *in situ* by avoidance or preservation by record through a systematic archaeological excavation.

4.6.10.1.2 *Monitoring of Mitigation Measures*

There are a number of obligatory processes to be undertaken as part of applications to the National Monuments Service for licences to carry out archaeological test trench excavations and these will allow for monitoring of the successful implementation of the mitigation measures.

A detailed method statement stating the proposed strategy for the site investigations will accompany the submitted licence application which will clearly detail the extent of the archaeological works and outline the processes to be enacted in the event that any archaeological features are encountered. Reports on the archaeological site investigations will then be submitted to the National Monuments Service, the National Museum of Ireland and the Planning Authority which will clearly describe the results of all archaeological works in written, mapped and photographic formats.

4.6.11 Waste Management

The CEMP, Appendix 4-1 of this EIAR, provides a Resource Waste Management Plan (RWMP) which outlines the best practice procedures during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. The RWMP outlines the methods of waste prevention and minimisation by recycling, recovery and reuse at each stage of construction of the Proposed Development. Disposal of waste will be a last resort.

A comprehensive site-specific Construction Demolition Waste Management Plan (CDWMP) has also been prepared by Tobins Consulting Engineers. The purpose of the CDWMP is to ensure that waste storage and movement within the development takes place in a manner which complies with relevant

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legislation and has a minimal impact on the nearby existing commercial and residential areas and ensures, where prevention is not possible, that maximum reuse, recycling and recovery of waste with diversion from landfill, wherever possible.

The plan estimates the type and quantity of waste to be generated from the Proposed Development during the Construction and Demolition phases and provides a strategy for managing the different waste streams. Guidance will also be given to ensure appropriate method of transportation of waste is used to prevent littering or other serious environmental pollution.

The Waste Management Act 1996 (Act) and its subsequent amendments provide for measures to improve performance in relation to waste management, recycling and recovery. The Act also provides a regulatory framework for meeting higher environmental standards set out by other national and EU legislation.

The Act requires that any waste related activity must have all necessary licenses and authorisations. It will be the duty of the Waste Manager on the site of the development to ensure that all contractors hired to remove waste from the site have valid Waste Collection Permits to ensure that the waste is delivered to a licensed or permitted waste facility. The hired waste contractors and subsequent receiving facilities must adhere to the conditions set out in their respective permits and authorisations.

4.7 Operational Phase

The Proposed Development will require periodic maintenance throughout the operational phase. The operation of a residential development is not a recognised source of environmental emissions or nuisance and so there will be no adverse effects associated with its operation.

The storm water drainage infrastructure for the Proposed Development will incorporate the philosophies of nature based Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). The proposed storm water drainage system will be designed to cater for all surface runoff from all hard surfaces in the Proposed Development including roadways, roofs, parking areas etc. All stormwater generated on site from roadways and roofs will discharge via an Oil/Petrol Interceptor to soakways/attenuation units. The soakaway/attenuation units will be strategically situated within the site.

Water will be provided to the Proposed Development off the watermain to be constructed as part of the permitted works which form part of the overall masterplan for the area. This watermain is a 150mm watermain permitted by GCC (Planning Reference 24/60370), which in turn connects to an existing UÉ owned 150mm watermain that runs along the western boundary along the southern arm junction of the adjacent Western Distributor Road roundabout and Altán Road.

The proposed foul drainage layout for the Proposed Development will outfall, via gravity, to a wastewater network permitted by GCC (Planning Reference 24/60370). From here, the wastewater will discharge to an existing UÉ owned 375mm foul sewer line located west of the Proposed Development along the southern arm junction of the adjacent roundabout and Altán Road.

It is proposed that all pipes will be thermoplastic structured wall pipes with the maximum and minimum pipe sizes being between 150mm and 300mm respectively. The maximum and minimum pipe gradients shall fall between 1/30 and 1/200. The sewer network has been designed to cater for six times the dry weather flow rate. A flow of 150 litres per head per day plus an additional 10% allowance to account for infiltration within a new development has been considered in the foul sewer design as per UÉ Code of Practice for Wastewater Infrastructure.

4.7.1 Property Management – Operational Stage

A property management company will be formed at an early stage of the development to ensure that all property management functions are dealt with for the development.

The property management company has a number of key responsibilities including compiling the service charge budget for the development for agreement with the owners' management company. The service charge budget covers such items as cleaning, landscaping, refuse management, utility bills, insurance, maintenance, and security. A full detailed summary of the provisions which the estate management company and appointed managing agents will be responsible for is outlined in the Property Management Strategy Report which is prepared by Aramark and accompanies this EIAR and planning application.

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4.7.2 Sustainable Energy Use

A Climate Scheme Sustainability Statement has been prepared by Moloney Fox Consulting for the Proposed Development and is outlined in Appendix 4-2. The Statement outlines how a target Building Energy Rating (BER) rating of A2 will be achieved using heat pump solutions as heating provisions.

Design and intent for apartments and townhouses has considered this also. Aluminium radiators will be provided in each space with thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs) as required. These radiators are specifically designed to work with low temperature heating systems and have quicker heat up periods and transfer rates than standard steel panel radiators.

Demand Control Ventilation will be provided to provide controlled natural ventilation to each dwelling. Demand Control Ventilation (DCV) is an energy-saving strategy used in building ventilation systems to optimize the amount of fresh air brought into a space based on its actual occupancy and ventilation requirements. DCV systems improve indoor air quality while reducing energy consumption by delivering the right amount of ventilation air when and where it is needed.

DCV systems utilize sensors and controls to monitor various factors such as occupancy, carbon dioxide (CO2) levels, temperature, humidity, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the space. These sensors provide feedback to the ventilation system, allowing it to modulate the amount of fresh air supplied accordingly.

Light emitting diode (LED) lighting and advanced lighting controls shall be implemented into the houses and apartments. LEDs have become the lighting technology of choice in modern apartment buildings due to their numerous advantages over traditional lighting options. LED lights are highly energy-efficient, consuming significantly less electricity than incandescent or fluorescent bulbs. They convert a higher percentage of electrical energy into light, minimising wasted energy as heat.

LED lighting and lighting control systems have transformed modern buildings, offering energy-efficient illumination, improved user experiences, and sustainable practices. The combination of LED technology and advanced controls provides residents with flexibility, comfort, and cost savings while promoting environmental stewardship in residential communities.

4.8 Decommissioning Phase

It is not intended that the proposed buildings will be removed, as permanent planning permission is being sought for this development. The Proposed Development will form an integral part of the local housing needs. Therefore, it is intended that the Proposed Development will be retained permanently and will not be decommissioned.

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APPENDIX 2

CONFIRMATION OF FEASIBILITY

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Uisce Éireann
Bosca OP 448
Oifig Sheachadta na
Cathrach Theas
Lathair Chorcaí

Uisce Éireann
PO Box 448
South City
Delivery Office
Cork City

www.water.ie

Michael Naughton

TOBIN
Fairgreen House
Fairgreen Road
Galway
H91AXK8

24 March 2026

Our Ref: CDS26001767 Pre-Connection Enquiry
Kingston Lands, Galway

Dear Applicant/Agent,

We have completed the review of the Pre-Connection Enquiry.

Uisce Éireann has reviewed the pre-connection enquiry in relation to a Water & Wastewater connection for a Housing Development of 140 unit(s) at Site At, Kingston Lands, Galway, Galway, (the **Development)**.

Based upon the details provided we can advise the following regarding connecting to the networks;

- **Water Connection**
  - Feasible without infrastructure upgrade by Uisce Éireann
  - The customer's property is located on a private road leading to their house therefore the customer is responsible for installing their service pipe from the edge of the public road to their development. The Customer shall obtain any permissions/consents/wayleaves (if required) for the pipe route from their house to the edge of the public road.

    Please note that according to our records there is an existing water main and sewer running through this site (see drawing attached).
    Any structures or works over or in close

Stiúrthóirí / Directors: Jerry Grant (Cathaoirleach / Chairperson), Niall Gleeson (POF / CEO), Douglas Millican, Michael Nolan, Patricia King, Eileen Maher, Cathy Mannion, Michael Walsh, Rena O'Sullivan and Orlagh Nevin.
Oifig Chláraithe / Registered Office: Teach Colvill, 24-26 Sráid Thalbóid, Baile Átha Cliath 1, D01 NP86 / Colvill House, 24-26 Talbot Street, Dublin, Ireland D01NP86
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		proximity to Uisce Eireann infrastructure that will inhibit access for maintenance or endanger structural or functional integrity of the infrastructure are not allowed. The layout of the development must ensure that this pipe is protected and adequate separation distances are provided between Uisce Eireann infrastructure and any structures on site. Alternatively, you may enter into a diversion agreement with Uisce Eireann and divert the pipe to accommodate your development. If you wish to proceed with this option, please contact Uisce Eireann at Diversions@water.ie and submit detailed design drawings before submitting your planning application. It will be necessary to provide a wayleave over this pipe to the benefit of Uisce Eireann and ensure that it is accessible for maintenance. For more information, please see go to the link below: https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/diversions/
• **Wastewater Connection**	-	Feasible without infrastructure upgrade by Uisce Éireann
	-	Customer proposes to connect into a 300mm foul sewer permitted under planning ref 24/60370 by GCC. Connections via third party owned assets can be permitted subject to the following conditions: • Written agreement should be obtained by the Customer from the 3rd party giving permission to the Customer to connect via 3rd party infrastructure. Can Consents be provided to UE at this point. • Confirmation shall be provided by the new customer, supported by design calculations (if required), that the 3rd party infrastructure has capacity and is structurally adequate. If IW deems a high level of risk involved, further information should be sought such as condition survey/CCTV survey, etc. • It should be made clear to all parties that the 3rd party infrastructure remains classified as a service connection and is not assumed by any party to be adopted/taken in charge by Uisce Eireann following the

new connection being made, unless it is expressly stated otherwise.
• The new customer and the 3rd party shall be treated individually for metering purposes.
• The Customer shall obtain a Wayleave (in favour of themselves) over the 3rd party infrastructure where possible. However this is not a requirement that should prevent the connection being made if a wayleave is not forthcoming.

Please note that according to our records there is an existing water main and sewer running through this site (see drawing attached).
Any structures or works over or in close proximity to Uisce Eireann infrastructure that will inhibit access for maintenance or endanger structural or functional integrity of the infrastructure are not allowed.
The layout of the development must ensure that this pipe is protected and adequate separation distances are provided between Uisce Eireann infrastructure and any structures on site. Alternatively, you may enter into a diversion agreement with Uisce Eireann and divert the pipe to accommodate your development. If you wish to proceed with this option please contact

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This letter does not constitute an offer, in whole or in part, to provide a connection to any Uisce Éireann infrastructure. Before the Development can be connected to our network(s) you must submit a connection application and be granted and sign a connection agreement with Uisce Éireann.

As the network capacity changes constantly, this review is only valid at the time of its completion. As soon as planning permission has been granted for the Development, a completed connection application should be submitted. The connection application is available at www.water.ie/connections/get-connected/

Where can you find more information?

- **Section A -** What is important to know?

- **Section B -** Details of Uisce Éireann's Network(s)

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This letter is issued to provide information about the current feasibility of the proposed connection(s) to Uisce Éireann's network(s). This is not a connection offer and capacity in Uisce Éireann's network(s) may only be secured by entering into a connection agreement with Uisce Éireann.

For any further information, visit **www.water.ie/connections**, **email** **newconnections@water.ie** or contact 1800 278 278**.**

Yours sincerely,

Dermot Phelan

Dermot Phelan
Connections and Developer Services

Section A - What is important to know?

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What is important to know?	Why is this important?
Do you need a contract to connect?	• Yes, a contract is required to connect. This letter does not constitute a contract or an offer in whole or in part to provide a connection to Uisce Éireann's network(s). • Before the Development can connect to Uisce Éireann's network(s), you must submit a connection application and be granted and sign a connection agreement with Uisce Éireann.
When should I submit a Connection Application?	• A connection application should only be submitted after planning permission has been granted.
Where can I find information on connection charges?	• Uisce Éireann connection charges can be found at: https://www.water.ie/connections/information/charges/
Who will carry out the connection work?	• All works to Uisce Éireann's network(s), including works in the public space, must be carried out by Uisce Éireann*. *Where a Developer has been granted specific permission and has been issued a connection offer for Self-Lay in the Public Road/Area, they may complete the relevant connection works
Fire flow Requirements	• The Confirmation of Feasibility does not extend to fire flow requirements for the Development. Fire flow requirements are a matter for the Developer to determine. • **What to do?** - Contact the relevant Local Fire Authority
Plan for disposal of storm water	• The Confirmation of Feasibility does not extend to the management or disposal of storm water or ground waters. • **What to do?** - Contact the relevant Local Authority to discuss the management or disposal of proposed storm water or ground water discharges.
Where do I find details of Uisce Éireann's network(s)?	• Requests for maps showing Uisce Éireann's network(s) can be submitted to: datarequests@water.ie

What are the design requirements for the connection(s)?	• The design and construction of the Water & Wastewater pipes and related infrastructure to be installed in this Development shall comply with ***the Uisce Éireann Connections and Developer Services Standard Details and Codes of Practice,*** available at www.water.ie/connections
Trade Effluent Licensing	• Any person discharging trade effluent** to a sewer, must have a Trade Effluent Licence issued pursuant to section 16 of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act, 1977 (as amended). • More information and an application form for a Trade Effluent License can be found at the following link: https://www.water.ie/business/trade-effluent/about/ **trade effluent is defined in the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act, 1977 (as amended)

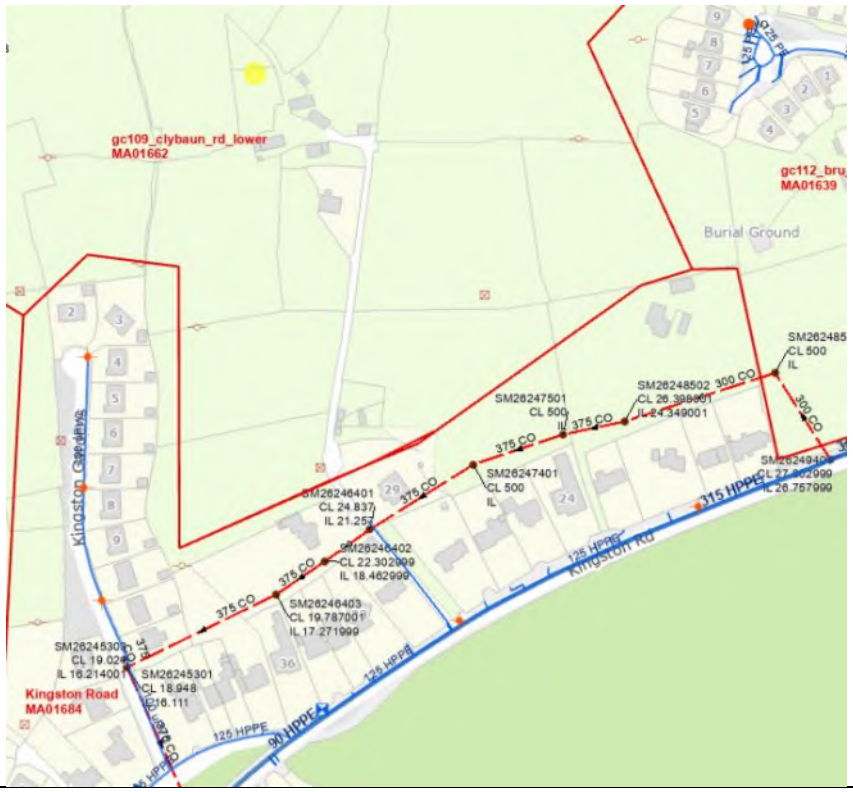
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Section B – Details of Uisce Éireann's Network(s)

The map included below outlines the current Uisce Éireann infrastructure adjacent the Development: To access Uisce Éireann Maps email datarequests@water.ie





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Note: The information provided on the included maps as to the position of Uisce Éireann's underground network(s) is provided as a general guide only. The information is based on the best available information provided by each Local Authority in Ireland to Uisce Éireann.

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Whilst every care has been taken in respect of the information on Uisce Éireann's network(s), Uisce Éireann assumes no responsibility for and gives no guarantees, undertakings or warranties concerning the accuracy, completeness or up to date nature of the information provided, nor does it accept any liability whatsoever arising from or out of any errors or omissions. This information should not be solely relied upon in the event of excavations or any other works being carried out in the vicinity of Uisce Éireann's underground network(s). The onus is on the parties carrying out excavations or any other works to ensure the exact location of Uisce Éireann's underground network(s) is identified prior to excavations or any other works being carried out. Service connection pipes are not generally shown but their presence should be anticipated.

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APPENDIX 3

Eileen Corley

From: Eileen Corley
Sent: Friday 3 October 2025 11:18
To: Eileen Corley
Subject: FW: DAU Ref: G Pre00169/2024 FW: 240142 - Knocknacarra Residential Development Scoping Exercise
Attachments: Knocknacarra.pdf

RECEIVED: 05/08/2026

From: Housing Manager DAU <Manager.DAU@npws.gov.ie>
Sent: Friday 13 June 2025 08:46
To: Eileen Corley <ecorley@mkoireland.ie>
Subject: RE: DAU Ref: G Pre00169/2024 FW: 240142 - Knocknacarra Residential Development Scoping Exercise

Caution: This is an external email and may be malicious. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

Good morning Eileen,

The Department response for this proposed development was emailed to you on 12 June 2024, I have attached same here for your convenience.
I do see that the reference number in your subject line is different to that on the response issued to you.
That was an error on our part, the correct reference is G Pre 00159/2024.
I hope this clarifies matters, however if you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,
Colette

Colette McCormack
Executive Officer

An Roinn Tithíochta, Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Aonad na nIarratas ar Fhorbairt
Development Applications Unit

Oifigí an Rialtais, Bóthar an Bhaile Nua, Loch Garman, Contae Loch Garman, Y35 AP90
Government Offices, Newtown Road, Wexford, Co Wexford, Y35 AP90
Telephone: 053 9117434

An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

RECEIVED: 05/08/2026

Your Ref: 240142
Our Ref: **G Pre00159/2024**
(Please quote in all related correspondence)

12 June 2024

Eileen Corley
MKO
Tuam Road
Galway
H91 VW84

Via email: ecorley@mkoireland.ie cc: tmadden@mkoireland.ie

Re: EIA scoping document for proposed Large-Scale Residential Development at Knocknacarra, County Galway

A Chara

I refer to correspondence received in connection with the above.

Outlined below are nature conservation observations/recommendations of the Department.

The Department welcomes the correspondence in relation to the proposed Large-Scale Residential development at Knocknacarra, County Galway. These observations are intended to assist you in relation to identifying potential impacts on European sites, other nature conservation sites, and biodiversity and environmental protection in general, in the context of the current proposal. The observations here are not exhaustive, and are made without prejudice to any recommendation that may be made by this Department in the future. Data collected and surveys carried out in connection with this proposed development may raise other issues that have not been considered here.

The Department notes that MKO is preparing an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) for the proposed residential development at Knocknacarra, County Galway. This proposal will also be subject to the Article 6(3) Appropriate Assessment (AA) Process. The Department notes that an AA Screening, and if required a Natura Impact Statement (NIS), will be prepared.

General ecological considerations

Assessment of the direct, indirect and cumulative significant effects of the project on biodiversity should be made with regard to:

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- Natura 2000 sites, i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the EC Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under the EC Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147 EC)

- Habitats and species protected under the Habitats Directive – Annex I habitats, Annex II species and their habitats, and Annex IV species and their breeding sites and resting places (wherever they occur), Bird species protected under the Birds Directive – Annex I species and other regularly occurring migratory species, and their habitats (wherever they occur)

- Other designated sites, or sites proposed for designation, such as Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Nature Reserves and Refuges for Fauna or Flora, designated under the Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2023

- Species protected under the Wildlife Acts including protected flora (note Flora (Protection) Order 2022)

- Important bird areas such as those identified by Birdwatch Ireland

- Features of the landscape, which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna, such as those with a "stepping stone" and ecological corridors function, as referenced in Article 10 of the Habitats Directive

- Other habitats of ecological value in a national to local context (such as those identified as locally important biodiversity areas within Local Biodiversity Action Plans and County Development Plans)

- Red data book species

- Biodiversity in general

Reference should be made to the up-to-date National Biodiversity Action Plan, Galway City Development Plan, Galway City Biodiversity Action Plan, as well as the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

<u>Likely significant effects on European sites:</u>
The Department notes that the Galway Bay Complex SAC (Site Code: 000268) is located 1km to the southwest and that Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code: 000297) is 2.8km east of the site. The scope of works includes these for assessment however, the Inner Galway Bay SPA (Site Code: 004031) and Lough Corrib SPA (Site Code: 004042) have not been mentioned, and should be included for assessment.

In relation to potential significant effects on a European site, assessments are carried out with respect to the implications for the conservation objectives of that site. Where available,

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the attributes, targets and notes specified as part of the conservation objectives will determine the scope and detail of surveys, data and analyses required to produce an NIS, if required. The NIS should present the scientific examination of all necessary evidence and data. It should be noted that the conservation objectives of a European site are wider in scope than the qualifying interests or special conservation interests alone, and will encompass other habitats and species, as well as aspects of habitat structure and function, and existing environmental problems and trends. The final analyses are carried out with respect to whether the conservation objective is to maintain or to restore the favourable conservation condition of the habitat or species in question within the site.

The key concerns in relation to likely significant effects of the project alone and in-combination with other plans and projects, on these European sites, in view of their conservation objectives, include the following:

- Disturbance of potential resting/roosting sites for Annex II species (e.g. Lesser Horseshoe Bat)

- Increased disturbance and displacement of species, and progressive habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration surrounding European sites arising from the development, and loss of important ecological corridors

- Added pressures on existing water services

Likely significant effects on the environment:
Under Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, member states must maintain and where possible enhance landscape features to improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 network. Particular note should be given to the EU Green Infrastructure Strategy. Opportunities for landscape enhancement should be considered within the landscape plan which should seek to integrate Green Infrastructure and 'Nature Based Surface Water Management' into the project design and consideration of Sustainable. Drainage Systems (SuDS) requirements. At a minimum, it is advised that areas of woodland and treelines on and bordering the site should be retained and protected by appropriate setback distances, landscaping and boundary treatments.

The development of the site should be consistent with protective policies and objectives in the Galway City Development Plan. Recent habitat mapping is available for much of Galway City and should be sourced. Substantial data on species, particularly the more mobile species such as bats, are also available for parts of the city and the environmental assessment documentation associated with the proposed N6 Galway City Ring Road should be consulted.

The Landscape Management Plan should be guided by valuable resources available as part of the National All-Ireland Pollinator Plan[1] and planting of potential invasive species such as Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster franchetii*) avoided.

[1] https://pollinators.ie/resources/

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The procedures outlined in 'Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK' and Eurobats 'Guidelines for Consideration of Bats in Lighting Projects' should be consulted with respect to the overall lighting design. This should also take into consideration Dark Sky Ireland guidance "Best practice in public lighting", notably that "warm" colour temperatures should be used at 2700K or less. Final sign off and testing of the lighting scheme should be carried out at night to ensure that the lighting is directional and targeted and should not spill over onto treelines and hedgerows which can have adverse impacts on bats and biodiversity in general. Bat species are strictly protected under Annex IV of the Habitats Directive.

Ecological surveys required:

Ecological surveys should be carried out in accordance with recognised methodologies, and should provide a comprehensive description and evaluation of the ecological baseline of the site, and an assessment of the likely direct, indirect and cumulative effects of all aspects of the proposed development.

Surveys should be carried out by suitably qualified persons at an appropriate time of the year depending on the species being surveyed for. The Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) should include the results of the surveys, and detail the survey methodology and timing of such surveys. It is expected by the Department, that in any survey methodology used, best practice will be adhered to and if necessary non-Irish methodology adapted for the Irish situation. The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM's) recent advice titled 'Advice note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys' should be noted.

Specific attention should be given to the assessment of:

- Hedgerows and ecological connectivity
- Bird usage of the site and surrounding areas (notably for feeding and roosting)
- Bats, including building inspections, roost presence/absence activity surveys, walked transects and automated static detectors

Any losses of semi-natural habitat associated with this proposed development such as woodland, scrub, hedgerows and other habitats should in the first instance be avoided where possible, and mitigated for where not.

Mitigation measures

Mitigation measures need to be assessed against the adverse effects the project or plan is likely to cause (alone or in-combination with other projects or plans). To assess mitigation measures, the following tasks must be completed:

- List each of the measures to be introduced (e.g. noise bunds, tree planting)