COYLE ENVIRONMENTAL LTD.

Natura Impact Statement Report for Proposed Development at Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025









1st & 2nd Floor Kilmurry House, Main Street,
Castlerea, Co. Roscommon, F45 DK58

Tel: 094 962 1258 **Website**: www.coyleenv.ie

Coyle ENVIRONMENTAL

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

About Coyle Environmental Ltd.

Coyle Environmental Ltd are a highly respected and progressive Environmental Monitoring & Consulting practice.

For over two decades, Coyle Environmental Ltd has been a trusted provider of professional Environmental Monitoring and Consulting Services throughout Ireland.

Our reputation is built on innovative work practices, cost-effective solutions, and unwavering client dedication.

Operating nationwide from our base in the West of Ireland we pride ourselves on delivering consistently high-quality services, ensuring that projects are completed on time and within budget. Our commitment to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and investment in the latest technology keeps us at the forefront of the industry.

We deliver to our valued clients a consistently excellent quality of service.

We offer a specialist range of services comprising:

- Environmental Monitoring
- Environmental Consulting
- Environmental Project Management

Coyle Environmental Ltds ability to provide a cost-efficient professional service coupled with a proven track record on project completion and delivery ensures that we remain an industry leader in our areas of expertise.

Our progressive and innovative work practices, together with our commitment to CPD (Continuous Professional Development) ensure that our workforce are consistently upgrading their professional skills and that the company is constantly investing in the most recent technology and equipment.

Domestic Sewage & Percolation Testing



Commercial Wastewater Management



Environmental Project Management



Environmental Monitoring



Environmental Permits & Compliance



AMTIVO
ISO 9001 Certified
Quality Management

AMTIVO
ISO 45001 Certified
Occupational Health & Safety Management

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

Document Control	
Project Title:	Natura Impact Statement Report for a Proposed Development at Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
Project Reference No:	21-172
Project Description:	Natura Impact Statement Report for a Proposed Development at Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
Status:	FINAL
Client Details:	Yellow Wave Ltd
Issued By:	Coyle Environmental Ltd., 1st & 2nd Floor Kilmurry House, Castlerea, Co. Tipperary F45 DK58.

Document Production & Approval

	Name	Date	Position
Prepared by:	Catherine Howarth	06/08/25	Ecological Consultant
Approved by	Emma Yore	07/08/25	Environmental Consultant

Revision History

Rev	Status	Date
0	Draft	07/08/25
1	Draft	11/08/25
2	Final	19/08/25

Coyle Environmental Limited disclaims any responsibility to the Client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the report. The report has been prepared with reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. The report is confidential to the Client and Coyle Environmental Limited accepts no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report or any part thereof is made known. Any such party relies upon the report at their own risk.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction 1
1.1. Requirement for an Appropriate Assessment 1
1.2. The Aim of the Report 1
2. Regulatory Context 1
2.1. Relevant Legislation 1
3. Methodology 3
3.1. Appropriate Assessment Screening and NIS 3
3.2. Statement of Competency 4
3.3. Field Based Studies 4
3.4. Desk Studies & Consultation 4
3.5. Assessment Methodology 5
4. Appropriate Assessment Screening 6
4.1. Development Description 6
4.2. Site Location and Surrounding Environment 8
4.3. Habitats within the Site 11
4.4. Water Features and Quality 13
4.5. National Conservation Designations 13
4.6. Natura 2000 Sites Identified 13
4.7. Identification of Potential Effects 17
4.8. Screening Conclusions 18
5. Stage II – Natura Impact Statement 19
5.1. Introduction 19
5.2. Site Specific Conservation Objectives 19
5.3. Natura 2000 Sites Identified 20
5.4. Qualifying Interests of the Lower River Suir SAC – Screened Out 21
5.5. Qualifying Interests of the Lower River Suir SAC – Screened In 22
5.7. Potential Significant Effects 26
6. Mitigation Measures 29
6.1. General Good Practice and Initial Works 29
6.2. Management of Construction Waste and Soil 29
6.3. Protection of Water Quality and Management of Pollutants 30
6.4. Wheel washing and Road Cleaning 31
6.5. Air quality control 31
6.6. Invasive Species Biosecurity 32
6.7. Biodiversity Management and Enhancement 33

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

7. NIS Conclusion 33
Appendices 36

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

TABLE OF FIGURES

FIGURES

Figure 1 – Extract from Site layout (Bury Architects) 7
Figure 2 - Extract from Attenuation and Pond Details Plan (Bury Architects) 7
Figure 3 – Site Location Map with Site Pinned (NPWS) 9
Figure 4 – Site Location Map with Site Outlined in Red 9
Figure 5 – Aerial Photograph of site and surrounding landscape 10
Figure 6 - Drone footage with redline boundary and excluded land in yellow 10
Figure 7 – Habitat Map with Fossitt codes and description. 12
Figure 8 – The Application Site in relation to the Natura 2000 Sites within 15km (Red). (NPWS Maps) 15
Figure 9 – The Application Site (Red) in relation to SAC (Orange). (EPA Maps) 16

TABLES

Table 1 – Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the site 16
Table 2 – The Qualifying Interests of the Lower River Suir SAC (Screened Out) 21
Table 3 – The Qualifying Interests of the Lower River Suir SAC (Screened In) 22
Table 4 – Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] 23
Table 5 – White-clawed Crayfish [1092] 23
Table 6 – Sea Lamprey [1095] 24
Table 7 – Brook lamprey [1096]/ River Lamprey [1099] 24
Table 8 – Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax fallax*) [1103] 25
Table 9 – Salmon [1106] 25
Table 10 – Otter (1355) 26
Table 11 – Integrity of Site Checklist (From NPWS, Information Checklist for AA, Box 6, EC (2002)) 34

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

1. Introduction

1.1. Requirement for an Appropriate Assessment

All plans and projects are required to be screened for potential impacts upon Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under Article 6 of the EU Habitat's Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC). The aim of this screening process is to establish whether a full Appropriate Assessment of the plan or project is necessary.

Consideration of likely significant effects should be based on the Source – Pathway – Receptor (S-P-R) risk assessment principle. If there is no ecological pathway or functional link between the proposed development and the European site, there is no potential for impact, and the project can be screened out. Ecological pathways can be physical, for example, water or air in the case of airborne pollutants (e.g. ammonia from intensive agricultural installations). Functional pathways occur, for example, where the application site is used as foraging for a Qualifying Interest of a SAC or SPA.

1.2. The Aim of the Report

This Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared in accordance with the current guidance on the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process, produced by the European Commission (EC, 2001; 2018) which was used to produce the guidance documents Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009) and Office of the Planning Regulator; Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (2021).

In July 2025 Coyle Environmental Ltd was appointed on behalf of Yellow Wave Ltd to provide the necessary information to allow the competent authority (in this case Tipperary County Council) to conduct an Article 6 (3) Appropriate Assessment for a proposed development in Clonmel. This information is being submitted as a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

The purpose of this NIS is to provide the information required to determine if the project along or in-combination with other plans and projects could undermine the conservation objectives of the European sites and give rise to likely significant effects in the absence of mitigation measures.

2. Regulatory Context

2.1. Relevant Legislation

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. It sets up the Natura 2000 network, a European network of important ecological sites comprising of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under Member States under this directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under the Birds Directive (Directive2009/147/EC).

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

The Birds Directive seeks to conserve all wild birds, protecting birds, their eggs, nests and habitats. The Directive (Directive2009/147/EC) requires that Member States take measures to classify the most suitable areas as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for the conversation of bird species listed in Annex 1 of the Directive. SPAs are selected for threatened and migratory bird species (listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive). SPA areas are of international importance for these migratory birds.

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) also requires that protection is given to sites (Special Areas of Conservation) which are made up of, or support, particular habitats and species listed in annexes to this Directive.

To protect this network, Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of this Directive also call for the undertaking of an Appropriate Assessment on any plan or project, not directly connected or necessary for the management of which is likely to have a significant effect on any European designated sites in view of the conservation objectives.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive sets out the decision-making tests for plans or projects affecting Natura 2000 sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

“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. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, 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 and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”

Article 6(4) deals with the steps that should be taken when it is determined, as a result of appropriate assessment, that a plan/project will adversely affect a European site. Issues dealing with alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest and compensatory measures need to be addressed in this case.

Article 6(4) states:

“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, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest."

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC) aims to ensure that Member States achieve water quality at least *Good Status* in rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters by 2027 and that status does not deteriorate in any waters. The WFD was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 722 of 2003). Water quality must be protected and highly impacts species diversity as such it is an important factor to consider in Appropriate Assessment.

3. Methodology

3.1. Appropriate Assessment Screening and NIS

This AA Screening and NIS has been prepared with reference to the following:

- CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- European Commission (2018). Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2021). Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2006). Nature and Biodiversity Cases: Ruling of the European Court of Justice.
- European Commission (2007). Clarification of the Concepts of: Alternative Solution, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence, Opinion of the Commission.
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities.
- Office of the Planning Regulator (2021). Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.
- NPWS (2019). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland.

In complying with the obligations set out in Articles 6(3) and following the guidelines described above, this screening statement has been structured as a stage-by-stage approach as follows:

- Description of the proposed project.
- Identification of the Natura 2000 sites close to the proposed development.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

- Identification and description of any individual and cumulative impacts on the Natura 2000 sites likely to result from the project.
- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified above on the site integrity.
- Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects.

3.2. Statement of Competency

This AA Screening and NIS report was carried out by Catherine Howarth. Catherine Howarth has a BSc (Honours) in Conservation Biology and Ecology from the University of Exeter and a Certificate in Ecological Consultancy. Catherine Howarth has over 17 years' experience in habitat monitoring and surveying. Catherine Howarth is a Consultant Ecologist at Coyle Environmental and is an Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

3.3. Field Based Studies

The site at Clonmel, Co. Tipperary was visited by Catherine Howarth of Coyle Environmental Ltd on the 29th of July 2025 to conduct a Site Walkover Survey when field notes and photographs were taken. Habitats within the application site were classified in accordance with Level 3 of *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland* (Fossitt, 2000). These habitats are denoted in the text along with their habitat code, e.g., the habitat code for improved agricultural grassland is GA1. A species list and photos of the site are included as appendices.

3.4. Desk Studies & Consultation

A desk study was carried out to collate information on European sites in the vicinity of the proposed development. The following data sources were accessed to complete a thorough examination of potential impacts prior to the completion of this statement:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service - Aerial photographs and maps of designated sites, information on habitats and species within these sites and information on protected plant or animal species, conservation objectives, site synopses and standard data forms for relevant designated sites.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)- Information pertaining to water quality, geology and licensed facilities within the area;
- Myplan.ie – Mapped based information;
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) – Information pertaining to protected plant and animal species within the study area;
- Google Street View – High quality aerials and street images;
- Bury Architects – Information regarding the proposed development including site plans and specifications and information on the site.
- Tipperary County Council – Information on planning history in the area for the assessment of cumulative impacts.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

3.5. Assessment Methodology

The development was assessed to identify any potential ecological impacts and it's 'Zone of Influence' (ZOI). The ZOI of a proposed development is the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a manner that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site.

For significant effects to arise there must be a potential impact from a Source, i.e., a development, to a Receptor, i.e., a European site via an Ecological pathway e.g. a water course. If there is no ecological pathway or functional link between the proposed development and the European site, there is no potential for impact, and the project can be screened out.

Based on the potential impacts and their ZOI, the Natura 2000 sites potentially at risk from direct, indirect or in-combination impacts were identified. The assessment considered all potential impact sources and pathways connecting the proposed development to Natura 2000 sites, in view of the conservation objectives supporting the favourable conservation condition of the site's Qualifying Interests (QIs) or Special Conservation Interests (SCIs).

The conservation objectives relating to each Natura 2000 site and its QIs/SCIs are cited generally for SACs as "to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected", and for SPAs "to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA".

The conservation status of a habitat is defined in Article 1 of the Directive. The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as favourable when:

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

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- The population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats.
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future.
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed works and those greater than 15km away with a direct pathway and biodiversity connections to the works location, must be considered when performing the Appropriate assessment Screening for this project, in accordance with Appropriate Assessment guidance (OPR 2021), CIEEM Guidance 2018 and complying with the requirements

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

of Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive. This 15km zone is a starting point when identifying the ZOI, which may vary from project to project due to the nature of the project, environmental receptors and the potential for in-combination effects.

When considering potential impacts such as direct disturbance, the potential ZOI may be much less than 15km. Likewise for hydrological impacts, the ZOI can be greater than 15km. If a hydrological pathway exists between works and a Natura 2000 site, the conservation objectives of protected sites beyond 15km should be considered. Where site-specific conservation objectives (SSCOs) have been prepared for a European site, these include a series of specific attributes and targets against which effects on conservation condition, or integrity, can be measured. Where potential significant effects are identified, then these SSCOs should be considered in detail.

The potential impacts of the works on these protected sites have been assessed using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model. If a pollution pathway exists between source (development site) and receptor (protected area Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests), there is a potential environmental risk. A hydrological pathway allows for potential pollutants and contaminants to travel to downstream receptors using water as a transport medium. In this case the proposed development is the potential source, the local watercourses are the potential pathway and the Qualifying Interests (QIs), and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of downstream Natura 2000 are the receptors of concern.

4. Appropriate Assessment Screening

4.1. Development Description

Yellow Wave Ltd is applying to Tipperary County Council for full planning permission for the construction of 91 residential units. ‘Five block types are proposed: Block Type 1 includes 5-unit terraces (9 blocks), Block Type 2 includes 4-unit terraces (3 blocks), Block Type 3 includes 3-unit terraces (2 blocks), Block Type 4 includes 3-unit terraces (4 blocks), and Block Type 5 comprises 4 apartment blocks of 4 maisonette units each (4 blocks). 3) Connect to existing services on site, 4) Carry out all ancillary site works at Parklands Estate, Glenconnor Td, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary’. An extract from the Site Layout is shown in Figure 1.

Wastewater and surface water

All rainwater will discharge into a petrol interceptor, then to the attenuation system and finally into the Buolic Stream. All foul water will discharge to the public main in the road.

The SuDs system will be installed, operated and maintained in accordance with EPA 2021 guidelines. The design includes a stilling pond during construction. Details of the proposed attenuation system and stilling ponds are shown in Figure 2.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

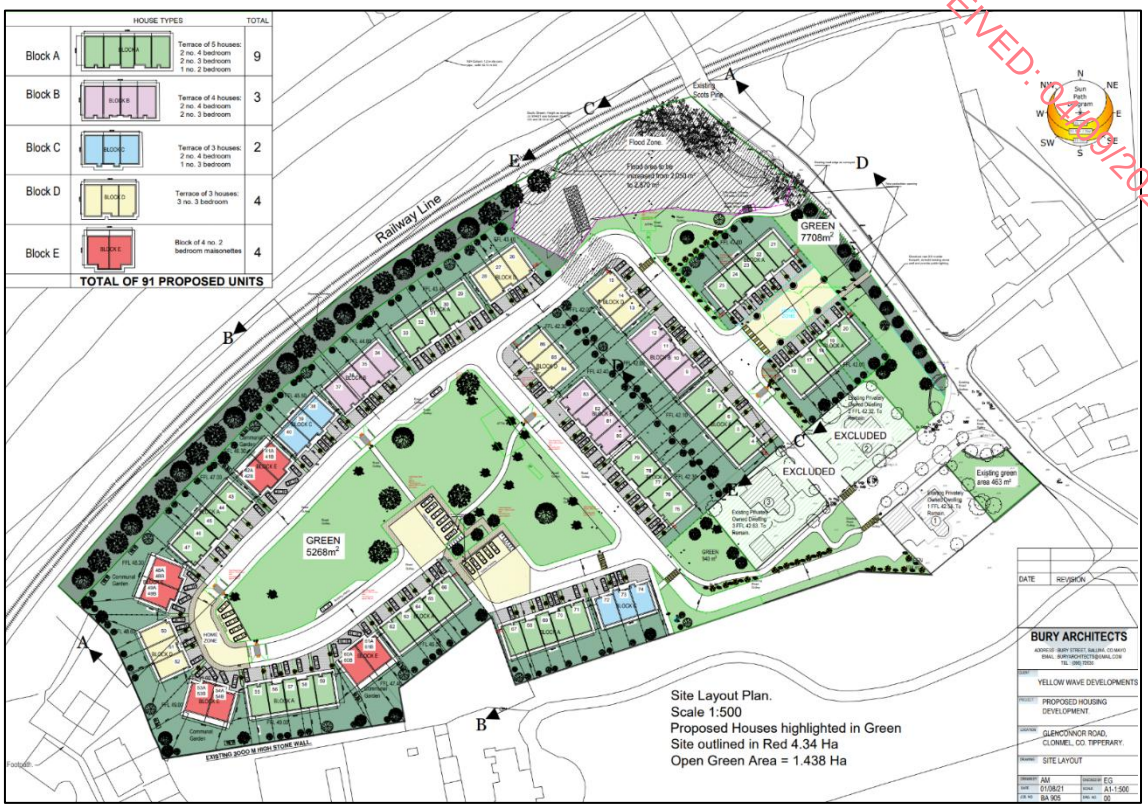


Figure 1 – Extract from Site layout (Bury Architects)

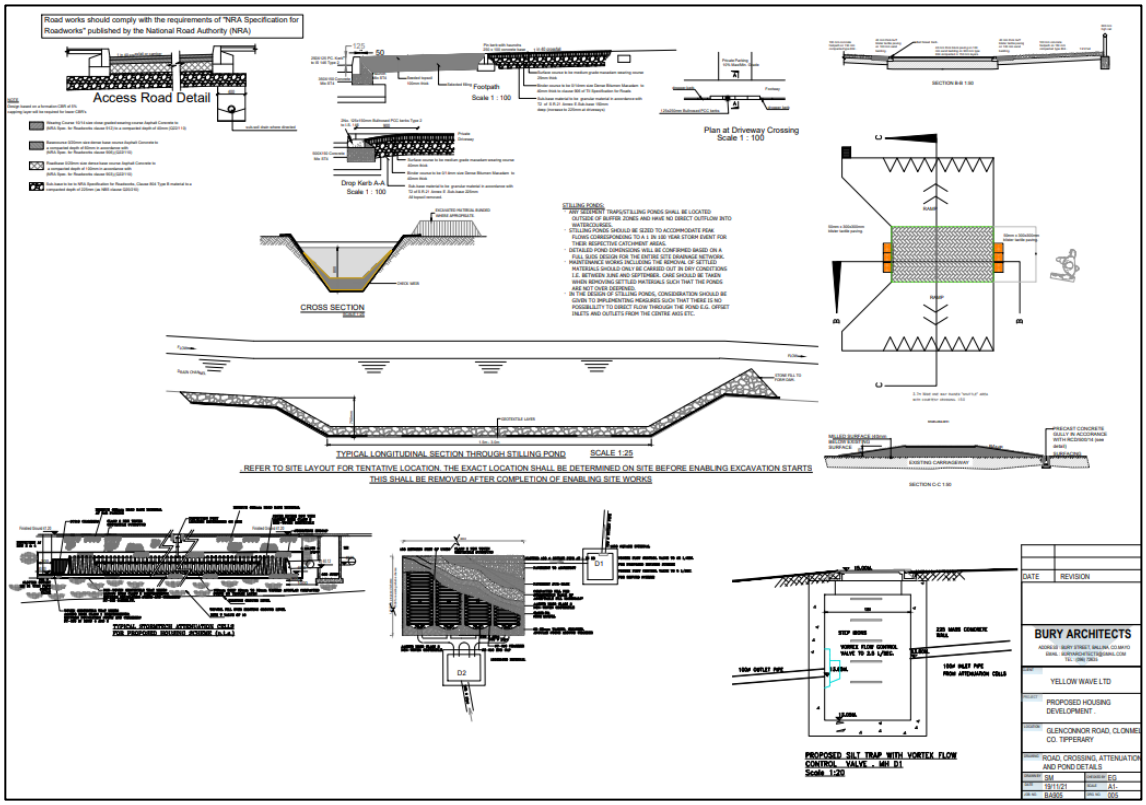


Figure 2 - Extract from Attenuation and Pond Details Plan (Bury Architects)

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

4.2. Site Location and Surrounding Environment

The site is approximately 4.34 hectares and is located in the northwest of Clonmel town on Glenconnor Road (ITM 618390, 623450). The site is adjacent to the Dublin to Cork railway line and 50m south of the N24. The site is a brown-field site in an urban location. There are two partially constructed dwellings within the subject site. A residential development was previously granted permission in 2022 (P 2260146).

The land use classification within the site, as defined by the 2018 CORINE landcover dataset, is classified as 'Artificial Surfaces' with 'Agricultural Areas' to the north and west. The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) national bedrock map (1:1,000,000) shows the bedrock geology at the subject site to be Tournaisian limestone, with Karstified limestone bedrock as surface and Shales and sandstones till (Namurian) subsoil. There are no karst features noted in the vicinity of the proposed development lands.

Site location maps are shown in Figures 3 and 4, aerial photographs of the site and its surrounding landscape are shown in Figures 5 and 6.

RECEIVED 04/09/2025

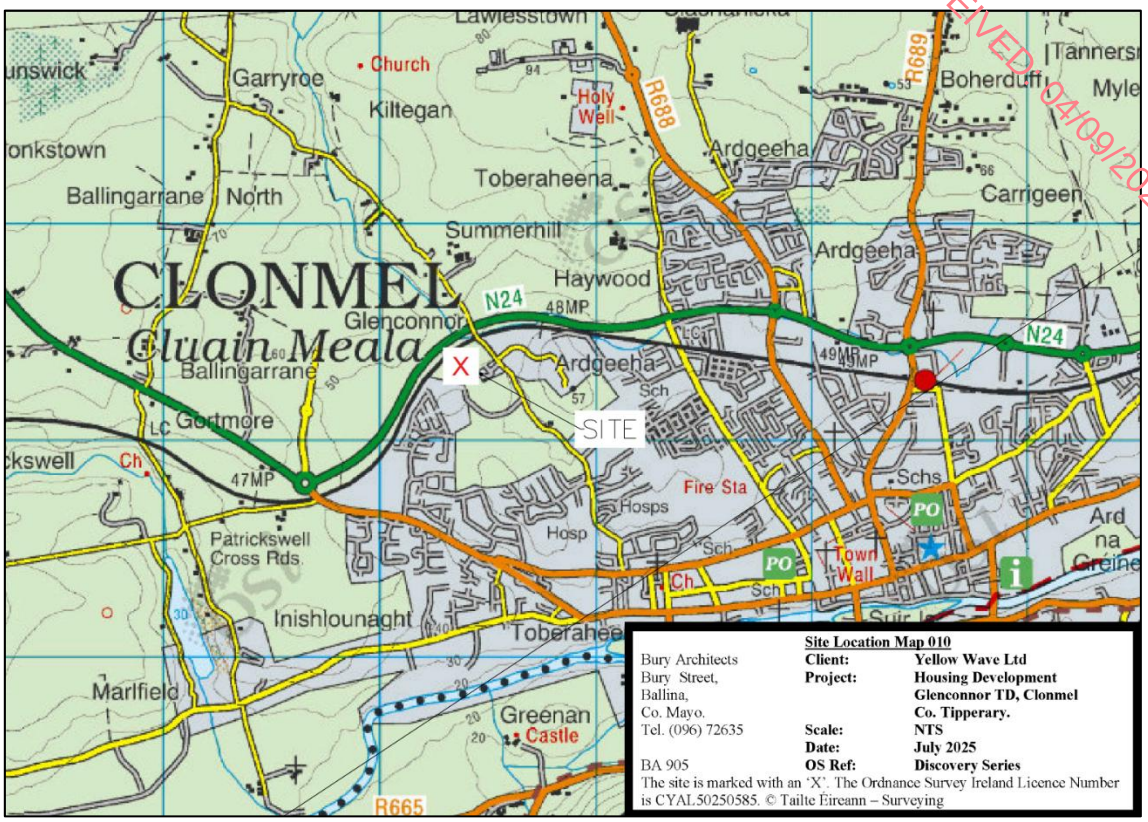


Figure 3 – Site Location Map with Site Pinned (NPWS)

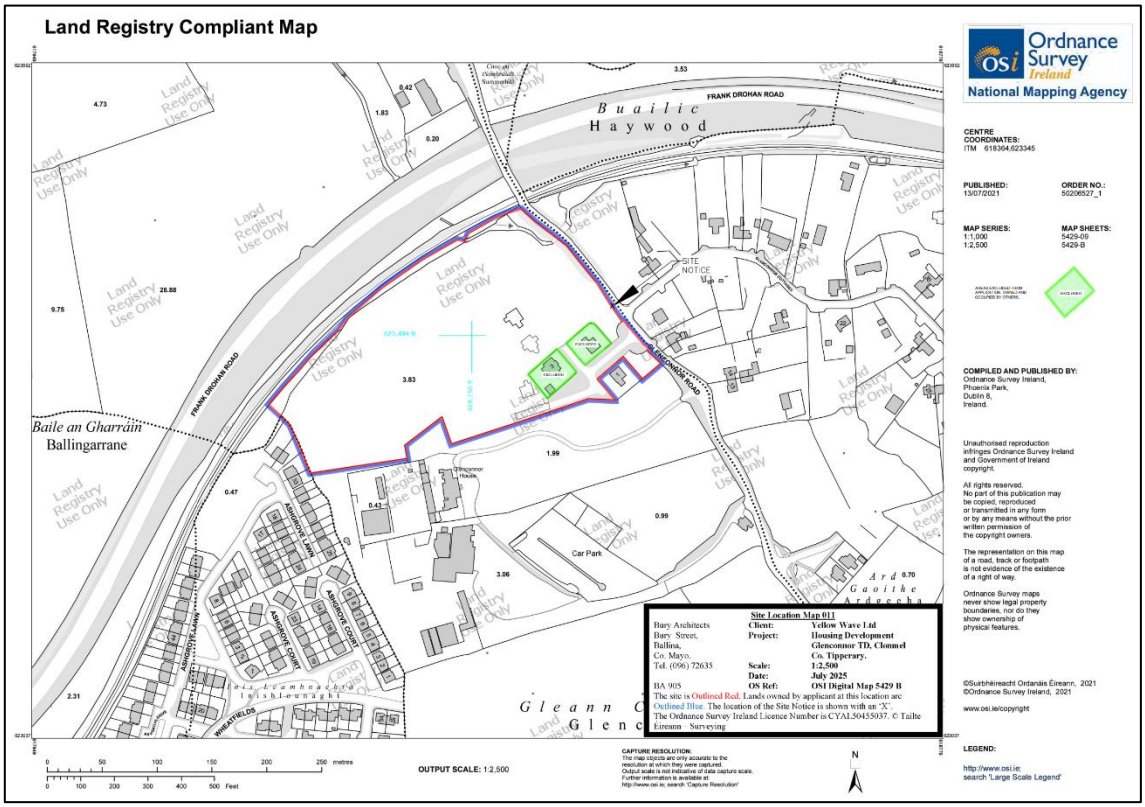


Figure 4 – Site Location Map with Site Outlined in Red

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025



Figure 5 – Aerial Photograph of site and surrounding landscape



Figure 6 - Drone footage with redline boundary and excluded land in yellow

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

4.3. Habitats within the Site

No part of the development site lies within an area that has been designated for nature conservation purposes. The habitats within the site are described in greater detail below.

The natural topography of the site has been altered historically as there are a number of mounds throughout the site, indicating previous excavation and land clearance works.

The main habitats on the site are 'Recolonising Bare Ground' (ED3), 'Immature Woodland' (WS2), 'Scrub' (WS1), 'Mixed Broadleaf/ Conifer Woodland' (WD2) and 'Bare Ground' (ED2). The north site boundary is adjacent to the railway line, and the east site boundary is adjacent to Glenconnor Road. To the west and south are residential buildings and gardens. The boundaries are currently defined by treelines and metal fencing.

The Buolic stream flows through the northeast corner of the site in an area overgrown with scrub.

All habitats within the development site were mapped and are shown on the accompanying habitat map in Figure 7.

4.3.1. Notable ecological features

The site has started to revegetate naturally with willow and birch scrub habitat, which has developed into immature woodland in several areas and revegetating bare ground the dominant habitats on site. The northern, western and eastern boundaries are dominated by treelines of mature trees with species such as oak *Quercus,* Scot's pine *Pinus sylvestris*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and beech *Fagus sylvatica*. The mature vegetation on site is of ecological value and supported 5 species of garden birds. There was evidence of mammal runs throughout the scrub. Much of this vegetation may need to be removed as part of the development.

Any clearance of woody vegetation must be done outside of the bird nesting season, which runs from 1st March to 31st August.

No Annex I habitats were noted on site. No evidence of Annex II or Wildlife Acts protected species was noted on the site.

Two invasive species were recorded on site. *Rhododendron ponticum* (European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024 (S.I. No. 374 of 2024)) was recorded in the wooded area to the north of the site and *Buddleja* (medium impact species) was found in large quantities throughout the site in both recolonising bare ground and scrub habitats.

An invasive species management plan is recommended for the site preparation and construction phases.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

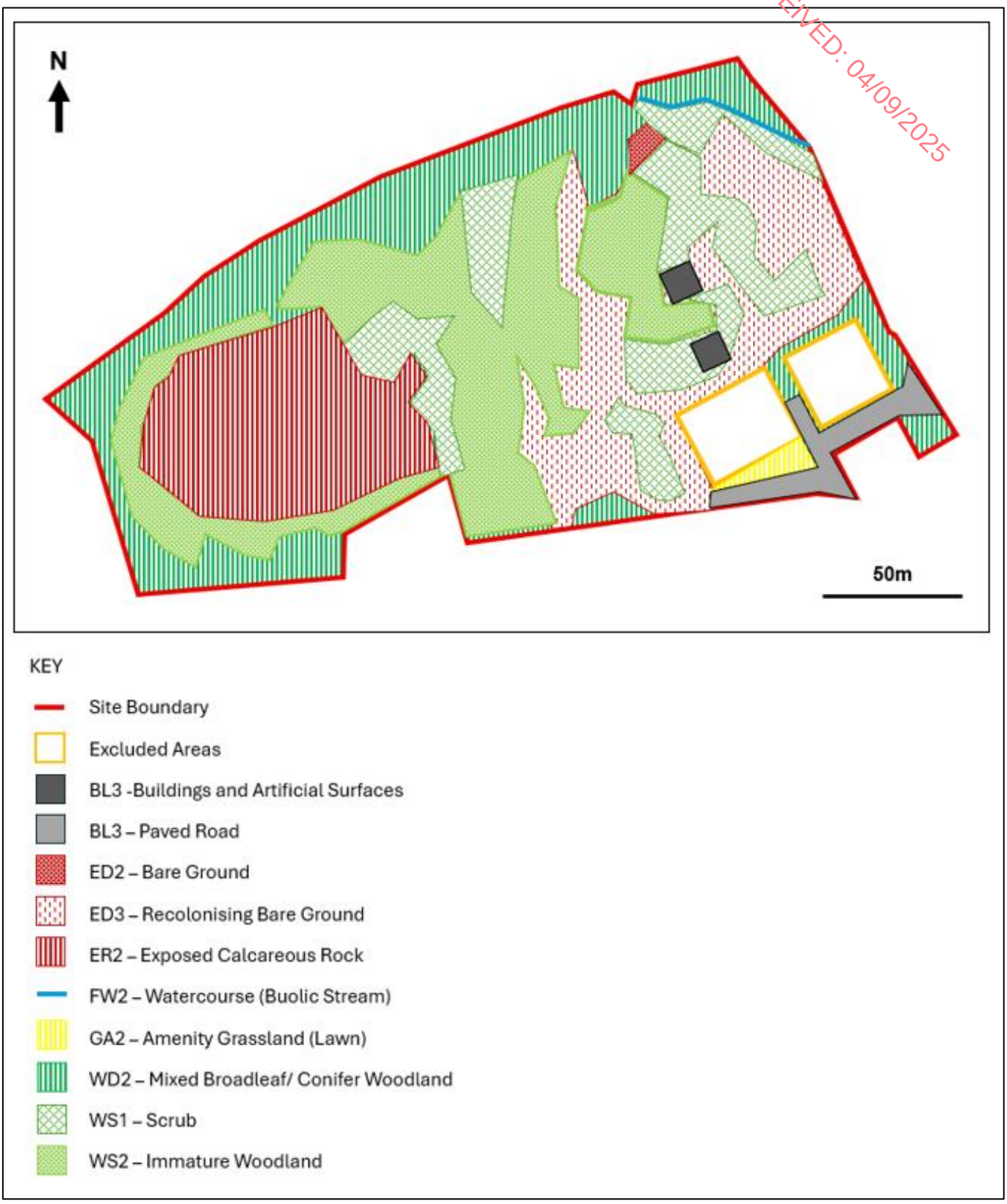


Figure 7 – Habitat Map with Fossitt codes and description.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

4.4. Water Features and Quality

The application site is located within the Suir Catchment (16), and the Suir_SC_120 Sub-Catchment (16_8). The site is within the Clonmel (IE_SE_G_040) Groundwater Body, and the status of this groundwater body is good.

The closest watercourse is the Buolic stream which runs through the northeast corner of the site. It is a tributary of the River Suir. The stream flows in a south-easterly direction, under the N24 road and railway track before entering the subject site. The Buolic stream flows away from the subject site via 3 no. stone culverts that are under Glenconnor Road. The culverts are approximately 0.9m in height and 0.9m in width. The Buolic stream continues to flow in an eastern direction for approximately 2km. The stream then turns sharply and flows in a southern direction for approximately 1.3km, discharging into the River Suir. The River Suir flows in an eastern direction for approximately 50km before discharging into Waterford Harbour. Drainage characteristics noted on site indicate the subject site is free draining positively in a northerly direction.

There is extreme and high groundwater vulnerability, and the site is located on a Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (diffuse). The site is 3.6 upstream of the Lower River Suir SAC (002137).

4.5. National Conservation Designations

Although not European site designations, NHAs (National Heritage Areas) and Proposed NHAs, (referred to as pNHAs) are national sites of interest for conservation that have been identified by NPWS. These sites become NHAs once they have been formally advertised and landowners have been notified of their designation. NHAs are protected under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000, from the date they are formally proposed. NHA is a statutory designation according to the Wildlife (Amended) Act, 2000 and requires consultation with NPWS if any development impacts on a pNHA. These sites are important on a national level and create a network of habitats across Ireland benefitting many species and habitats that are often qualifying interests of European sites.

Article 10 of the EU Habitats Directive and Habitats Regulations 2011 recognises the importance of non-European designated sites (such as NHAs and pNHAs), along with other features such as hedgerows, woodland etc, for allowing biodiversity to move across the landscape and between designated European sites.

There is one pNHA within 5km of the application site, Marlfield Lake pNHA (001981). There is no connection or pathway between the subject site and this pNHA so there is no risk of any negative effects arising from the proposed development on its integrity.

4.6. Natura 2000 Sites Identified

In accordance with the Appropriate Assessment guidance (OPR 2021) and Inland Fisheries Ireland Guidance Notes for AA Screenings in the vicinity of watercourses (IFI 2018), a list of Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development have been identified and described according to

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

their site synopses, qualifying interests and conservation objectives. In addition, any other sites further than this, but potentially within its zone of interest were also considered. The ZOI may be determined by an assessment of the connectivity or pathway between the application site (source) and the designated areas (receptors) by virtue of hydrological connectivity, atmospheric emissions, flight paths, ecological corridors etc.

The proposed works are within 15km of three SACs that have been designated under the EU Habitats Directive and the EU Birds Directive. Maps showing the locations of Natura 2000 sites relative to the application site are shown in Figure 8. These designated areas, their closest points to the development and QIs are outlined in Table 1. A full description of these sites can be read on the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (npws.ie).

Each of these 3 Natura 2000 sites will be evaluated following the Source-Pathway-Receptor model and screened in or out accordingly. In this case the proposed development is the potential source, the most likely significant pathway is hydrological, in this instance the Annaghgortagh watercourse and Breensford River and the Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of downstream Natura 2000 sites are the receptors of concern. Figure 9 shows the location of Natura 2000 sites in the ZOI of the application site.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

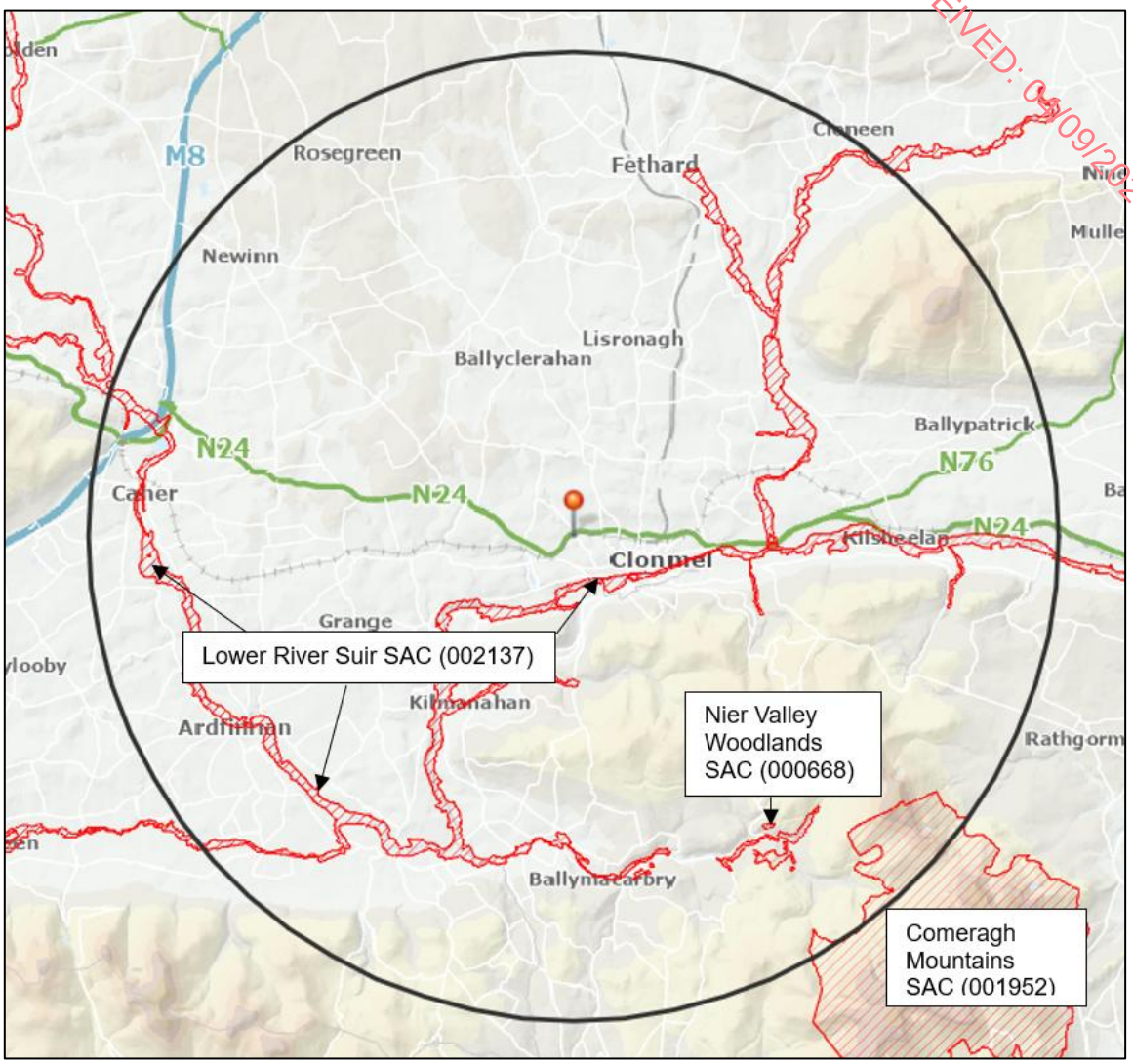


Figure 8 – The Application Site in relation to the Natura 2000 Sites within 15km (Red). (NPWS Maps)

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

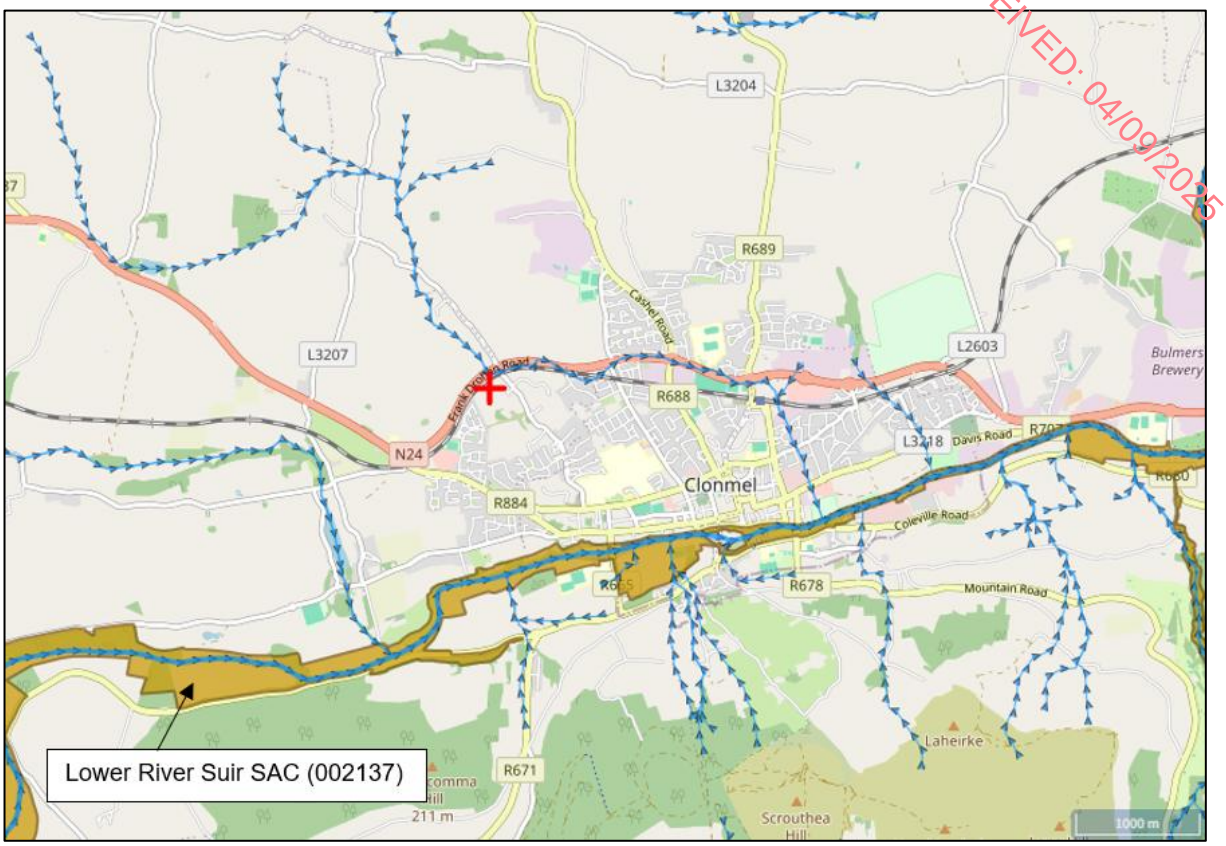


Figure 9 – The Application Site (Red) in relation to SAC (Orange). (EPA Maps)

Table 1 – Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the site.

Site Name & Code	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Screened In / Out
Lower River Suir SAC SAC 002137	1.35km	**Habitats** 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation 6430 Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles 91E0 Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae*)* 91J0 *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles* **Species** 1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel *(Margaritifera*	**Screened In** – There is a direct hydrological and ecological link from the application site to the SAC and the potential for significant effects upon this SAC and its QIs arising from constructional and operational impacts cannot be ruled out and further assessment is required.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

Site Name & Code	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Screened In / Out
		margaritifera) 1092 White-clawed Crayfish *(Austropotamobius pallipes)* 1095 Sea Lamprey *(Petromyzon marinus)* 1096 Brook Lamprey *(Lampetra planeri)* 1099 River Lamprey *(Lampetra fluviatilis)* 1103 Twaite Shad *(Alosa fallax fallax)* 1106 Salmon *(Salmo salar)* 1355 Otter *(Lutra lutra)*	
Nier Valley Woodlands SAC SAC 000668	10.39km	**Habitats** 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles	**Screened Out** - There is no hydrological or ecological connectivity between the application site and this SAC, and significant effects upon this SAC will not arise.
Comeragh Mountains SAC SAC 001952	12.52km	**Habitats** 3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*) 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 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths 7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog) 8110 Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (*Androsacetalia alpinae* and *Galeopsietalia ladani*) 8210 Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation 8220 Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation **Species** 6216 Slender Green Feather-moss *(Hamatocaulis vernicosus)*	**Screened Out** - There is no hydrological or ecological connectivity between the application site and this SAC, and significant effects upon this SAC will not arise.

4.7. Identification of Potential Effects

The proposed development at Clonmel has a direct hydrological link to Lower River Suir SAC (002137). In this regard the potential impacts regarding negative impacts affecting this designated site, given its proximity will be addressed in detail in Section 5.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

There are no expected impacts from the proposed works on the other designated sites listed in Table 1 as there are no direct hydrological connection or the distance is deemed far enough away that any disturbance emanating from the proposed works would be both temporary and on a negligible scale so as not to have an impact. Accordingly, these sites will not be discussed regarding potential impact.

The development is not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the designated site. In the absence of any mitigation, impacts upon these designated sites arising from the operation of this proposed development cannot be ruled out. Therefore, using the precautionary principal, in a worst-case scenario and in the absence of mitigation, an accidental pollution event of a sufficient magnitude during construction or operation, either alone or in-combination with other pollution sources, could potentially affect the surface water quality in these local watercourses to an extent that undermines the conservation objectives of certain qualifying interests of the Lower River Suir SAC. A reduction in water quality locally has the potential to affect the aquatic habitats and natural conditions that are required to maintain or achieve the specific attributes and targets of the qualifying interests associated with the Lower River Suir SAC and the conservation objectives that have been set for these QIs.

Therefore, following an evaluation of the relevant information including the characteristics of the proposed development and the likelihood of significant effects on the sites and with regards to the tenets of the precautionary principal, it is considered in the opinion of this author that, on the basis of objective information, it is not possible to exclude that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a likely significant effect on the above European sites.

Only those features of the development that have the potential to affect the integrity and conservation objectives of the identified Natura sites and protected species have been considered. Several factors were examined at this stage and dismissed or carried forward for Appropriate Assessment as relevant. The following areas were examined in relation to potential impacts and subsequent effects from the proposed development on the Natura 2000 sites identified:

- Deterioration of water quality in designated areas resulting from pollution from surface water run-off during site preparation and construction.
- Deterioration of habitat in designated areas during the operation of the site.
- Cumulative impacts with other proposed/existing developments.

4.8. Screening Conclusions

This section considers the list of sites identified in Section 3.3. It can be considered that all sites, except for the Lower River Suir SAC can be excluded from the remainder of the Appropriate Assessment process. This is based on their distance from the proposed development and the fact that it is outside of the Zone of Influence of these sites and that no impacts are likely to arise. The

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

remaining concerns will therefore focus upon the protected habitats and species of the Lower River Suir SAC.

The proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the designated site. Therefore, following the precautionary principal in consideration of likely significant effects on Lower River Suir SAC in relation to the proposed development at Clonmel, this project must proceed to the next stage of Appropriate Assessment, the Natura Impact Assessment.

5. Stage II – Natura Impact Statement

5.1. Introduction

The main objective of this stage (Stage 2, Natura Impact Statement) in the Appropriate Assessment process is to determine whether the development of the proposed planning application at Clonmel (either alone or in combination with other plans, programmes and projects) will result in significant adverse effects to the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites identified with respect to these site's structures, species, functions and/or conservation objectives. This stage also outlines the mitigation measures that should be taken to avoid any negative impacts of this application, should it receive consent.

5.2. Site Specific Conservation Objectives

For the site that has been screened in, the Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) were reviewed considering the proposed development and the potential impacts that might occur. These SSCOs aim to define the favourable conservation condition for the habitats or species at that site. They outline certain attributes such as distribution, population structure, water quality for different species and habitats with targets, which define favourable condition for a habitat or species at a particular site. The maintenance of habitats and species within the Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at national level. Where available, these SSCOs can be downloaded on the NPWS website. Any potential threats to the attributes and targets as defined in these SSCOs were assessed and where necessary, mitigated for.

For each Qualifying Interest of the SAC, the specific conservation objective is either to *maintain or restore* the favourable conservation condition of that interest, by defining a list of attributes and targets which are indicative of the conservation status of that interest. For habitats, the main attributes include habitat area; habitat and community distribution; vegetation structure/composition and physical structure. The main target is to ensure that the habitats are stable or increasing in area and that the other attributes are maintained or restored.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

5.3. Natura 2000 Sites Identified

A summary of the site screened in is presented below. Full details of these sites are available on the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

5.3.1. Lower River Suir SAC (002137)

Lower River Suir SAC consists of the freshwater stretches of the River Suir immediately south of Thurles, the tidal stretches as far as the confluence with the Barrow/Nore immediately east of Cheekpoint in Co. Waterford, and many tributaries including the Clodiagh in Co. Waterford, the Lingaun, Anner, Nier, Tar, Aherlow, Multeen and Clodiagh in Co. Tipperary. The Suir and its tributaries flow through the counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny and Waterford. Upstream of Waterford city, the swinging meanders of the Suir criss-cross the Devonian sandstone rim of hard rocks no less than three times as they leave the limestone-floored downfold below Carrick-on-Suir. In the vicinity of Carrick-on-Suir, the river follows the limestone floor of the Carrick Syncline. Upstream of Clonmel the river and its tributaries traverse Upper Palaeozoic Rocks, mainly the Lower Carboniferous Visean and Tournaisian. The freshwater stretches of the Clodiagh River in Co. Waterford traverse Silurian rocks, through narrow bands of Old Red Sandstone and Lower Avonian Shales, before reaching the carboniferous limestone close to its confluence with the Suir. The Aherlow River flows through a Carboniferous limestone valley, with outcrops of Old Red Sandstone forming the Galtee Mountains to the south and the Slievenamuck range to the north. Glacial deposits of sands and gravels are common along the valley bottom, flanking the present-day river course.

Old oak woodlands are also of importance at the site. The best examples are seen in Portlaw Wood which lies on both sides of the Clodiagh River. On the south-facing side the stand is more open and the oaks (mainly Pedunculate Oak, *Quercus robur*) are well grown and spreading. Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg*.) are common on the ground, indicating relatively high light conditions.

Floating river vegetation is evident in the freshwater stretches of the River Suir and along many of its tributaries. The site is of particular conservation interest for the presence of a number of Annex II animal species, including Freshwater Pearl Mussel (both *Margaritifera margaritifera* and *M. margaritifera subsp. durrovensis* occur), White-clawed Crayfish, Salmon, Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax fallax),* three species of Lampreys - Sea Lamprey, Brook Lamprey and River Lamprey, and Otter. This is one of only three known spawning grounds in the country for Twaite Shad.

Land use at the site consists mainly of agricultural activities including grazing, silage production, fertilising and land reclamation. The grassland is intensively managed, and the rivers are therefore vulnerable to pollution from run-off of fertilisers and slurry. Arable crops are also grown. Fishing is a main tourist attraction on stretches of the Suir and some of its tributaries, and there are a number of Angler Associations, some with a number of beats. Fishing stands and styles have been erected in places. Both commercial and leisure fishing takes place on the rivers. The Aherlow River is a designated Salmonid Water under the E.U. Freshwater Fish Directive. Other recreational activities

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

such as boating, golfing and walking are also popular. Several industrial developments, which discharge into the river, border the site including three dairy related operations and a tannery. The Lower River Suir contains excellent examples of a number of Annex I habitats, including the priority habitats alluvial forest and Yew woodland. The site also supports populations of several important animal species, some listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive or listed in the Irish Red Data Book. The presence of two legally protected plants (Flora (Protection) Order, 2022) and the ornithological importance of the site adds further to the ecological interest and importance.

In 2017, the NPWS published Site Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) for the Lower River Suir SAC. These SSCOs can be downloaded on the NPWS website. Any potential threats to the attributes and targets as defined in these SSCOs were assessed and where necessary, mitigated for.

5.4. Qualifying Interests of the Lower River Suir SAC – Screened Out

Lower River Suir SAC is a complex and varied site. Certain qualifying interests of these sites will not be potentially impacted upon from this proposed development, either due to the distance involved or because they are features that are outside of the Zone of Influence of the site. These features and the reason for their screening out are listed in Table 2. In considering these QI features, the SSCOs of the site were referred to, along with the most recent Article 17 Reports on the status of protected habitats and species in Ireland (NPWS, 2019).

Table 2 – The Qualifying Interests of the Lower River Suir SAC (Screened Out)

Designated Feature & Code	Rationale for Screening Out
1330 Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae)	This habitat is not present within or adjacent to the proposed application site. There will be no loss or fragmentation of this habitat within the SAC, and significant effects upon it can be ruled out.
1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi)	
6430 Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels	
91A0 Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles	
91E0 Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae*)	
91J0 *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles	
1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*	This species is not present within or adjacent to the development site. It's known habitat within the SAC is within the Clodiagh Catchment outside the ZOI of the

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

Designated Feature & Code	Rationale for Screening Out
	application site and significant effects upon it can be ruled out.

5.5. Qualifying Interests of the Lower River Suir SAC – Screened In

Table 3 describes the qualifying interests of the Lower River Suir SAC that have the potential to be impacted upon from the proposed development, i.e., these QIs have been screened in, and potential effects have been considered in terms of the SSCOs that have been set.

Table 3 – The Qualifying Interests of the Lower River Suir SAC (Screened In)

Designated Feature & Code	Rationale for Screening In
3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation	There is potential direct hydrological connectivity of this habitat downstream of the application site, as such the SSCOs of this habitat will be considered in detail and mitigation measures outlined to protect this habitat.
1092 White-clawed Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*	These species have not been recorded within or adjacent to the development site, however the species listed may be negatively impacted by a decrease in water quality of its habitats downstream of the development. As such the SSCOs of this species will be considered in detail and mitigation measures outlined to protect this species habitat.
1095 Sea Lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*	
1096 Brook Lamprey *Lampetra planeri*	
1099 River Lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*	
1103 Twaite Shad *Alosa fallax fallax*	
1106 Salmon *Salmo salar*	
1355 Otter *Lutra lutra*	

5.5.1. SSCOS of the Lower River Suir SAC QI (Screened In)

Site specific conservation objectives for this site were prepared in 2017 (NPWS, 2017). These SSCOs can be downloaded on the NPWS website:

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

(https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002137.pdf). These SSCOs are outlined in Tables 4 - 10.

Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation [3260]

The SSCO for this habitat is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation in Lower River Suir SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Table 4 – Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260]

Attribute	Measure	Target
Habitat area	Kilometres	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes
Hydrological regime: river flow	Metres per second	Maintain appropriate hydrological regimes
Hydrological regime: groundwater discharge	Metres per second	Maintain appropriate hydrological regime
Hydrological regime: tidal influence	Daily water level fluctuations - metres	Maintain natural tidal regime
Substratum composition: particle size range	Millimetres	Maintain appropriate substratum particle size range, quantity and quality, subject to natural processes
Water quality	Various	Maintain appropriate water quality to support the natural structure and functioning of the habitat
Typical species	Occurrence	Maintain typical species in good condition, including appropriate distribution and abundance
Floodplain connectivity	Hectares	Maintain floodplain connectivity necessary to support the typical species and vegetation composition of the habitat
Fringing habitats	Hectares	Maintain marginal fringing habitats that support the typical species and vegetation composition of the habitat

White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes)* [1092]

The SSCO for this species is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of White-clawed Crayfish in Lower River Suir SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Table 5 – White-clawed Crayfish [1092]

Attribute	Measure	Target
Distribution	Occurrence	No reduction from baseline
Population structure: recruitment	Occurrence of juveniles and females with eggs	Juveniles and females with eggs in all occupied tributaries

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

Attribute	Measure	Target
Negative indicator species	Occurrence	No alien crayfish species
Disease	Occurrence	No instances of disease
Water quality	EPA Q value	At least Q3-4 at all sites sampled by EPA
Habitat quality: heterogeneity	Occurrence of positive habitat features	No decline in habitat heterogeneity of habitat quality

Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) [1095]

The SSCO for this habitat is to restore the favourable conservation condition of Sea Lamprey in Lower River Suir SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Table 6 – Sea Lamprey [1095]

Attribute	Measure	Target
Distribution: extent of anadromy	Percentage of river accessible	Greater than 75% of main stem length of rivers accessible from estuary
Population structure of juveniles	Number of age/size groups	At least three age/size groups present
Juvenile density in fine sediment	Juveniles/m^2	Juvenile density at least 1/ m^2
Extent and distribution of spawning habitat	M^2 and occurrence	No decline in extent and distribution of spawning beds
Availability of juvenile habitat	Number of positive sites in 3rd order channels (and greater) downstream of spawning areas	More than 50%of sample sites positive

Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*) [1096]

River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) [1099]

The SSCO for this habitat is to restore the favourable conservation condition of Brook/ River Lamprey in Lower River Suir SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Table 7 – Brook lamprey [1096]/ River Lamprey [1099]

Attribute	Measure	Target
Distribution	Percentage of river accessible	Access to all watercourses down to first order streams
Population structure of juveniles	Number of age/size groups	At least three age/size groups of brook/river lamprey present
Juvenile density in fine sediment	Juveniles/m^2	Mean catchment juvenile density of brook/river lamprey at least 2/m^2
Extent and distribution of spawning habitat	M^2 and occurrence	No decline in extent and distribution of spawning beds
Availability of juvenile habitat	Number of positive sites in 2nd order	More than 50%of sample sites positive

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

Attribute	Measure	Target
	channels (and greater) downstream of spawning areas	

Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax fallax*) [1103]

The SSCO for this habitat is to restore the favourable conservation condition of Twaite Shad in Lower River Suir SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Table 8 – Twaite Shad (Alosa fallax fallax) [1103]

Attribute	Measure	Target
Distribution: extent of anadromy	Percentage of river accessible	Greater than 75% of main stem length of rivers accessible from estuary
Population structure: age classes	Number of age classes	More than one age class present
Extent and distribution of spawning habitat	M^2 and occurrence	No decline in extent and distribution of spawning beds
Water quality: oxygen levels	Milligrams per litre	No lower than 5mg/l
Spawning habitat quality: Filamentous algae; macrophytes; sediment	occurrence	Maintain stable gravel substrate with very little fine material, free of filamentous algal (macroalgae) growth and macrophyte (rooted higher plants) growth

Salmon (*Salmo salar*) [1106]

The SSCO for this habitat is to restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic Salmon in Lower River Suir SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Table 9 – Salmon [1106]

Attribute	Measure	Target
Distribution: extent of anadromy	Percentage of river accessible	100% of river channels down to second order accessible from the estuary
Adult spawning fish	Number	Conservation limit (CL) for each system consistently exceeded
Salmon fry abundance	Number of fry/5 minutes electrofishing	Maintain or exceed 0+ fry mean catchment-wide abundance threshold value. Currently set at 17 salmon fry/5 minutes sampling
Out-migrating smolt abundance	Number	No significant decline
Number and distribution of redds	Number and occurrence	No decline in number and distribution of spawning redds due to anthropogenic causes
Water quality	EPA Q value	At least Q4 at all sites samples by EPA

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

Otter (*Lutra lutra*) [1355]

The SSCO for this species is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] in Lower River Suir SAC, which is generally defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Table 10 – Otter (1355)

Attribute	Measure	Target
Distribution	Percentage of positive survey sites	No significant decline
Extent of terrestrial habitat	Hectares	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 116.17ha above high water mark (HWM) and 726.61ha along riverbanks
Extent of freshwater (river) habitat	Kilometers	No significant decline. Length mapped and calculated as 382.31km
Extent of marine habitat	Hectares	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 712.27ha
Couching sites and holts	Number	No significant decline
Fish biomass available	Kilograms	No significant decline
Barriers to connectivity	Number	No significant increase.

5.7. Potential Significant Effects

5.7.1. Introduction

This section will establish whether the impacts of the proposed development at the Clonmel site that were identified in the previous section, are likely to occur and whether they are significant. The identification of potential impacts and the assessment of their significance typically requires the identification of the type and magnitude of the impacts; whether impacts will be short term or long term, direct, indirect or cumulative and will they occur during construction or operation. These potential impacts will be examined with respect to the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site identified.

In the screening section of this report Lower Suir River SAC was identified as being at risk of indirect impacts as a result of a pollution incident originating on the proposed development site. The transfer of this risk is via the Boulic stream. No specific direct impact was identified such as habitat loss or disturbance species designated for this site. However, a number of potential indirect impacts arising during construction and operation have been identified. The following possible future impacts on the Lower River Suir SAC were listed, and these concerns are again listed below, and they will be dealt with in more detail in this section.

1. Deterioration of water quality in designated areas resulting from pollution from surface water run-off during site preparation and construction.

2. Deterioration of habitat in designated areas during the operation of the site.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

3. Cumulative impacts with other proposed/existing developments.

5.7.2. Deterioration in Water Quality in the SAC During Construction

The proposed development will involve the excavation of soil and pouring of concrete. Any additional surface water run-off, due to the construction works of the proposed works, has some limited potential to have a negative impact on the water quality downhill of the site in the Lower River Suir SAC.

Hydrocarbon and / or chemical leakage could occur from construction site equipment due to faulty machinery, incorrect refuelling methods or improper storage of fuels on site. Contaminated water could enter the Boulic stream.

Use of wet cement is a requirement during construction. Run-off water from recent cemented areas will result in highly alkaline water with high pH. Vehicles entering and exiting the site could potentially carry cement on their wheels onto the public road in the absence of wheel washing, allowing this to enter storm drains.

Soil excavation in the initial stages of the construction phase could result in sediment runoff directly into the Boulic stream. Invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed could potentially be spread to qualifying habitats in the Lower River Suir SAC via contaminated soils introduced onto the site via imported soils or machinery.

The transfer of hydrocarbons, chemicals, sediments, invasive species via the Boulic stream could potentially cause habitat degradation to QI habitats. Otter, crayfish and salmonoids could also be at risk of being impacted upon in the event of a pollution incident affecting water quality.

The development must be constructed and operated in accordance with best practice guidelines and follow recommended mitigation advice listed in Section 6.

5.7.3. Deterioration in habitat in the SAC Post Construction / Operation

Negative impacts upon water quality in the Lower River Suir SAC arising from the operation of the site have also been considered. The proposed development includes a SuDs design featuring petrol and oil interceptors, attenuation tanks with a controlled discharge well within accepted levels. Foul water will be discharged to an existing public sewer on Glenconnor Road which discharges to Clonmel Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP).

No direct or indirect impacts on Lower Suir River SAC, arising from the operation phase of the proposed development, is predicted. It is considered unlikely that the additional works on the site will negatively affect the QIs of this SAC or any other Natura 2000 site.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

5.7.4. In combination effects with other proposed/existing developments

This section of the NIS examines whether any other plans or projects have the potential to act cumulatively or in-combination with the proposed development to adversely affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site identified.

In-combination effects may arise from the development of other projects in the vicinity of the site, such as construction of housing, roads, rail, water and wastewater infrastructure, gas, electricity, provision of tourism facilities and telecommunications infrastructure, however, the in-combination effects of other developments would depend on factors such as the distance in relation to the site, the scale and the characteristics e.g. the types and quantities of emissions.

In the past 10 years there have been over 20 applications for planning permission approved within the vicinity of the site. A check of the Tipperary County Council Planning Application Maps found small-scale one-off housing and residential housing developments in the area. The closest project to the proposed development at Clonmel was granted permission in 2018 to construct a domestic garage and associated site development works at No 1 Parklands, Glenconnor, Clonmel (Planning Ref. 18600617). The application site was previously granted planning permission in 2022 for 1) 52 No. dwelling houses, (4 No. 4 Bed detached, 26 No. 4 bed semi-detached, 16 No. 3 bed semi-detached, 4 No. 3 bed end of terrace and 2 No 2 bed mid terrace), 2) construct all roads, footpaths, green areas and associated services, 3) connect to existing services on site, 4) carry out all ancillary site works at Parklands Estate, Glenconnor Td Clonmel, Co Tipperary. (Planning Ref. 2260146).

Any future application in the area that has the potential to impact upon these Natura 2000 sites will be subjected to Appropriate Assessment as required under Articles 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. Following mitigation, this current development will have no cumulative impacts upon the SAC identified when considered in combination with any other development that has been screened for no impacts themselves (Stage 1) or where potential impacts have been mitigated against (Stage 2 AA / NIS).

Finally, both the Tipperary County Development Plan, 2022-2028 and Clonmel & Environs Local Area Plan 2024 -2030 have been reviewed and considered for possible in-combination effects with the proposed project.

With the implementation of the mitigation measures that are included as part of this NIS, the proposed development will not lead to cumulative impacts upon any designated site when considered in combination with other developments that have been properly screened for AA, or where an NIS was submitted.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

6. Mitigation Measures

To protect Lower River Suir SAC and to avoid any reductions in water quality in the area surrounding the proposed development site, several site-specific mitigation measures have been recommended, and these must be implemented and followed.

The implementation of these measures will ensure the protection of Natura 2000 habitats and species, and the local non-designated ecological receptors. The primary parties responsible for the implementation of these measures include the applicants, the project manager and the construction contractors.

6.1. General Good Practice and Initial Works

- Upon appointment of the construction contractor, this team will also be made aware of the sensitivity of the site and the mitigation measures required to protect habitats, groundwater and surface water quality. All measures will be undertaken from initial site works until the completion of all construction and landscaping works on site.
- Prior to the commencement of developments on site, the site engineer and the contractors must be made aware of the ecological sensitivity of the site and its proximity and connection to the Lower River Suir SAC.
- A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) outlining mitigation and preventative measures is required during the construction phase of the project to ensure the protection of the Buolic Stream and River Suir should be prepared in advance of works commencing.
- Guidelines in the following best practice documents should be adhered to:
    - Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) (2005) Environmental Good Practice on Site (C692)
    - Construction Industry Research and Information Association (2001) Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites, Guidance for Consultants and Contractors (C532)
    - Construction Industry Research and Information Association (2000) Environmental Handbook for Building and Civil Engineering Projects (C512)
    - Environmental Protection Agency (2015) List of Waste and Determining if Waste is Hazardous or Non-Hazardous
    - Environment Agency et al. (2015) Guidance on the Classification and Assessment of Waste, Technical Guidance WM3.
    - Inland Fisheries Ireland (2020) Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment

6.2. Management of Construction Waste and Soil

- The applicants and construction contractors will be responsible for the safe removal of any construction waste generated on site. There must be no disposal of construction waste or topsoil in any designated site.
- All topsoil generated from site works should be stored within the application site until it is required for landscaping. It must not be stored outside the site boundaries, and it must not be

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

used for the infilling of any area outside of the site. It must be stored at appropriate locations within the site, away from watercourses.

- If there is more topsoil than is needed for landscaping, it must be removed from site by a registered contractor for appropriate use elsewhere. The end location of the topsoil must be identified, and records presented to the local authority if requested.
- It is recommended that a Construction & Demolition Waste Management Plan is put in place and implemented throughout the construction of the development to ensure:
    - That site activities are effectively managed to minimise waste generation and to maximise the re-use and recycling of waste materials
    - That waste materials are appropriately segregated and stored in a managed dedicated waste storage area
    - All construction waste must be removed from site by a registered contractor to a registered site. Evidence of the movement and safe disposal of the construction waste must be retained and presented to Local Authority upon request.

6.3. Protection of Water Quality and Management of Pollutants

- The development design includes a buffer zone between the development and the watercourse and includes a stilling pond during construction. This must be adhered to.
- Efficient construction practices and sequences should be employed on site, and this will minimise soil erosion and potential pollution of local watercourses with soil and sediment.
- Works within the site should be avoided during periods of heavy rainfall.
- It is vital that there is no deterioration in water quality in the nearby watercourses. This will protect both habitats and species that are sensitive to pollution. Therefore, strict controls of erosion, sediment generation and other pollutants associated with the installation process should be implemented, including the provision of attenuation measures, silt traps or geotextile curtains to reduce and intercept sediment release into any local watercourses.
- Silt fences and berms should be installed prior to the commencement of construction on site.
- The silt fences should be monitored daily to ensure that they remain functional throughout the construction of the proposed development. Maintenance of the fences should be carried out regularly. Fences should be inspected thoroughly after periods of heavy rainfall.
- Any groundwater which is removed from site by pumping to facilitate excavation works will be treated to remove soil (e.g. pass through settling tanks) prior to discharging to the Boulic stream.
- Best practice concrete / aggregate management measures must be employed on site (these measures should be included where possible on a site plan). These will include:
    - Best practice in bulk-liquid concrete management should be employed on site addressing pouring and handling, secure shuttering, adequate curing times etc.
    - Stockpile areas for sands and gravel must be kept to a minimum size, well away from the drains (minimum 50m).
    - Where concrete shuttering is used, measures must be put in place to prevent against shutter failure and control storage, handling and disposal of shutter oils.
    - Activities which result in the creation of cement dust must be controlled by dampening down the areas.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

- Raw and uncured waste concrete must be disposed of by removal from the site;
- Stockpile areas for sands and gravel will be kept to a minimum size, well away from the adjacent watercourse.

- Daily plant inspections must be completed by all plant operators on site to ensure that all plant is maintained in good working order. Where leaks are noted on these inspection sheets, the plant must be removed from operations for repairs as pollution control measures.
- Refuelling of site plant and vehicles shall only be conducted by using a mobile refuelling vehicle fitted with appropriate spill kit
- Plant fuel and liquid construction materials shall be stored in impermeable bunded containers which are covered from the elements.
- All empty containers containing residual quantities of oils, hydrocarbons, chemicals etc shall be stored in dedicated bunded receptacles prior to removal from site.
- Oil spill kits shall be located throughout the site
- All construction staff shall be informed of how to clean a spill and correctly dispose of the contaminated material.
- Accidental oil or fuel spills shall be immediately cleaned with appropriate absorbent materials.
- All contaminated material shall be placed in an appropriately labelled waste receptacle awaiting off- site disposal by an appropriately licenced waste contractor.

6.4. Wheel washing and Road Cleaning

- A potential source of debris and dust on public roads is from trucks exiting the construction site. The wheels of vehicles exiting the site will be power washed (or similar) to remove muck and debris. Discharge from wheel-wash areas will be directed through a suitably sized settlement area or silt trap. Debris and sediment from the wheel wash area will be disposed off-site at a suitably licensed facility.
- Provision will be made for cleaning access routes to / from site within a suitable distance of the site to remove potential construction related debris. The extent and frequency of road sweeping may be adjusted to take account of highly intensive work activities e.g. excavation, concrete pouring etc. Road sweeping will be carried out by a suitably sized mechanical road sweeper.
- The following measures will minimise the dust deposited on local roads (and therefore minimise the risk of sediment entering storm drains)

6.5. Air quality control

- Unnecessary movement of vehicles on site shall be avoided
- All vehicles / plant shall be turned off when not in operation. Idling engines shall not be permitted for excessive time periods
- Exhaust emissions from vehicles and other plant operating on site shall be minimised by routine servicing and the use of low emission fuels where possible
- An appropriate speed limit will be imposed on vehicles entering / leaving site to minimise the generation of airborne dust
- Materials shall be transported to / from site in covered vehicles

RECEIVED 04/09/2025

- The overloading of trucks entering / leaving the site shall not be permitted
- During dry periods, dust emissions at heavily trafficked locations (on-site & off site) shall be controlled by spraying surfaces with water and/or suitable wetting agent
- Road sweeping shall be carried out to clean public road surfaces from debris
- Materials will be stockpiled on site to minimise exposure to wind and the production of airborne dust
- Water spray will be used, as required, to minimise the potential for airborne dust during dry or windy periods
- Rubble chutes and receptor skips shall be used during construction works to minimise / control the production of airborne dust
- Measures shall be taken to control the generation of dust during operations such as drilling, grinding, polishing of concrete, paving, stone etc including the installation of wind breaks and dust barriers
- Concrete cutting equipment shall be fitted with a water dampening systems, as required, to minimise the production of dust.
- Air quality monitoring shall be carried out at sample locations on the site boundary to ensure that air quality standards associated with dust deposits is acceptable. Where levels are found to exceed specified limits, dust generating activities shall cease immediately and enhanced mitigation measures shall be provided by the Contractor.
- A complaints log shall be maintained by the Contractor. Should there be a complaint relating to the generation of dust, this should be investigated by the Contractor

6.6. Invasive Species Biosecurity

- A pre-construction survey for legally controlled (European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024) invasive species shall be undertaken.
- Biodiversity protocols; All equipment and machinery being used in or adjacent to the watercourse will be power washed and disinfected in advance. It will also be disinfected before leaving site.
- Biosecurity will be required for all equipment and machinery pre and post works. This will involve:
    - All PPE and machines working in proximity to the watercourse will be power washed before entry to the site and sprayed with a suitable disinfectant (e.g., 1% virkon aquatic solution).
    - Visually inspect all equipment for evidence of attached plant or animal material, or adherent mud or debris. This will be carried out before leaving the site.
    - Remove any attached or adherent material (vegetation and debris) before leaving the site of operation.
    - Ensure that all water is drained from any live wells and other water retaining compartments, tanks and other equipment before transportation elsewhere.
    - High-pressure hot water cleaning, with water > 40 degrees C, is recommended for machinery that will be moved from one watercourse to another. Many roadside garages provide these facilities. If it is not possible to steam clean the equipment, a normal power

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

hose must be used. After cleaning visually inspect the equipment to ensure that all adherent material and debris has been removed.
    - Apply disinfectant, to the undercarriage and wheels of the vehicle/machine.
- Quarries supplying material for the project should provide written confirmation to the client that material provided is free of non-native invasive species and noxious weeds.

6.7. Biodiversity Management and Enhancement

- The lighting design should use lighting that reduces light pollution for the benefit of nocturnal species. Lighting shall be controlled to avoid light pollution of green areas and shall be targeted to areas of human activity and for priority security areas. Motion-activated sensor lighting is preferable to reduce light pollution.
    - Dark corridor for movement of nocturnal species along the grounds of the site. Lighting shall be directed downwards and shall not illuminate vegetation.
    - All luminaires shall lack UV elements when manufactured and shall be LED
    - A warm white spectrum (ideally <2700 Kelvin) to reduce blue light component
    - Luminaires shall feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm
- All existing native mature trees should be retained where possible.
- Where woody vegetation must be removed it shall be done outside of the bird nesting season (1st March - 31st August) to comply with Section 22 of the Wildlife Act 1976 as amended.
- It is recommended that Irish provenance native planting is used in the landscaping.
- Bird and bat boxes should be incorporated into the new development, these boxes should be placed at height with clear flight paths, in dark undisturbed areas.

7. NIS Conclusion

This current NIS has been undertaken to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed development regarding the effects upon the conservation objectives and qualifying interests (including the habitats and species) of the Lower River Suir SAC. It is considered that following mitigation, that the proposed project does not have the potential to significantly affect the conservation objectives of this Natura 2000 site, and the integrity of this site will not be adversely impacted.

The qualifying interests of the site and their potential to be impacted upon from the potential development were listed in Section 5. It is considered that these potential impacts can be successfully mitigated against. With implementation of the mitigation measures there will be no deterioration in water quality or impacts upon any designated habitat or any species dependent on these designated habitats. The integrity of this site will not be adversely affected. Table 11 follows the integrity of the SAC / SPA checklist, which shows that the integrity of the site would not be affected by the proposed development.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

Table 11 – Integrity of Site Checklist (From NPWS, Information Checklist for AA, Box 6, EC (2002))

Conservation Objective: Does the project have the potential to:	**Yes / No**
Cause delays in progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the site?	N
Interrupt progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the site?	N
Disrupt those factors that help to maintain the favourable conditions of the site?	N
Interfere with the balance, distribution and density of key species that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the site?	N
Other Objectives: Does the project have the potential to:	**Yes / No**
Cause changes to the vital defining aspects (e.g. nutrient balance) that determine how the site functions as a habitat or ecosystem?	N
Other Objectives: Does the project have the potential to:	**Yes / No**
Change the dynamics of the relationships (between, for example, soil and water or plants and animals) that define the structure and/or function of the site?	N
Interfere with predicted or expected natural changes to the site (such as water dynamics or chemical composition)?	N
Reduce the area of key habitats?	N
Reduce the population of key species?	N
Change the balance between key species?	N
Reduce diversity of the site?	N
Result in disturbance that could affect population size or density or the balance between key species?	N
Result in fragmentation?	N
Result in loss or reduction of key features (e.g. tree cover, tidal exposure, annual flooding, etc.)	N

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

Considering the above, it is deemed that the integrity and conservation objectives of Lower River Suir SAC and other Natura 2000 sites will not be affected by the proposed works following the implementation of and adherence to the mitigation measures detailed in Section 6 of this NIS report. Following the implementation of these mitigation measures, no significant adverse effects on the integrity of Natura 2000 protected sites will occur as a result of the proposed development in Clonmel and the conservation status of the Annex I habitats and Annex II species will not be compromised by the proposed works either directly, indirectly or cumulatively.



Catherine Howarth (ACIEEM).
Consultant Ecologist.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

Appendix 1

References & Species List

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

References and Further Reading

Bowers Marriott, B. (1997) Practical Guide to Environmental Impact Assessment: A Practical Guide. Published by McGraw-Hill Professional, 1997, 320 pp.

CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities.

Dwyer (2000) Protecting Nature in Ireland, The NGO Special Areas of Conservation Shadow List. Published by the Irish Peatland Conservation Council, Meath.

EPA (2022) Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Reports. Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland.

EPA (2003) Advice Notes on Current Practice in the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements. EPA, Wexford, Ireland.

EPA (2002) Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements. Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland.

EPA (2001) Parameters of Water Quality - Interpretation and Standards. Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland.

European Commission (2021). Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

European Commission (2018). Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.

European Commission (2007). Clarification of the Concepts of: Alternative Solution, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence, Opinion of the Commission.

European Commission (2006). Nature and Biodiversity Cases: Ruling of the European Court of Justice.

Fossitt, J.A. (2000) A Guide to Habitats in Ireland. The Heritage Council, Kilkenny.

Inland Fisheries Ireland (2018) IFI Appropriate Assessment Environmental Impact Assessment Procedures: Introduction to the Environmental Assessment Process.

Institute of Environmental Assessment (1995) Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment. Institute of Environmental Assessment, Great Britain.

IUCN (2003) Red List of Threatened Species. International Council for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

Natura Environmental Consultants (2005) Draft Habitat Survey Guidelines: A Standard Methodology for Habitat Survey and Mapping in Ireland. The Heritage Council, Kilkenny.

NPWS (2019) The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Species Assessments Volume 3. Version 1.0. Unpublished Report, National Parks & Wildlife Services. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Meath, Ireland.

NPWS (various) – Documents relating to all Natura 2000 sites of Offaly Bay. All available online.

Office of the Planning Regulator (2021). Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

Species List

Birds

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)
House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*)
Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*)
Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalus caudatus*)
Magpie (*Pica pica*)
Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)
Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Flora

Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)
Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*),
Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)
Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*)
Birch (*Betula spp.*)
Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*)
Butterfly-bush (*Buddleja spp.*)
Centaury (*Centaurium erythraea*)
Cotoneaster
Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens)*
Daisy (*Bellis perennis*)
Dandelion (*Taraxacum spp.*)
Docks (*Rumex spp.*)
Dog rose (*Rosa canina*)
Dogwood (*Cornus spp.)*
Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*)
Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*)
Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*)
Harts tongue fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*)
Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
Hedge woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*)
Herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*)
Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*)
Ivy (*Hedera hibernica*)
Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*)
Lady's-mantle (*Alchemilla vulgaris*)
Male Fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*)
Nettle (*Urtica dioica*)

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

Oak (*Quercus spp.)*
Oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)
Plantains (*Plantago spp*.)
Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*)
Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*)
Rhododendron (Rhododendron ponticum)
Rye grasses (*Lolium spp*.)
Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)
Sitka Spruce (Picea sitchensis)
St. John's-wort (*Hypericum pulchrum*)
Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)
Thistles (*Cirsium arvense, C. vulgare, C. acaule*)
Tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*)
Willows (*Salix spp*.)
Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*)

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

Appendix 2

Photo Plates

Plate 1 – Aerials of site facing north, east, south and west

Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. July 2025

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025



Plate 2 – Entrance gate and external fencing on boundaries

Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. July 2025

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025



Plate 3 –Exposed calcareous rock, recolonising bare ground, scrub and woodland habitats

Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. July 2025

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025



Plate 4 – Scrub, immature woodland and mixed broadleaf/ conifer woodland habitats

Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. July 2025

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025



Plate 5 – Buildings and artificial surfaces, recolonising bare ground and scrub habitat

Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. July 2025

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025



Plate 6 – Northeast corner of site with the Buolic stream, woodland, scrub and recolonised bare ground habitat.

Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. July 2025

RECEIVED: 04/09/2025

