

November '25  
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**ENVIROPLAN CONSULTING  
LIMITED**

## **Title**

*Natura Impact Statement*

## **Development Description**

*“Take Notice that Keogh Homes Ltd. intends to apply to the Planning Authority for full Planning Permission to construct 42 No. Dwelling Houses comprising*

- 2 No. 4 bedroom detached house,*
- 16 No. 4 bedroom semi-detached houses,*
- 10 No. 3 bedroom semi-detached houses,*
- 6 No. 3 bedroom terraced houses,*
- 4 No. 2 bedroom semi-detached bungalows,*
- 2 No. 2 bedroom duplex units*
- 2 No. 3 bedroom duplex units*

*and all associated site works and services at the above address. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been included in the application”.*

## **Location**

*Cappagh Road & Soldiers Hill, Kilrush, Co. Clare*

## **Applicants**

*Keogh Homes Ltd*

## **Prepared by:**

*Edel Hardiman (B.Sc) in consultation with  
James O’ Donnell (BA, MRUP, Dip APM)*

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

This Stage 2 Natura Impact Statement (Appropriate Assessment Report) has been prepared by Edel Hardiman (B.Sc) in consultation with James O' Donnell, Planning Consultant (BA, MRUP, Dip APM) on behalf of Keogh Homes Ltd who are applying for planning permission to Clare County Council "to construct 42 No. Dwelling Houses comprising

- 2 No. 4 bedroom detached house,
- 16 No. 4 bedroom semi-detached houses,
- 10 No. 3 bedroom semi-detached houses,
- 6 No. 3 bedroom terraced houses,
- 4 No. 2 bedroom semi-detached bungalows,
- 2 No. 2 bedroom duplex units
- 2 No. 3 bedroom duplex units

and all associated site works and services at the above address.

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been included in the application".

The site for the proposed development lies approximately 487 meters to the east of the Lower River Shannon SAC and is approximately 585 meters to the east of the River Shannon & River Fergus Estuaries SPA. These sites have been designated under the EU Habitats and Birds Directive. Therefore, it is necessary that the potential impacts of the proposed works be assessed by the competent authority, in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive. This report provides the information necessary for the competent authority to complete an Appropriate Assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed works on sites of European importance in the area.

The current project is not directly connected with, or necessary for, the management of any European Site.

The assessment in this report is based on a desk study, and field surveys undertaken on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2025, 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2025 and the 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2025 by Edel Hardiman (Consultant Ecologist).

This Stage 2 NIS has been informed by the Stage 1 AA Screening Report, which concluded that indirect construction phase impacts/effects on the Natura 2000 networks could not be ruled out at that stage. Due to the large scale of the proposed development and the proximity to the Lower River Shannon SAC and the River Shannon & River Fergus Estuaries SPA Natura 2000 sites, indirect impacts during the construction phase cannot be ruled out. As per the precautionary principle, surface water runoff could result in groundwater contamination which could indirectly impact on the Qualifying Interests associated with the Lower River Shannon SAC and the River Shannon & River Fergus Estuaries SPA in the absence of mitigation measures. Furthermore, indirect noise impacts cannot be ruled out during the

construction phase as per the precautionary principle. Noise control mitigation measures are required to ensure no impact on the Qualifying Interest Bird species associated with the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA.

This Report has been prepared in accordance with the European Commission guidance document 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 (EC, 2001) and the Department of the Environment's Guidance on the Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (December 2009, amended February 2010).

## **1.2 Statement of Authority**

A baseline ecological survey was undertaken on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 by Edel Hardiman (B.Sc).

Edel is a qualified ecologist and has obtained a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science (BSc Hons) at the University of Galway. Edel has completed Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports, Natura Impact Statements, Ecological Impact Assessments, Bat Survey Reports and Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Reports for a wide range of public and private sector projects. She has conducted Bird Surveys and Bat Surveys in the Republic of Ireland. She is a registered member of CIEEM.

James O' Donnell is a qualified Town Planner and Project Manager with over 25 years planning experience in both the public and private sector in the west of Ireland, including 6 years-experience as a local authority planning officer. James has particular experience in the project management and delivery of a wide range of complex planning applications requiring environmental and ecological assessment, in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and EIA Directives.

## **1.3 Screening for Appropriate Assessment**

The screening exercise will be conducted in line with the recommendations and protocol set out in the Guidance from the Commission (EC, 2002). This protocol involves a four-stage process to complete an Appropriate Assessment. At each stage, the findings of certain issues and tests will determine whether the next stage in the process is required.

The four stages in the Appropriate Assessment process are outlined below:

### **Stage 1: Screening**

This step consists of examining the likely potential impacts of a project or plan, alone or in combination with other projects, upon a Natura 2000 site or sites, and considers whether these impacts may be considered significant. If no significant impacts are foreseen, then a 'finding of no significant effects' (FONSE) statement is issued to the appropriate authority,

and the process is complete. If the effects are considered significant or their significance is unknown, then the process moves on to Stage 2.

## Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

Where the screening process has identified potential impacts which are considered significant or unknown, this process examines these potential impacts in detail, in relation to the conservation interests of the Natura 2000 site or sites. Mitigation measures may be suggested to reduce the likelihood or severity of these impacts. If the impacts are still considered to be significant or unknown after this stage is complete, then alternative solutions must be considered (Stage 3).

This Natura Impact Statement represents an **Appropriate Assessment** “to construct 42 No. Dwelling Houses comprising

- 2 No. 4 bedroom detached house,
- 16 No. 4 bedroom semi-detached houses,
- 10 No. 3 bedroom semi-detached houses,
- 6 No. 3 bedroom terraced houses,
- 4 No. 2 bedroom semi-detached bungalows,
- 2 No. 2 bedroom duplex units
- 2 No. 3 bedroom duplex units

and all associated site works and services at the above address.

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been included in the application”.

## Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

‘If the potential impacts are still considered to be significant or unknown after the Appropriate Assessment stage, then alternative ways of implementing the project are considered at this stage. If no alternative solutions are possible, then it is considered whether the project or plan may go ahead regardless, if imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) are found’.

## Stage 4: Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)

If significant negative impacts on the Natura 2000 site are unavoidable, and no alternative solutions may be found, then this stage involves the consideration of whether the project or plan may go ahead despite these effects, for ‘imperative reasons of overriding public interest’ (IROPI).

## 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Site Location

The application site is located to the south of the town of Kilrush, County Clare. The subject site is bounded by the Cappagh Road (R473) to the north, the Soldiers hill Road to the east and the Fort Road to the south. The site is in greenfield condition, comprised of agricultural grassland with hedgerows present along field boundaries. The site has urban infill characteristics, with housing to the west north and south and a timber manufacturing facility to the east. The topography of the site falls from south to north. The Kilrush Marina is located further to the north of the site. The site is 1.86 hectares in size.

### 2.2 Characteristics of Proposed Development

As per the public notices planning permission is sought *“to construct 42 No. Dwelling Houses comprising*

*2 No. 4 bedroom detached house,*

*16 No. 4 bedroom semi-detached houses,*

*10 No. 3 bedroom semi-detached houses,*

*6 No. 3 bedroom terraced houses,*

*4 No. 2 bedroom semi-detached bungalows,*

*2 No. 2 bedroom duplex units*

*2 No. 3 bedroom duplex units*

*and all associated site works and services at the above address.*

*A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been included in the application.”*

The development site comprises an overall area of 1.86 hectares. A map showing the site location is provided as **Figure 2.1**.



Fig 2.1 – Indicative extent of application site outlined in red.



Figure 2.2: Site Location in Relation to the Lower River Shannon SAC and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA Natura 2000 sites.

### 3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

#### 3.1 Habitats

A walkover survey of the site was conducted on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2025. The NRA publication *Ecological Surveying Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna* was used as a guide for surveying. Habitats were classified according to the information in *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland* (Fossit 2000) and correlated with any Annex I habitats if applicable.

The application site is an agricultural grassland (GA1) with hedgerows (WL1) present throughout. There is a treeline (WL2) to the northeast of the site adjacent to the road junction.



Fig 3.1 Indicative Habitat map of proposed site.



**Plate 3.1** Looking at the southern boundary



**Plate 3.2** Looking west from the eastern boundary



**Plate 3.3** Looking south from the northern boundary



**Plate 3.4** Looking east from the centre of the site



**Plate 3.5** Looking west from the centre of the site

### 3.2 Fauna

The subject application site is located approximately 585 meters east of the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA. An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been submitted as part of this application, to assess the impacts of the proposed development on this designated site.

No QI bird species associated with the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA were identified on site.

Bird species were recorded on site during the survey on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 include Ravens (*Corvus corax*), Western house martin (*Delichon urbicum*), House sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Eurasian wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), Meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*), and Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*).

Bird species were recorded on site during the survey on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2025 include Song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), Western house martin (*Delichon urbicum*), Meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*), Eurasian wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), Willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), European greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*), and Common linnet (*Linaria cannabina*). A Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) was recorded in flight from the north to the south of the site.

No Qualifying interests of the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA were recorded on site during the field surveys. No mammal prints or wildlife tracks were noted on the site.

## **4 EU NATURE CONSERVATION LEGISLATION AND NATURA 2000 SITES.**

There are three main types of designation for nature conservation in Ireland: Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). NHAs are designated under the Irish Wildlife Act 1976 (amended 2000). SACs and SPAs are designated under European legislation, the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed into Irish law in the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 as amended in 1998 and 2005) and the EU Birds Directive 79/409/EEC, respectively. These European designated sites (SACs and SPAs) are also known as Natura 2000 sites. This means that they are part of the Natura 2000 Network, a network of important ecological sites across the European Union.

Sites are designated on the basis of the presence of certain 'Qualifying Features', i.e., the habitats listed under Annex I and the species listed under Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive.

Once a site is designated as a SAC/SPA and publicly advertised it is legally protected and becomes a proposed candidate SAC (pcSAC) or proposed candidate SPA (pcSPA). A three-month period follows during which landowners may lodge an objection to the designation. Details of each proposed SAC and proposed SPA are then given to the EU Commission, and thereafter the site is called a "candidate SAC" or "candidate SPA". Once the sites are approved by the commission, they are formally designated by the Minister.

### **4.1 Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites**

Due to the proximity of the proposed development site to a Natura 2000 site, an Appropriate Assessment may be required under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Article 6(3) and (4), Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites. Such assessments are required where it is identified that a proposed plan or project could have significant impact on a Natura 2000 site. Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Directive, state the following;

6.3 'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives... the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned....'

6.4 'If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest... the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected...'

## 5. EUROPEAN SITES IN THE LIKELY ZONE OF IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

A desktop study was conducted examining online and GIS spatial datasets for Surface Water Catchments and European designated sites on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2025. Information from the site was gleaned from the following source:

- The National Park and Wildlife website [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie) was consulted for details of protected sites and rare and protected species in the area.
- The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) was consulted for information on the soils, geology and hydrology of the site.
- The website [catchments.ie](http://catchments.ie) was used to review information on groundwater
- Relevant Development Plans and Local Area Plans in the neighboring areas.
- The planning section of the Clare County Council's website was consulted for information on local planning applications.
- Various other publications and websites were consulted for supporting information (see References section)

European sites within the zone of likely effects of the project were identified. The Lower River Shannon SAC and the River Shannon & River Fergus Estuaries SPA have been screened in. In the absence of construction phase mitigation, indirect impacts/effects cannot be ruled out during the construction phase of development. Due to the large scale of the proposed development and the proximity to the Lower River Shannon SAC and the River Shannon & River Fergus Estuaries SPA Natura 2000 sites, indirect impacts during the construction phase cannot be ruled out. As per the precautionary principle, surface water runoff could result in groundwater contamination which could indirectly impact on the Qualifying Interests associated with the Lower River Shannon SAC and the River Shannon & River Fergus Estuaries SPA in the absence of mitigation measures. Furthermore, noise disturbance to QI bird species associated with the River Shannon & River Fergus Estuaries SPA cannot be ruled out during the construction phase of development due to the distance and associated noise levels associated with construction works.

**Table 5.1** lists all European Sites within the zone of likely effect. The site synopsis and conservation objectives of these sites, as per the NPWS website ([www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)), were considered at the time of preparation of this report. Details of these sites, including their distance from the proposed development, are provided in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 Determination of European Sites within the Likely Zone of Impact**

European Site	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European Site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a> )	Conservation Objectives	Zone of Likely Impact Determination
<p>Lower River Shannon SAC Site code: 002165</p> <p>Approximately 487 meters from the application site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time [1110]</li> <li>• Estuaries [1130]</li> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>• Coastal lagoons [1150]</li> <li>• Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]</li> <li>• Reefs [1170]</li> <li>• Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</li> <li>• Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]</li> <li>• Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</li> <li>• Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330]</li> <li>• Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]</li> <li>• Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]</li> <li>• Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410]</li> <li>• Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]</li> <li>• <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]</li> <li>• <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</li> <li>• <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096]</li> <li>• <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1099]</li> <li>• <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]</li> <li>• <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]</li> <li>• <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</li> </ul>	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a></p>	<p>The proposed works are located approximately 487 meters (straight line measurement) to the east of the European Site and following preliminary assessment it is <b>considered to be within the Likely Zone of Impact.</b></p>

European Site	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European Site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a> )	Conservation Objectives	Zone of Likely Impact Determination
<p>River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA Site code: 004077</p> <p>Approximately 585 meters from the application site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017]</li> <li>• Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038]</li> <li>• Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]</li> <li>• Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048]</li> <li>• Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050]</li> <li>• Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052]</li> <li>• Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054]</li> <li>• Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056]</li> <li>• Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>) [A062]</li> <li>• Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137]</li> <li>• Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</li> <li>• Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]</li> <li>• Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]</li> <li>• Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143]</li> <li>• Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]</li> <li>• Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]</li> <li>• Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]</li> <li>• Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160]</li> <li>• Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]</li> <li>• Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>) [A164]</li> <li>• Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]</li> </ul>	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a></p>	<p>The proposed works are located approximately 585 meters (straight line measurement) to the east of the European Site and following preliminary assessment it is <b>considered to be within the Likely Zone of Impact.</b></p>

## 6 MITIGATION AND BEST PRACTICE MEASURES

The following mitigation and best practice measures will be adhered to during the construction and/or the operational phase of the proposed development. These are an integral part of the design of the project and are considered standard procedure. These guidelines must be read in conjunction with the "Preliminary Construction Environmental Management Plan" and the "Ecological Impact Assessment" prepared by Enviroplan Consulting Ltd and submitted as part of this planning application.

### **Construction Phase:**

#### **6.1 Site Set Up**

- A solid fence will be erected around the perimeter of the proposed development site prior to the commencement of construction works. This will create a solid boundary between the site and the surrounding area
- All works will be located within the confines of these fences. No works will take place outside the fences to prevent damage to areas outside the necessary development footprint.

#### **6.2 Earthworks/Invasive Species Control**

- Works such as soil excavations, soil depositing or soil stripping shall not take place immediately following periods of heavy or prolonged rainfall.
- All stockpile areas of sand, gravel, and soils shall be stored on level terrain and shall be covered during heavy rainfall periods in order to prohibit the mobilisation of sediments.
- Any machinery or construction materials being brought onsite ensure that the source is free of invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, *Gunnera* and *Rhododendron*.
- Any invasive species identified within the application site are to be removed and treated by a licensed and trained specialist to prevent the spread of invasive species. This measure is to be carried out prior to any construction work on the application site.

#### **6.3 Air Quality Dust and Emissions**

- Dust and mal odours shall be kept to a minimum.
- The site shall be dampened down as necessary to minimise windblown dust when necessary or during periods of dry weather.
- Dust suppression equipment must be used when point source emissions are likely.
- No Burning of materials will be allowed onsite.
- Care will be taken from the commencement of the project that the deposition of debris on local roads is kept to a minimum.

#### 6.4 Refueling, fuel and hazardous materials storage

- All machinery maintenance and re-fueling shall be carried out off-site. Spill kits for contaminants such as fuels oils and lubricants must be used.
- All petroleum products and tarmacadam are to be bunded, stored in water tight containers during the construction stage of the development.

#### 6.5 Environmental Approvals and Licenses

- Appropriate waste permits will be provided to and retained by the supervising engineer for the completion of demolition / waste disposal file.

#### 6.6 Groundwater Contamination

- All direct discharges of pollutants into groundwater are prohibited.
- Neither ground water nor surface water run-off from the working areas will be permitted to discharge directly to the existing surface water disposal system. Run off generated within the site during construction will be filtered and treated to remove hydrocarbons and sediment.
- Drip trays shall be utilized for all machinery on site and monitoring undertaken to ensure that there is no risk of overflowing and that they are adequately sized to deal with the specific element of machinery that they are protecting against.
- Site storage will be on an impervious base within a secondary containment system such as a bund.
- A spill kit with sand or earth shall be kept close to storage areas. Staff will be trained on how to used spill kits correctly.
- Damaged, or leaking drums shall be removed from site immediately and disposed of via a registered waste disposal contractor.
- No concrete or cleaning water shall enter soil or the adjacent waterway.
- Construct systems to collect, convey, treat, and attenuate the surface water runoff generated by the proposed development.

#### 6.7 Drainage and Water Quality

- The works shall be planned and executed in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency Guidelines.
- Wash water from on-site mixers or lorries shall be disposed of appropriately off site.
- The contractor must ensure that operations do not give rise to the discharge of large quantities of dirty water into the water courses. Measures must be in place to ensure that silt will not be allowed to enter the water system.
- To prevent run off from stripped ground, banks are to be placed on the downstream side of stockpiles.

- Water from excavations shall be pumped to land and allowed to settle, or passed through silt traps, before returning into the watercourse.
- Good site management will ensure that surface water and groundwater will be protected from accidental contamination.
- Washing out of concrete trucks shall not be permitted within the site and must be conducted in hard standing areas.
- All trucks will be visually inspected prior to entering the site; at the visitor car park area near the main entrance.
- A concrete pond will be set up to provide a restricted area where chute can be washed. This will be located at the north of the site, away from the drainage ditch. This area will be monitored when in use.
- With the exception of concrete chutes, trucks will not be washed on site.
- Works with concrete shall be done during dry conditions for a period sufficient to cure the concrete (at least 48 hours).
- Concrete pours shall occur in contained areas.
- Portable toilets and sanitary facilities will be provided for site use.
- Plant will be re-fueled away from watercourses.
- All site operatives will have immediate access to spill kits when machinery is being used.

## **6.8 Noise Control Measures**

- While increased levels of background noise are unavoidable during the construction phase of any project, measures will be implemented to reduce the number of noise-generating activities occurring concurrently.
- A copy of the EPA 'Guidance Note for Noise: License Applications, Surveys and Assessments in Relation to Scheduled Activities (NG4)' will be available on site for the duration of the works and will be referred to as required during the works.
- The major groundworks/excavations that are required by the proposed development will occur in the period 1st April to 31st September inclusive. This is to prevent disturbance to the bird species during the wintering period
- Channels of communication will be established between the Contractor, local authority, and residents.
- Machines shall be turned off when not in use.
- Where possible loud equipment shall be substituted with a quieter alternative.
- Noise shall be dampened where possible.
- Noise should be minimised, as far as practicable, by the selection of appropriate methods and equipment, and by the use of silencing devices wherever necessary.
- All compressors, percussion tools and vehicles will be fitted with effective silencers of a type recommended by their manufacturers.

**6.9 Protection of biodiversity and Landscape**

- Confine disturbance of vegetation to a minimum and where possible stay out of areas where no work is to take place.
- Retain landscape features, such as trees, hedgerows, and green areas where possible.
- Landscaping with native flora where possible and the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan shall be considered.
- Care must be taken when removing vegetation for small mammals, such as hedgehogs, badgers, and foxes.

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**7 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY EFFECTS ON EUROPEAN SITES**

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 the following criteria: 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 and operation have been considered in this assessment.

**7.1 Assessment with regard to each of the European Sites located within the Likely Zone of Impact**

Table 7.1 provides the assessment with regard to each of the European Sites located within the Likely Zone of Impact. The Lower River Shannon SAC and River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA are within the Likely Zone of Impact.

**Table 7.1 Assessment of pathways for potential adverse effects on the integrity of European Sites within the Zone of Likely Impact of the Proposed Works**

European Site	Pathways for Direct Effects	Pathways for Indirect Effects	Potential for adverse effects on the European Site
River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA Site code: 004077  Approximately 585 meters from the application site.	There is no potential for direct effect on the Qualifying Interests of the European Site. The proposed works are entirely outside the boundary of the European Site.	In the absence of construction phase mitigation, there is the potential for noise disturbance during the construction phase as per the precautionary principle. Additionally, surface water runoff could result in groundwater contamination which could indirectly impact on the Qualifying Interests associated with this Natura 2000 site in the absence of mitigation measures.  Best practice and mitigation measures are outlined in section 6 of this report.	With the proposed mitigation in place as stated in Section 6, there is no potential for impact on this European site. <b>No potential for adverse effect.</b>

European Site	Pathways for Direct Effects	Pathways for Indirect Effects	Potential for adverse effects on the European Site
<p>Lower River Shannon SAC Site code: 002165 Approximately 487 meters from the application site</p>	<p>There is no potential for direct effect on the Qualifying Interests of the European Site. The proposed works are entirely outside the boundary of the European Site.</p>	<p>In the absence of construction phase mitigation, surface water runoff could result in groundwater contamination which could indirectly impact on the Qualifying Interests associated with this Natura 2000 site in the absence of mitigation measures.  Best practice and mitigation measures are outlined in section 6 of this report.</p>	<p>With the proposed mitigation in place as stated in Section 6, there is no potential for impact on this European site. <b>No potential for adverse effect.</b></p>

## 8 LIKELY CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON EUROPEAN SITES, IN-COMBINATION WITH OTHER PLANS AND PROJECTS

The proposed development was considered in combination with other plans and projects in the area that could result in cumulative effects on European Sites.

The online planning system for Clare County Council was consulted on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2025.

The following local planning applications were granted within a 300m radius of the site in the past 5 years.

- **PI ref – 22875** – *to construct a new semi-detached dwelling house to the side of the existing dwelling house, to include revision of the existing site boundaries along with all associated site works and services*
- **PI ref – 21827** – *of the existing unauthorised extensions to the side and front of the existing dwelling house with all necessary ancillary services*
- **PI ref – 22899** – *to construct a new dwelling house, access road, boundary wall, new entrance, private garage, with connection to water & sewerage facilities along with all associated works*
- **PI ref – 24132** – *of the following: alterations to existing dwelling (as granted under Kilrush Town Council Planning Ref 813/85, to include velux windows to attic storage space, gable window to attic storage, alterations to rear elevations and Retention Permission for existing garage, / shed at rear of house, including all ancillary site works*
- **PI ref – 2360450** – *to demolish existing roof structure & supporting structural frame, reinstatement of new roof frame & structure, elevational changes along with all associated works*
- **PI ref – 20366** – *for the alteration and enlargement of 2 no. existing windows and the construction of 1 no. new roof light*
- **PI ref – 20565** – *to construct new dwelling, connect to existing public sewer and water services, including all ancillary site works, utilising existing entrance location onto public road*

No potentially significant cumulative and/or in-combination pollution disturbance, disruption, displacement, or habitat loss effects on any QI of any European Site have been identified regarding the proposed development.

## 9 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

### 9.1 Characteristics of the Site and Development

This report consists of a Natura Impact Statement in relation to a proposed development to “construct 42 No. Dwelling Houses comprising

- 2 No. 4 bedroom detached house,
- 16 No. 4 bedroom semi-detached houses,
- 10 No. 3 bedroom semi-detached houses,
- 6 No. 3 bedroom terraced houses,
- 4 No. 2 bedroom semi-detached bungalows,
- 2 No. 2 bedroom duplex units
- 2 No. 3 bedroom duplex units

and all associated site works and services at the above address.

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been included in the application”.

The site for the proposed development is located approximately 487 meters to the east of the Lower River Shannon SAC and is approximately 585 meters to the east of the River Shannon & River Fergus Estuaries SPA. It is not expected that the proposed development, will give rise to any direct impacts on the Natura 2000 sites in question.

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a) *Is the project directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?*

The project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European Site.

b) *Cumulative Impact Assessment - Are there any other projects or plans that together with the project being assessed could affect the site?*

A search in relation to plans and projects that may have the potential to result in cumulative impacts on European sites was carried out as part of the Appropriate Assessment Process. As detailed above in **Section 8**, the proposed development will have no individual or in-combination impacts on any European site in any regard.

## 9.2 Assessment of Significance of Effects

Describe how the project is likely to affect the Natura 2000 sites

- a) The project as planned will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site. During the assessment, pathways for potential significant indirect impacts/effects on Lower River Shannon SAC and River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA. Construction phase activities could result in potential noise disturbance during the construction phase as per the precautionary principle and potential groundwater contamination.
- b) Explain why these effects are not considered significant.
- There will be no negative direct impacts or reduction in Annex I habitat area or Annex II species within any European Site.
  - There will be no reduction in key habitats supporting populations of Annex II species and no reduction in the populations of any Annex II species.
  - Any potential pathways for impact have been blocked through good design, mitigation measures and a suitability assessment of the lands for development of this type.
  - The works themselves will involve little disturbance or disruption to the ecological processes in the area during construction, operation, or decommissioning.

## **Data Collected to Carry Out Assessment**

In preparation of the report, the following sources were used to gather information:

- Review of NPWS Site Synopses and Conservation Objectives for European sites.
- Site Visit on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2025.
- Desk study of relevant ecological information.

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### **9.3 Concluding Statement**

With the implementation of the best practice and mitigation measures described in section 6 of this report, it is not expected that the proposed development will give rise to any direct, indirect, or secondary impacts on the Lower River Shannon SAC and River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA.

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