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NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT REPORT

SITE A
WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK,
WEXFORD,
CO. WEXFORD

2025

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT	6
3. METHODOLOGY	7
3.1 METHODOLOGY BACKGROUND	8
3.2 DESKTOP RESEARCH	9
3.3 SITE SURVEY	9
4.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	10
4.1 DEVELOPMENT SITE	10
4.2 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT	14
4.3 WATER ENVIRONMENT	18
5.0 EUROPEAN SITES (NATURA 2000 SITES) WITHIN ZONE OF INFLUENCE	22
5.1 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC SITE CODE (000781).....	23
5.2. WEXFORD HARBOUR AND SLOBS (SITE CODE: 004076).....	36
6.0 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY IMPACTS	45
6.1 DISTURBANCE TO PROTECTED HABITATS AND SPECIES	45
6.2 INVASIVE SPECIES	48
6.3 POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON WATER QUALITY	49
6.4 SCREENING CONCLUSIONS	51
7.0 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY ADVERSE EFFECTS: STAGE 2 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT. 51	
8.0 MITIGATION MEASURES.....	65
8.1 GENERAL MEASURES	65
8.2. WATER QUALITY	66
9.0 IN COMBINATION EFFECTS	68
9.1 HABITAT LOSS / FRAGMENTATION	70
9.2. DISTURBANCE TO SPECIES	70
9.3 AIR QUALITY	71
9.4 DETERIORATION IN WATER QUALITY	71
10.0 CONCLUSION	72
11.0 REFERENCES.....	72
APPENDIX A PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT	75
APPENDIX B PROTECTED SITES MAP	82
APPENDIX C PHOTO LOG	84

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NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

LIST OF FIGURES		
FIGURE		PAGE
Figure 4.1	Location of development site at Westpoint Business Park, Wexford, Co. Wexford	13
Figure 4.2	Location of development site and Natura 2000 Sites.	13
Figure 4.3	Habitat Map	15
Figure 4.4	Mapped Watercourses Surrounding the development site.	19
Figure 4.5	Transitional and coastal waters	20
Figure 5.1	Slaney River Valley SAC	25
Figure 5.2	Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA	38

LIST OF TABLES		
TABLE		PAGE
Table 4.1	Habitat classification hierarchy.	16
Table 4.2	Transitional and Coastal waterbodies.	20
Table 5.1	Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas potentially within the zone of influence.	22
Table 5.2	Slaney River Valley SAC Qualifying Interests - Habitats	23
Table 5.3	Slaney River Valley SAC Qualifying Interests - Species	24
Table 5.4	Slaney River Valley SAC Conservation Objectives	26
Table 5.5	Conservation status for the qualifying interest of the Slaney River Valley SAC	35
Table 5.6	Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA Qualifying Interests	36
Table 5.7	Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA Conservation Objectives	39
Table 5.8	Conservation statuses for the qualifying interests of the Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA	44
Table 6	National Biodiversity Data Centre records of high impact invasive species within a 10km square (T01) of the development site.	48
Table 7.1	Slaney River Valley SAC Potential Impacts	53
Table 7.1	Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA	56
Table 9	Recent planning applications close to the development site.	68

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

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Executive Summary

Panther Ecology Ltd. was commissioned by Ian Doyle Ltd. on behalf of the client, Clonard Little Ltd., to prepare a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) as part of a planning application a proposed residential development and all associated site works at Westpoint Business Park, Wexford, Co. Wexford. (GPS Coordinates: 52.328381, -6.492209).

This report identified the presence of European sites within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development. The closest Natura 2000 sites are the Slaney River Valley SAC (Site Code: 000781) located approximately 2.4km to the north-east and the Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (Site Code: 004076) located approximately 2.7km to the north-east of the proposed development.. The potential for impacts to European sites as a result of the proposed development such as potential surface water quality impacts, introduction of invasive species, habitat destruction and impacts from noise and dust were considered and the level of risk posed assessed.

Under Regulation 49(2) of the European Communities Birds and Natural Habitats) Amendment (S.I. No. 355 of 2015) of Regulations 2011-2015, save in accordance with a licence granted under paragraph (7), any person who plants, disperses, allows or causes to disperse, spreads or otherwise causes to grow in any place specified in relation to any plant which is included in Part 1 of the Third Schedule shall be guilty of an offence. Materials containing invasive species are considered “controlled waste”, and, as such, there are legal restrictions on their handling and disposal. Under Regulation 49(7) of the European Communities Birds and Natural Habitats) Amendment (S.I. No. 355 of 2015) of Regulations 2011-2015, it is a legal requirement to obtain a license to move “vector materials” listed in the Third Schedule, Part 3.

The NIS will allow for the inclusion of mitigation measures for the control of invasive species and general water quality measures where applicable.

Due to the recommended control measures and standard practice during the construction phase, it is considered that there would be no significant risks to the conservation objectives of the habitats and species for which the aforementioned designated sites have been designated. It is considered that there would be no significant risk of negative impact, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, to the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Panther Ecology Ltd. was commissioned by Ian Doyle Ltd on behalf of the client, Clonard Little Ltd., to prepare a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) as part of a planning application for a proposed residential development on a Phased Basis which includes all associated site works at Westpoint Business Park, Wexford, Co. Wexford. (GPS Coordinates: 52.328381, 6.492209).

The principal aim of this study is to assess whether significant effects to European sites (the Natura 2000 network) are likely to occur as a result of this project in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2001, as amended. This report has been prepared with regards to the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 (S.I. No. 94 of 1997), and the later amendment regulations (S.I. No. 233 of 1998; S.I. No. 237 of 2005).

A study was undertaken by Ms Soraia Branco who has a MSc in Management and Conservation of Nature from Azores University and a BSc in Biology from Coimbra University, with significant experience in wildlife surveys. This comprised a review of the development site, a site visit on 11th March 2025 to examine the ecological context of the development site, a desk study of the information on European sites within the potential zone of influence of the site and an analysis of the information in the context of the guidance to determine if a Natura Impact Statement is required.

The Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Statement shall be undertaken in accordance with the guidance outlined in “Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities” (DoEHLG, Dec 2010) and “Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites” (EC, Nov 2001) and “Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive” (EC, 2018).

- DoEHLG (2010) “Appropriate Assessment of Plans & Projects in Ireland”
- Environment DG, European Commission (2002) “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” Oxford Brookes University, 2001
- Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) Circular Letter SEA 1/08 and NPWS 1/08.
- Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) Circular letter NPWS 1/10 and PSSP 2/10

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as amended by council directive 97/62/EC, 2006/105/EC, and Regulation EC1882/2003 of September 2003, as transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477/11), provides the framework for legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The Natura 2000 network provides an ecological infrastructure for the protection of sites that are of particular importance for rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats and species within the EU. The Natura 2000 network in Ireland is made up of European Sites which include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive establishes the requirement for appropriate assessment when planning new developments that might affect a Natura 2000 site. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states;

“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.”

Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA)

This stage involves an initial screening assessment of the potential impacts of the project, either alone or in combination with other projects, upon a Natura 2000 site. If it can be concluded that there would be no significant impacts upon Natura 2000 sites, the assessment stops at this stage. If not, or if further assessment is required, the assessment proceeds to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment / Natura Impact Statement (NIS)

This stage assesses the impact of the project, alone or in combination with other projects or plans, on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site, with respect to the site's conservation objectives, the site's ecological structure and function and its overall integrity. The output of this stage is an NIS, which also includes any mitigation measures required to avoid, reduce or offset negative impacts of the project. If this stage determines that adverse effects on the Natura 2000 site cannot be excluded, then the plan or project should proceed to Stage 3 or be abandoned.

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

3. METHODOLOGY

Stage 1 - Screening

Screening is the first stage in the Appropriate Assessment process, and is carried out to determine whether a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is required. Screening addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3);

1. Whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the European (Natura 2000) site; and
2. Whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European (Natura 2000) site, in view of its conservation objectives.

Screening should be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation measures. If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overly complicated, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 AA and an NIS.

The findings and conclusions of the screening process should be documented, with the necessary supporting evidence and objective criteria. This is of particular importance in the cases where the Appropriate Assessment process ends at the screening stage because the conclusion is that no significant effects are likely.

Stage 2 – Natura Impact Assessment

The scope of this assessment follows the appropriate assessment statement methodology as defined within the European Commission guidance document “*Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites*” (2002), Section 3, Part 2. Guidance from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government “*Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland*” (2009) and “*Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive*” (2018) have also been used in the preparation of this report. In accordance with this guidance, the following methodology has been used to produce this Natura Impact Statement:

Step 1: Information Required

Identifying the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site and the aspects of the project, alone or in combination with other projects or plans, which have the potential to affect those conservation objectives.

This process involves gathering information for the Natura 2000 site, including the conservation objectives of the site, factors contributing to conservation value, aspects sensitive to change and the existing baseline condition of the site. The principal source of information used for Natura 2000 sites, their qualifying interests and conservation objectives is the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). Information is also required for the project including the size and scale of the project, the relationship (distance, connectivity etc.) of the project to the Natura 2000 site and the characteristics of existing, proposed or other projects which have the potential to affect the Natura 2000 site.

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

Step 2: Impact Prediction

This process predicts and identifies the likely impacts of the project on the Natura 2000 site. Potential impacts are identified as; direct and indirect; short or long-term duration; construction, operational or decommissioning; and isolated, interactive and cumulative effects.

Step 3: Conservation Objectives

Once the potential impacts of the project have been predicted and identified, it will be necessary to assess whether these impacts will adversely impact upon the integrity of the Natura 2000 site, as defined by the site's conservation objectives and status of the site. Where it cannot be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts upon the Natura 2000 site, mitigation measures must be proposed for the project.

Step 4: Mitigation Measures

Upon the identification of potential impacts, the project will have on the Natura 2000 site (alone or in combination with other projects or plans), mitigation measures will be proposed to eliminate, reduce or offset these negative impacts. Mitigation measures should be considered with preference to the hierarchy of preferred options outlined in the guidance document "*Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites*".

3.1 METHODOLOGY BACKGROUND

This Appropriate Assessment has been carried with reference to the following guidelines:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidelines for Planning Authorities. DoEHLG, 2010.
- Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10 Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities
- Managing Natura 2000 sites – The Provisions of Article 6 of The Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2000.
- Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management OPR Practice Note PN01 March 2021
- Circular L8/08 Water Services Investment and Rural Water Programmes – Protection of Natural Heritage and National Monuments 2 September 2008
- 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, 2021.
- Commission Notice "Managing Natura 200 sites The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 21.11.2018

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.

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

3.2 DESKTOP RESEARCH

Desktop research was carried out to gather information on the ecology of the site and surrounding areas. The locations of the Natura 2000 sites within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development at Westpoint Business Park Wexford, Co. Wexford were identified from National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) online map viewer, based on distance and hydrological connection.

Water quality data from the EPA was reviewed for the assessment of biological and environmental data collected on waterbodies in Ireland as per the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Monitoring Programme of River Ecology Monitoring Results (2024).

Information on the characteristics of the Natura 2000 sites within the potential zone of influence was reviewed from the conservation objectives documents, site synopses and Standard Natura 2000 data forms available on the NPWS website.

3.3 SITE SURVEY

A site characterisation assessment was undertaken on the 11th March 2025 to examine the ecological context of the development site, by systematically walking the site and boundaries and determining the habitats present. The habitat survey was undertaken in accordance with the standard methodology outlined in Fossitt's "*A Guide to Habitats in Ireland*", a hierarchical classification scheme based upon the characteristics of vegetation present. The Fossitt system also indicates when there are potential links with Annex I habitats of the E.U. Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). Cognisance was also taken of the Heritage Council guidelines, "*Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping*", (Smith *et al.*, 2011).

Bird species and signs of fauna activity and dwellings were also noted. Particular attention was given to the possible presence of habitats and/or species, which are legally protected under Irish and European legislation and to assessing any potential ecological connectivity with Natura 2000 sites or supplementary or stepping-stone habitats of relevance to Natura 2000 sites.

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 DEVELOPMENT SITE

The development will consist of 1) a Residential scheme of 92 units (consisting of 9 four bed, 32 three bed, 17 two bed and 34 one bed) over 4 house types and 5 blocks of apartments/maisonettes. 2) A crèche of 223.8sq.m.; 3) 112 carparking spaces (including 25 EV spaces and 13 disabled spaces) & 209 bicycle parking space (157 over two secure storage facilities and 52 visitor); 4) two communal bin stores, alterations to existing access road serving existing business park at Westpoint Business Park, and all associated works at the Westpoint Business Park, Wexford, Co. Wexford (GPS Coordinates: 52.328381, -6.492209).

The total footprint of the red line boundary is 2.3Ha. The proposed development will be accessed via the existing vehicular access off the Whitemill Industrial Estate Road. See Appendix C for site plans and layout.

The proposed residential scheme will include the following types of units:

House Type 1: 4-bed houses;

House Type 2: 3- bed houses;

House Type 3: 3-bed houses (adaptable);

House Type 4: 2-bed houses;

Block Type A: 2 no. 2-bed apartments; 1 no. 3-bed maisonette;

Block Type B: 3 no. 1-bed apartment; 3 no. 2-bed maisonettes;

Block Type C: 1 no. 1-bed apartment; 1 no. 1-bed apartment (adaptable); 1no. 3-bed maisonette;

Block Type D: 1no. 1-bed apartment; 1 no. 3-bed maisonette; 1 no. bicycle storage unit;

Block Type E: 1 no. Childcare facility; 2 no. 3-bed maisonettes;

Block Type F: 1 no. 2-bed apartment (adaptable); 1 no. 2-bed maisonette;

Block Type G: 1 no. 1-bed apartment; 1 no. 3-bed maisonette; 1 no. office unit.

Drinking water will be supplied to the proposed development by mains. Irish Water has confirmed the feasibility of the connection with no infrastructure upgrades required (Ref. CDS24008658).

The surface water drainage for the development has been designed to cater for all surface water run-off from proposed building and impermeable surfaces. The proposed surface water network has been designed in accordance with the “Recommendations for site Development Works for Housing Areas”, “Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study” (GDSDS), Flood Risk Management Guidelines, Wexford Town and Environs Development Plan, BS EN 752: 2008 Drain and Sewer Systems Outside Buildings and Building Regulations “Technical Guidance Document Part H Drainage and Wastewater Disposal” as published by the Department of Housing and Local Government. To comply with the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) the proposed drainage plan includes the creation of rain gardens, swales, tree-pits, bio-retention features and a detention basin. Permeable pavement will be used for the car park with excess run-off to the road drainage. These SuDS features will reduce the overall area of permeable surfaces and reduce the volume of water captured within the surface water drainage network. Surface water captured within the proposed pipe network will discharge to the existing surface water drainage sewer at the site entrance to the south, which in turn connects to a surface water drainage sewer under the Whitemill Industrial Estate Road. This sewer is likely to connect to the Killens stream downstream of the site. Surface water flow from

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

the proposed development will be attenuated to 32.7 L/s by an Attenuation Storage unit with flow control device to be installed to the west of the site entrance, prior to leaving the site. Any surface water from the proposed development reaching the existing surface water drainage infrastructure via the proposed network during the operational phase will be clean and attenuated.

Surface water from the existing driveway is currently collected by existing road gullies and is directed to the existing surface water drainage infrastructure. During the operational phase surface water from this driveway will continue to drain to the existing infrastructure. Currently the rainwater runoff from the area to the West of the existing driveway naturally drains towards the driveway. The lands to the east and northeast of the driveway naturally drain towards a drainage ditch that borders the site to the east. The existing sewer serves the commercial development to the north of the site. The existing infrastructure includes a surface water attenuation and storage system that serves the development permitted under Planning Ref no. W20063370, but does not serve the development lands covered by this planning application.

Wastewater generated by sanitary facilities at the dwelling units will be collected by a new proposed network of pipes and directed to the existing mains sewer at Whitemill Industrial Estate Road to the south of the site. Irish Water has confirmed feasibility of connection to the existing networks without infrastructure upgrade. Foul water will then be directed to the Wexford Town WWTP (EPA Licence No: D0030-02), which discharges treated water into Lower Slaney Estuary (306186E, 121137N). The Wexford Town WWTP currently has available capacity according to the Wexford WWTP Capacity Register (accessed 7th August 2025). There is existing wastewater sewerage within and along the boundary of the site serving the existing commercial development to the northeast (installed under Planning Ref. no. W20063370), and discharging to the public sewer at the public road to the south. No changes will be made to this existing infrastructure. There is also an existing sewer that was laid with the road that is to be removed which was to allow for the future development of these lands. This sewer has been rendered obsolete and will be removed as part of the proposed development.

The proposed heating system will be Air to water heat pump.

A lighting plan has been prepared by Martin Hanley Consulting Engineers Ltd and it proposes the installation of three different types of external luminaires. Only LED lights will be used and light colour temperature will not be above 3000K. The columns will be up to 8m tall. The lights will be directed towards the roads and car parking areas, and will be angled away from the existing and proposed boundary vegetation. There will be no significant light spillage within the River Killens, the adjacent drainage ditch and the adjacent treelines.

A landscape plan has been prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds Land Planning & Design and it includes mostly native species. No Third-scheduled or High Impact unscheduled invasive species have been proposed within the planting schedule. The species proposed for planting include *Betula pendula*, *Sorbus hibernica*, *Prunus padus*, *Amelanchier x grandiflora* 'Robin Hill', *Malus tschonoskii*, *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer', *Malus sylvestris*, *Betula pendula*, *Pinus sylvestris*, *Prunus avium*, *Quercus petraea*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Larix decidua*, *Rosmarinus officinalis*, *Hebe* sp., *Potentilla fruticosa*, *Skimmia japonica*, *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote', *Stachys byzantina*, *Erysimum* 'Bowl's Mauve', *Berberis darwinii*, *Bergenia* 'Eroica', *Sarcococca hookeriana*, *Cotoneaster conspicuus*, *Allium giganteum*, *Erica cinerea*, *Geranium magnificum*, *Nepeta* 'Six Hills Giant', *Salvia namorosa* 'May Night', *Crataegus monogyna*, *Euonymus europaeus*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Ligustrum vulgare*, *Sambucus*

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

nigra, *Elaeagnus pungens* ‘Maculata’, *Viburnum tinus* ‘Eve Prince’, *Brachyglottis* ‘Sunshine’, *Allium schoenoprasum*, *Calendula officinalis*, *Chamaemelum nobile*, *Hemerocaulis fulva*, *Jasminum nudiflorum*, *Lamium album*, *Lavandula angustifolia*, *Melissa officinalis*, *Mentha x piperita*, *Mentha spicata*, *Origanum vulgare*, *Salvia officinalis*, *Satureja montana*, *Thymus vulgaris*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Astilbe* sp., *Calamintha nepeta*, *Carex morrowii*, *Crococsmia* spp., *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Geum coccineum*, *Hemerocaulis* sp., *Luzula nivea*, *Verbena hastata*, *Anemone nemorosa*, *Geranium robertianum*, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, *Muscari* ‘Blue Spike’, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Primula vulgaris*, *Viola riviniana*, *Crocus* sp., *Galanthus nivalis*, *Anemone x hybrida*, *Anemone hupehensis*, *Aster* sp., *Chrysanthemum* sp., *Dahlia* sp., *Helleborus* sp., *Rudbeckia* ‘Goldstrum’, *Calamagrostis* ‘Karl Foerster’ and *Stipa* ‘Ponytails’. Plants will be of local provenance where possible.

A treeline and some sections of hedgerow will be removed to facilitate the proposed development. The landscape plan proposed to retain and enhance the linear habitats that border the site to the east.

The proposed timeframe for the construction phase is up to 5 years. The proposed development will require ground levelling. It is expected to import approximately 10,000m³ of stone for road build up. No materials are expected to be exported offsite. Excavated soils will be temporarily stored onsite and will be used for landscaping and reinstatement works where possible. Any exported materials will be removed offsite to a licensed facility. There are no hazardous materials onsite.

The closest Natura 2000 site is the Slaney River Valley SAC (Site Code: 000781) located approximately 2.4km to the north-east and the Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (Site Code: 004076) located approximately 2.7km to the north-east of the proposed development.

The following project elements of the proposed development have been examined for relevance to possible effects on the Natura 2000 sites:

- Earthworks & Excavation
- Sediment & Hydrocarbon Runoff
- Stormwater & Waste Water
- Disturbance to Protected Species
- Impact on Protected Habitats
- Dust and Noise
- Invasive Species

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD



Figure 4.1: Location of development site at Westpoint Business Park, Wexford, Co. Wexford.

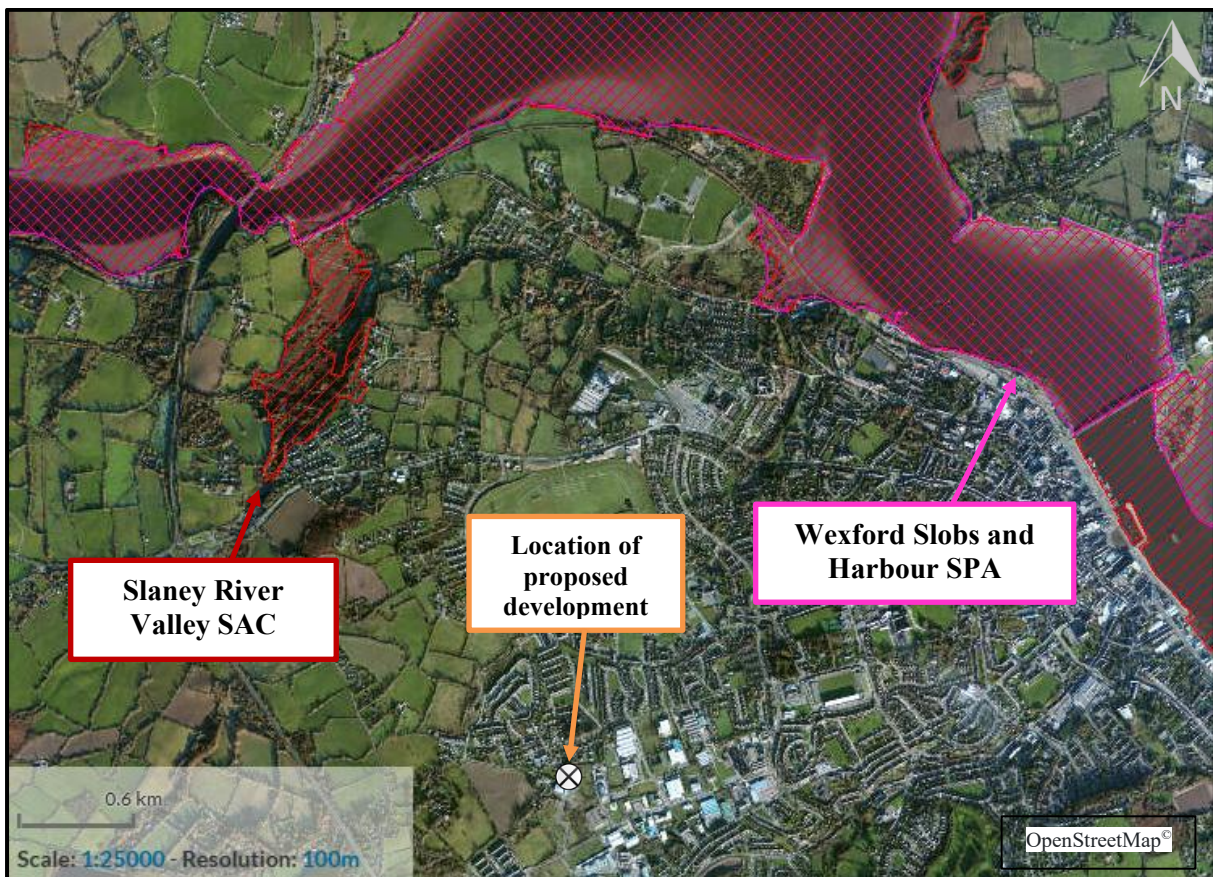


Figure 4.2: Location of Proposed Development and Natura 2000 Sites.

4.2 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

The proposed development site currently is mostly comprised of a road, semi-natural grassland and bare ground. The surrounding area is mostly urban in nature, with residential dwellings to the west, commercial/industrial areas to the north and agricultural grassland to the east. The Whitemill Industrial Estate Road borders the site to the south.

4.2.1 Site Survey

Habitats and flora

A site characterisation assessment was conducted on 11th March 2025 to examine the ecological context of the proposed development site. See accompanying EcIA (Ref: PE_EcIA_10302) for a complete characterization of the habitats onsite.

The **Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2)** habitat occupies most of the site area and it is comprised of tussocky grass species such as Bent Grasses (*Agrostis* spp.), Cock's Foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*).

The **Spoil and bare ground (ED2)** is present at the east section of the development site and it consists of an area of bare ground that has been recently cleared and currently has less than 50% of vegetation cover. Species present within this habitat included Common Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Moss species (Bryophyta), Willow (*Salix* spp.), Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja davidii*) and Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*).

The **Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)** habitat encompasses the road, curbs and sidewalks. Species present within this habitat included Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Bittercress (*Cardamine* spp.), Ivy-leaved Toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.), Mouse-ear (*Cerastium* spp.), Willowherb (*Epilobium* spp.) and Fescue (*Festuca* spp.).

The **Hedgerow (WL1)** habitat is present along the east boundary of the site and along the east border of the GS2 habitat. The hedgerow was mostly comprised of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja davidii*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and Willow (*Salix* spp.).

The **Recolonising bare ground (ED3)** habitat occupies a small area to the northeast of the development site and it consists of an area of disturbed ground that currently has over 50% of vegetation cover. The species composition includes Canadian Fleabane (*Conyza canadensis*), Annual Meadow Grass (*Poa annua*), Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Daisy (*Bellis perennis*) and Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*).

The **Amenity grassland (GS2)** habitat is present in the borders of the road and it is regularly mowed. Species present within this habitat included Fescue (*Festuca* spp.), Moss species (Bryophyta), Annual Meadow Grass (*Poa annua*), Perennial Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), White Clover (*Trifolium repens*) and Daisy (*Bellis perennis*).

There is a **Treeline (WL2)** along the southeast boundary of the site comprised of Lime (*Tilia* spp.) with an understorey of *Escallonia* spp., and another small treeline bordering a part of the north boundary of the site that is mostly comprised of Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Oak (*Quercus* spp.), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

The **Scrub (WS1)** habitat covers a small area along the north boundary of the site and it is comprised of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Willow (*Salix* spp.), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and Moss (Bryophyta).

Habitats outside the red line boundary include the stream that borders the site to the west which has been classified as a **Depositing/ lowland river (FW2)**. The stream was 1.5m wide with banks up to 1.5m tall. The water was transparent, approximately 5cm deep, and flowing slowly. The substrate was muddy. No vegetation was present within the stream. The banks were well vegetated. There is a **Treeline (WL2)** bordering the site to the west and northwest. The treeline is mostly comprised of Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Oak (*Quercus* spp.) and Willow (*Salix* spp.) with New Zealand Broadleaf (*Griselinia littoralis*), Ivy (*Hedera* spp.), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*). The **Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)** habitat adjacent to the development site include a derelict building to the north of the site boundary. Species present within this habitat include Navelwort (*Umbilicus rupestris*) and Ivy (*Hedera* spp.).

No protected plant species under the Flora (Protection) Order, 2022 (S.I. No. 235 of 2022) were noted during the assessment. No Third Schedule invasive plant species were noted onsite during the site assessment. See Table 4.1 for summary for habitats located at and adjacent to the proposed development. See Appendix D for photo log of the site.



Figure 4.4: Habitat Map

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Table 4.1 Summary of Habitats Identified at and Adjacent the Development Site

HABITAT CLASSIFICATION HIERARCHY		
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
E – Exposed rock and disturbed ground	ED – Disturbed ground	ED2 – Spoil and bare ground
		ED3 – Recolonising bare ground
B – Cultivated and built land	BL – Build land	BL3 – Buildings and artificial surfaces
G - Grassland	GS – Semi-natural grassland	GS2 – Dry meadows and grassy verges
	GA – Improved grassland	GA2 – Amenity grassland
W – Woodland and scrub	WL – Linear woodland / scrub	WL1 - Hedgerows
		WL2 – Treelines
	WS – Scrub/transitional woodland	WS1 - Scrub
F - Freshwater	FW - Watercourses	FW2 – Depositing/ lowland river
		FW4 – Drainage ditch

Fauna

Bird species noted during the site walkover included Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*), Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*), Hooded Crow (*Corvus cornix*), Magpie (*Pica pica*), Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*), Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*) and Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*). Herring Gull and Starling are amber listed. None of the bird species recorded is red listed. None of the bird species recorded is listed under Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. The development site would not offer suitable habitat for Kingfisher. The stream to the west would offer limited suitable foraging habitat for Kingfisher and would not offer optimal conditions for Kingfisher burrows. The trees onsite would offer limited opportunities for roosting bats.

There are animal tracks/paths throughout the grassland habitat. Rabbit droppings were present onsite. There are a few burrows outside of the red line boundary under the treeline to the northeast. These burrows were smaller than 20cm wide and mostly round-shaped, and therefore would not be Badger's (Muir & Morris, 2013). These have been most likely dug by Rabbits given the presence of Rabbit droppings at the entrance. Dog droppings were present throughout the site, and during the site assessment it was observed that the site is actively used by people walking their dogs. No protected mammals or evidence of protected mammals such as Otter

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

(*Lutra lutra*) or Badger (*Meles meles*) was found. The stream to the west and the drainage ditch to the east would offer limited foraging opportunities for Otter and would not offer suitable conditions for Otter holts. Fauna typical of that found throughout the rest of Ireland which would be expected to be found in the area would include Badger (*Meles meles*), Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Pine Marten (*Martes martes*), Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Stoat (*Mustela erminea hibernica*), American Mink (*Mustela vison*), Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*), Hedgehog (*Erinus europaeus*), Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*), Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*), Bank Vole (*Myodes glareolus*), and Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus*).

4.2.2 Desk-based review

Flora

In addition to the site walkover, flora and fauna records were reviewed on the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) website for the proposed development site and vicinity. Five protected plant species under the Flora (Protection) Order, 2022 (S.I. No. 235 of 2022) were recorded within the 10km square (Hectad – T02) in which the proposed development site is located: Annual Knawel (*Scleranthus annuus*), Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia fasciculata*), Hairy Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus subbiflorus*), Rough Poppy (*Papaver hybridum*), Small Cudweed (*Filago minima*). None of these species was found onsite.

Ten invasive plant species listed in the Third Schedule of the European Communities Birds and Natural Habitats) Amendment (S.I. No. 355 of 2015) of Regulations 2011-2015 were recorded within the 10km square (Hectad – T02): Common Cord-grass (*Spartina anglica*), Curly Waterweed (*Lagarosiphon major*), Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Giant Knotweed (*Fallopia sachalinensis*), Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Nuttall's Waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*), Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*), Sea-buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) and Three-cornered Garlic (*Allium triquetrum*). None of these species was present within the red line boundary. None of these species was found onsite.

Fauna

Protected fauna species of note recorded within the NBDC 10km square (Hectad – T02) include the protected species Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*), Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*), Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*), Common Porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*), Common Seal (*Phoca vitulina*), Grey Seal (*Halichoerus grypus*), Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Badger (*Meles meles*), Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus*), Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*), European Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Lesser Noctule (*Nyctalus leisleri*), Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*), Pine Marten (*Martes martes*), Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu lato*), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). None of these species was found onsite during the site assessment.

High impact invasive fauna species listed in the Third Schedule of the European Communities Birds and Natural Habitats) Amendment (S.I. No. 355 of 2015) of Regulations 2011-2015 include Harlequin Ladybird (*Harmonia axyridis*), American Mink (*Mustela vison*), Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), Eastern Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) and Colonial Sea Squirt (*Perophora japonica*). None of these species was found onsite during the site assessment.

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

Bird species of note include Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*), Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*), Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus* subsp. *bewickii*), Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*), Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*), Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), Black-throated Diver (*Gavia arctica*), Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla*), Coot (*Fulica atra*), Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*), Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), Common Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*), Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*), Common Guillemot (*Uria aalge*), Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*), Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*), Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina*), Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*), Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*), Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*), Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Swift (*Apus apus*), Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*), Corn Bunting (*Emberiza calandra*), Corn Crake (*Crex crex*), Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), Eurasian Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), Eurasian Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*), Eurasian Teal (*Anas crecca*), Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*), Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*), Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*), Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), European Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*), European Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*), Gadwall (*Anas strepera*), Garganey (*Anas querquedula*), Great Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*), Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*), Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*), Great Northern Diver (*Gavia immer*), Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*), Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*), Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*), Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*), House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*), Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*), Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*), Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*), Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*), Little Gull (*Larus minutus*), Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*), Merlin (*Falco columbarius*), Mew Gull (*Larus canus*), Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*), Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*), Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*), Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*), Razorbill (*Alca torda*), Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*), Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*), Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*), Red-throated Diver (*Gavia stellata*), Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*), Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*), Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*), Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*), Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*), Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*), Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*), Sky Lark (*Alauda arvensis*), Slavonian Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*), Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), Stock Pigeon (*Columba oenas*), Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*), Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*), Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*), Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) and the Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*).

4.3 WATER ENVIRONMENT

4.3.1 Surface Water

The proposed development is located within the Forth_Commons_SC_010 sub-catchment (ID: 12_5) which is part of the Slaney & Wexford Harbour Catchment (ID: 12). The closest watercourse to the development site is the Killen stream (EPA Code: 12K10 – Order 1) which flows along the southwestern stretch of the site boundary. This stream flows in a southerly

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

direction for approximately 653m until it joins the Whitemill River (EPA Code: 12W03 - Order 1). The Whitemill River flows for 2.9km in an easterly direction until it discharges into the Wexford Harbour which forms a part of the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour & Slob SPA.

Other watercourses of note within the vicinity include the Clonard Little which flows for 113m in an easterly direction and joins the Killen stream 130m south of the development site. The Laurstown stream (EPA Code: 12L07 - Order 1) flows for 721m in a northerly direction and joins the Whitemill River 366m south of the development site. The Townparks stream (EPA Code: 12T06 - Order 1) is located 534m northeast of the development site. It flows for 2.1km in a northerly direction and joins the Slaney River and ultimately discharges into the sea. The Newbay River (EPA Code: 12N01 - Order 3) is located 833m to the west of the development site. It flows 3.5km north until it joins the Slaney River and ultimately discharges into the sea.

There are no drainage ditches onsite. There is a drainage ditch outside of the red line boundary that runs along part of the east border of the site. This drainage ditch is culverted under the Whitemill Industrial Estate Road and it is likely connected to the Killens stream.

The development site will be hydrologically connected to the Wexford Harbour via the proposed waste water drainage network and is potentially hydrologically connected to the Killens stream/ Whitemill River (which discharges into the Wexford Harbour) via the existing and proposed surface water drainage infrastructure.

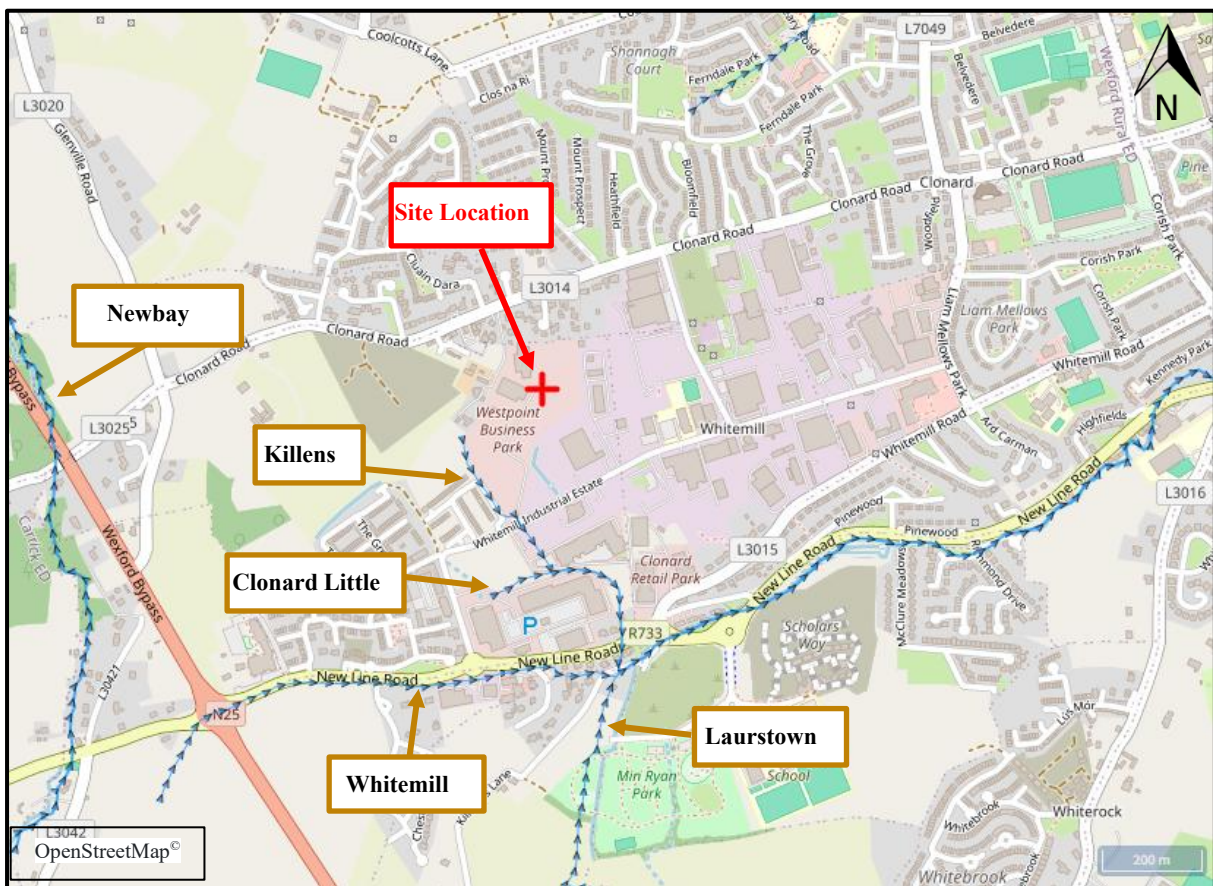


Figure 4.5: Mapped Watercourses surrounding the proposed development site.

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not undertake surface water monitoring along the Killens stream or the Whitemill stream, but it does undertake water monitoring on the Slaney Estuary and on coastal waters. The results for the transitional and coastal waters near the proposed development site are listed in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Transitional and Coastal Waterbodies

TRANSITIONAL AND COASTAL WATERBODIES				
NAME	ID	TYPE	STATUS (2019)	APPROX. DISTANCE FROM SITE
Lower Slaney Estuary	IE_SE_040_0200	Transitional	At Risk - Eutrophic	2.4km NE
Wexford Harbour	IE_SE_040_0000	Coastal	At Risk - Intermediate	4km SE
Southwestern Irish Sea	IE_SE_010_0000	Coastal	Not at Risk - Unpolluted	7.3km SE

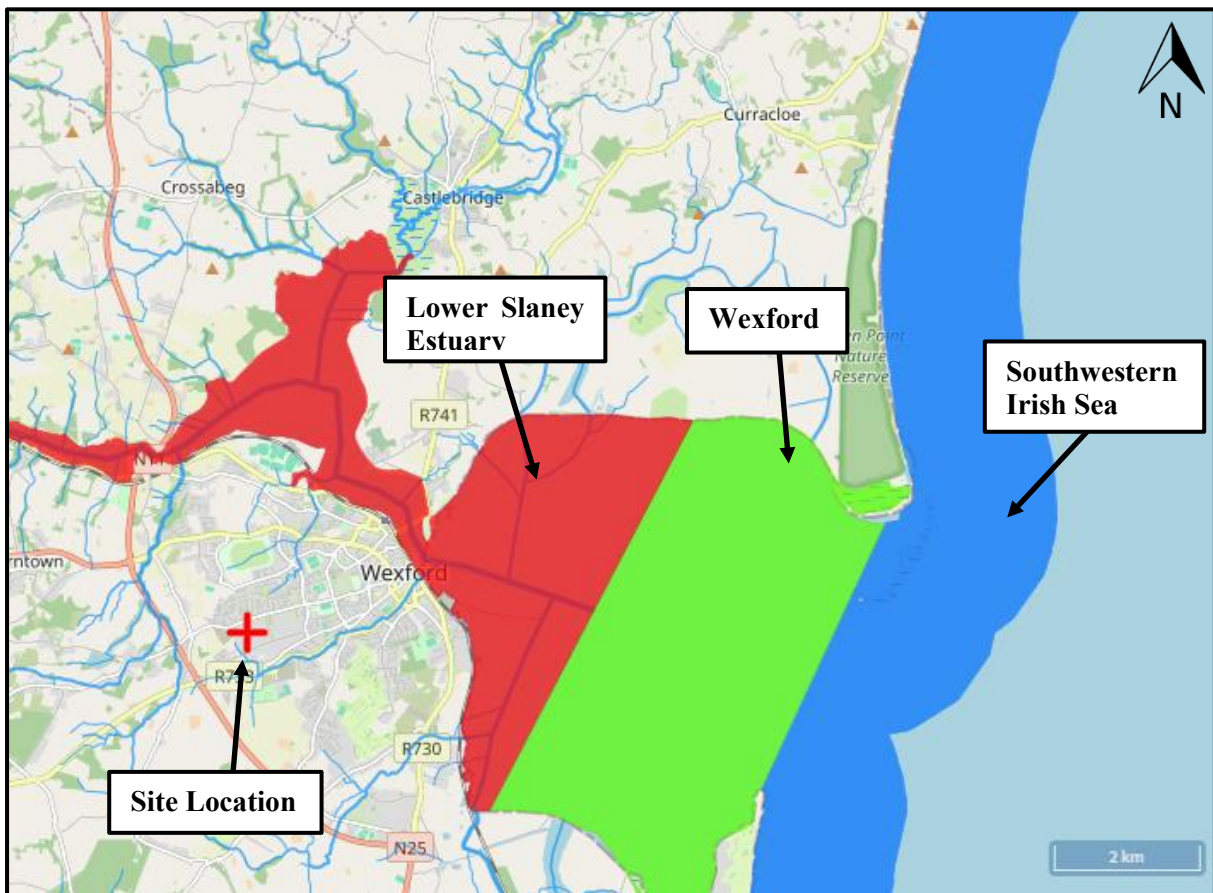


Figure 4.6: Transitional and coastal waters

The significant pressures identified for the transitional waters in Wexford Harbour include agriculture pressures. Nutrient pollution is impacting the Lower Slaney Estuary (EPA, 2021). Nutrient pollution and organic pollution are both impacting Wexford Harbour coastal waters. Urban wastewater pressures have been identified for the Lower Slaney Estuary and coastal waterbody in the outer Wexford Harbour (EPA, 2021).

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

4.3.2. Groundwater

The development site is located on the Industrial Facility (P0062-02) ground waterbody (European Code: IE_SE_G_151). The Industrial Facility (P0062-02) ground waterbody has achieved a Poor chemical groundwater status, a Poor overall groundwater status and a Good quantitative groundwater status during the monitoring period 2016-2021. The ground waterbody is considered to be At risk of not meeting their water quality objectives under the Water Framework Directive (Cycle 3). The groundwater vulnerability is considered to be Low according to the Groundwater Data Ireland ITM Viewer.

4.3.3. Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment

According to the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) Mapping tool by the OPW, the development site is not located within an area of fluvial or pluvial flooding, indicative of 10% AEP (10-yr) event, 1% AEP (100-yr) event or 0.1% AEP (1000-yr) event. However, it should be noted that this map is based on broad-scale simple analysis and may not be accurate for a specific location. There is no history of flooding at the development site. The nearest record of a past flood event was located 2.3km to the northeast.

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

5.0 EUROPEAN SITES (NATURA 2000 SITES) within zone of influence

In assessing the zone of influence of this project upon European sites, the following factors must be considered:

- Potential impacts arising from the project;
- The location and nature of European sites;
- Pathways between the development and European sites.

The project impact sources, environmental pathways and protected site characteristics were screened to identify European sites potentially within the zone of influence of the project.

Five Special Protection Areas (SPA) and eight Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) occur within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development and are shown in the following table:

Table 5.1. Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas potentially within the zone of influence.

SITE NAME	DESIGNATION	SITE CODE	DISTANCE
Slaney River Valley	SAC	000781	1.7km NW
Wexford Harbour and Slobs	SPA	004076	2km W
The Raven	SPA	004019	7.7km NE
Raven Point Nature Reserve	SAC	000710	8.3km NE
Seas off Wexford	SPA	004237	8.4km E
Screen Hills	SAC	000708	9.6km NE
Long Bank	SAC	002161	13.3km E
Tacumshin Lake	SAC	000709	12.7km S
Tacumshin Lake	SPA	004092	13km S
Carnsore Point	SAC	002269	14.4km SE
Ladies Island Lake	SPA	004009	14.4km SE
Ladies Island Lake	SAC	000704	14.4km SE
Blackwater Bank	SAC	002953	15.8km E

Maps detailing European sites potentially within the zone of influence (ZoI) of the development site are included as Appendix C below. For this assessment, the sites considered to be within the zone of influence of the proposed development were the Slaney River Valley (Site Code: 000781) and Wexford Harbour and Slobs (Site Code: 004076) due to the distance and the potential hydrological connection via the Killens Stream.

The proposed development is hydrologically connected to Raven Point Nature Reserve SAC (Site Code: 000710), The Raven SPA (Site Code: 004019), Seas off Wexford SPA (Site Code: 004237), Long Bank SAC (Site Code: 002161), Carnsore Point SAC (Site Code: 002269) and Blackwater Bank SAC (Site Code: 002953). The development site does not contain any of the protected coastal/marine habitats for which these protected sites have been designated. The development site would not offer suitable breeding habitat for coastal and marine birds. Some of the habitats and species for which these protected sites has been designated are sensitive to

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

water quality deterioration. However, due to the considerable dilution effect of coastal waters, the considerable hydrological distance and the lack of associated habitats these SACs and SPAs have been screened out.

The proposed development is not hydrologically connected to the Screen Hills SAC (Site Code: 000708). It does not contain Dry Heaths and Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*) for which the SAC is designated. Therefore, in the absence of a source-pathway-receptor relationship, lack of associated habitats and lack of hydrological connection, and due to the considerable distance to the development site, the Screen Hills SAC has been screened out.

The proposed development has a very weak hydrological connection to Tacumshin Lake via the Seas of Wexford. There are no freshwater habitats onsite for which the SAC has been designated. There are no suitable supporting habitats for the waterbirds of the SPA onsite. Considering the distance, the dilution effect of coastal waters and the lack of suitable habitat Tacumshin Lake SAC and SPA has been screened out.

The Ladies Island Lake SAC and SPA have been designated for coastal habitats and coastal birds respectively. The development site does not contain coastal habitats and would be unsuitable for coastal species. Given the distance, the absence of supporting habitats and the dilution effect of coastal waters, the Ladies Island Lake SAC and SPA have been screened out.

5.1 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC SITE CODE (000781)

This site comprises almost the entire Slaney system, from the headwater streams in the Wicklow Mountains to the extensive estuarine area of Wexford Harbour. The main river tributaries included are the Bann, Glasha, Clody, Derry, Derreen, Douglas and Carrigower Rivers. The tidal influence extends upriver as far as Enniscorthy. In the upper and central regions, the geology consists of granite. Above Kilcarry Bridge, the Slaney has cut a gorge into the granite plain. The Derry and Bann Rivers are bounded by a narrow line of uplands which corresponds to schist outcrops. South of Kildavin the Slaney flows through an area of Ordovician slates and grits. The river is often fringed by woodland and/or swamp vegetation. Other habitats which occur alongside the river include wet grassland, scrub and, in higher areas, heath and bog. Improved grassland and arable land is included alongside the river for water quality reasons. Salt marshes are a feature of the lower estuarine area of the site. The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

TABLE 5.2. ANNEX I HABITATS	
CODE	DESCRIPTION
1130	Estuaries
1140	Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats
1330	Atlantic Salt Meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>)
1410	Mediterranean Salt Meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)
3260	Floating River Vegetation
91A0	Old Oak Woodlands
91E0	Alluvial Forests*

* denotes a priority habitat

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SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

TABLE 5.3. ANNEX II SPECIES		
CODE	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
1029	Freshwater Pearl Mussel	<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>
1095	Sea Lamprey	<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>
1096	Brook Lamprey	<i>Lampetra planeri</i>
1099	River Lamprey	<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>
1103	Twaite Shad	<i>Alosa fallax</i>
1106	Atlantic Salmon	<i>Salmo salar</i>
1355	Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>
1365	Common (Harbour) Sea	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>

The conservation objectives for the SAC site are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the qualifying interests. An excerpt from the Natura 2000 Data Form for the Slaney River Valley SAC is included below, while further details are available within the site's site synopsis (NPWS, 2015).

“This site comprises the freshwater stretches of the River Slaney as far as the Wicklow Mountains; a number of tributaries, the larger of which include the Bann, Boro, Glasha, Clody, Derry, Derreen, Douglas and Carrigower Rivers; the estuary at Ferrycarrig; and Wexford Harbour. The site flows through the Counties of Wicklow, Wexford and Carlow. Towns along the site but not within it include Baltinglass, Hacketstown, Tinahely, Tullow, Bunclody, Camolin, Enniscorthy and Wexford. The river is up to 100m wide in places and is tidal at the southern end from Edermine Bridge below Enniscorthy. In the upper and central regions almost as far as the confluence with the Derry River the geology consists of granite. Above Kilcarry Bridge, the Slaney has cut a gorge into the granite plain. The Derry and Bann Rivers are bounded by a narrow line of uplands which corresponds to schist outcrops. Where these tributaries cut through this belt of hard rocks, they have carved deep gorges, more than two miles long at Tinahely and Shillelagh. South of Kildavin the Slaney flows through an area of Ordovician slates and grits.”

The site supports populations of several species listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive, including Sea Lamprey, River Lamprey and Brook Lamprey, Otter, Salmon, small numbers of Freshwater Pearl Mussel, and in the tidal stretches, Version date: 11.12.2015 5 of 6 000781_Rev15.Docx Twaite Shad. A survey of the Derreen River in 1995 estimated the population of Freshwater Pearl Mussel at about 3,000 individuals. This is a significant population, especially in the context of eastern Ireland. The Slaney is primarily a spring salmon fishery and is regarded as one of the top rivers in Ireland for early spring fishing. The upper Slaney and tributary headwaters are very important for spawning. The site supports regionally significant numbers of Common Seal. This Annex II species occurs year-round in Wexford Harbour where several sandbanks are used for breeding, moulting and resting activity. At least 27 Common Seal regularly occur within the site.

The high pressures/threats to this SAC are forest and plantation management & use, invasive non-native species, Cultivation (includes increase of agricultural area), fertilisation and groundwater pollution by discharge to ground such as disposal of contaminated water to soakaways.

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

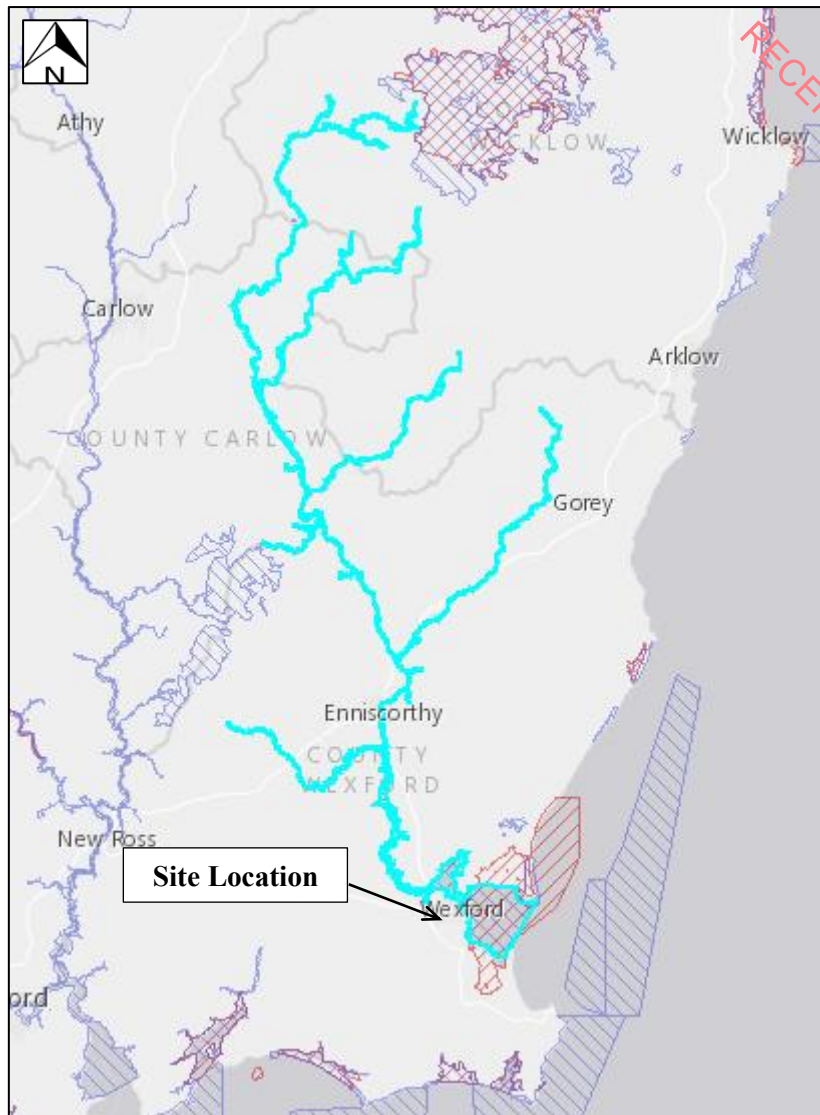


Figure 5.1: Slaney River Valley SAC

Slaney River Valley SAC Conservation Objectives

The Habitats Directive requires the Appropriate Assessment process to assess the potential impacts of the development “in view of the site’s conservation objectives”. Site specific conservation objectives (SSCOs) for the qualifying interests of the Slaney River Valley SAC are provided in the table below, where available from the NPWS document “Conservation Objectives: Slaney River Valley SAC 000781” (NPWS, 2011).

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 SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

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TABLE 5.4 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
[1130] Estuaries			
Habitat area	Hectares	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes	Habitat area was estimated as 1,905ha using OSI data and the defined Transitional Water Body area under the Water Framework Directive.
Community distribution	Hectares	The following community types should be maintained in, or restored to, a natural condition: Mixed sediment community complex; Estuarine muds dominated by polychaetes and crustaceans community complex; and Sand dominated by polychaetes community complex	
[1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats			
Habitat area	Hectares	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes.	Habitat area was estimated as 1,027ha using OSI data.
Community distribution	Hectares	The following community types should be maintained in a natural condition: Estuarine muds dominated by polychaetes and crustaceans community complex; and Sand dominated by polychaetes community complex	
[1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows			
None Specified	-	-	-
[1410] Mediterranean salt meadows			
None Specified	-	-	-
[3260] Floating River Vegetation			
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes	The full distribution of this habitat and its sub-types in this site is currently unknown. The basis of the selection of the SAC for the habitat is the presence of an excellent example of the vegetation assemblage
Habitat area	Kilometres	Area stable at 12.6km or increasing, subject to natural processes	
Hydrological regime: river flow	Metres per second	Maintain appropriate hydrological regimes	

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SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

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TABLE 5.4 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Hydrological regime: tidal influence	Daily water level fluctuations - metres	Maintain natural tidal regime	<p>associated with tidal reaches of large rivers between Enniscorthy and Polladerry townland.</p> <p>Due to regular disturbance (through variations in flow), river macrophytes rarely reach a climax condition but frequently occur as transient communities. A natural (relatively unmodified) flow regime is required for both plant communities and channel geomorphology to be in favourable condition, exhibiting typical dynamics for the river type.</p>
Substratum composition: particle size range	Millimetres	For the tidal sub-type, the substratum of the channel must be dominated by particles of sand to gravel, with silt at the river margins	
Water quality: nutrients	Milligrams per litre	The concentration of nutrients in the water column must be sufficiently low to prevent changes in species composition or habitat condition	
Vegetation composition: typical species	Occurrence	Typical species of the relevant habitat sub-type reach favourable status	
Floodplain connectivity: area	Hectares	The area of active floodplain at and upstream of the habitat must be maintained	
[91A0] Old Oak Woodlands			
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, at least 146.17ha for sub-sites surveyed.	<p>The sizes of at least some of the existing woodlands need to be increased in order to reduce habitat fragmentation and benefit those species requiring 'deep' woodland conditions.</p> <p>Oak regenerates poorly. In suitable sites ash can regenerate in large numbers although few seedlings reach pole size.</p> <p>Dead wood is a valuable resource and an integral part of a healthy, functioning</p>
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline.	
Woodland size	Hectares	Area stable or increasing. Where topographically possible, "large" woods at least 25ha in size and "small" woods at least 3ha in size	
Woodland structure: cover and height	Percentage and metres	Diverse structure with a relatively closed canopy containing mature trees; subcanopy layer with semi- mature trees and shrubs; and well-developed herb layer	
Woodland structure: community diversity and extent	Hectares	Maintain diversity and extent of community types	

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

TABLE 5.4 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Woodland structure: natural regeneration	Seedling: sapling: pole ratio	Seedlings, saplings and pole age-classes occur in adequate proportions to ensure survival of woodland canopy	<p>woodland ecosystem.</p> <p>Mature and veteran trees are important habitats for bryophytes, lichens, saproxylic organisms and some bird species. Their retention is important to ensure continuity of habitats/niches and propagule sources.</p> <p>Includes ancient or long-established woodlands, archaeological and geological features as well as red-data and other rare or localised species.</p> <p>The following are the most common invasive species in this woodland type: beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>), rhododendron (<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>), cherry laurel (<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>)</p>
Woodland structure: dead wood	m ³ per hectare; number per hectare	At least 30m ³ /ha of fallen timber greater than 10cm diameter; 30 snags/ha; both categories should include stems greater than 40cm diameter	
Woodland structure: veteran trees	Number per hectare	No decline	
Woodland structure: indicators of local distinctiveness	Occurrence	No decline	
Vegetation composition: native tree cover	Percentage	No decline. Native tree cover not less than 95%	
Vegetation composition: typical species	Occurrence	A variety of typical native species present, depending on woodland type, including oak (<i>Quercus petraea</i>) and birch (<i>Betula pubescens</i>)	
Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Occurrence	Negative indicator species, particularly non-native invasive species, absent or under control	
[91E0] Alluvial Forests			
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, at least 18.7ha for sites surveyed	The sizes of at least some of the existing woodlands need to be increased in order to reduce habitat fragmentation and benefit those species requiring 'deep' woodland conditions.
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline.	
Woodland size	Hectares	Area stable or increasing. Where topographically possible, "large" woods at least 25ha in size and "small" woods at least 3ha in size	

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

TABLE 5.4 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Woodland structure: cover and height	Percentage and metres	Diverse structure with a relatively closed canopy containing mature trees; subcanopy layer with semi- mature trees and shrubs; and well-developed herb layer	Alder and oak regenerate poorly. Ash often regenerates in large numbers although few seedlings reach pole size.
Woodland structure: community diversity and extent	Hectares	Maintain diversity and extent of community types	Periodic flooding is essential to maintain alluvial woodlands along river floodplains.
Woodland structure: natural regeneration	Seedling: sapling: pole ratio	Seedlings, saplings and pole age-classes occur in adequate proportions to ensure survival of woodland canopy	Dead wood is a valuable resource and an integral part of a healthy, functioning woodland ecosystem.
Hydrological regime: Flooding depth/height of water table	Metres	Appropriate hydrological regime necessary for maintenance of alluvial vegetation	Mature and veteran trees are important habitats for bryophytes, lichens, saproxylic organisms and some bird species. Their retention is important to ensure continuity of habitats/niches and propagule sources.
Woodland structure: dead wood	m ³ per hectare; number per hectare	At least 30m ³ /ha of fallen timber greater than 10cm diameter; 30 snags/ha; both categories should include stems greater than 40cm diameter (greater than 20cm diameter in the case of alder)	Includes ancient or long-established woodlands, archaeological and geological features as well as red-data and other rare or localised species.
Woodland structure: veteran trees	Number per hectare	No decline	The following are the most common invasive species in this woodland type: sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>) and Himalayan balsam (<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>)
Woodland structure: indicators of local distinctiveness	Occurrence	No decline	
Vegetation composition: native tree cover	Percentage	No decline. Native tree cover not less than 95%	
Vegetation composition: typical species	Occurrence	A variety of typical native species present, depending on woodland type, including alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>), willows (<i>Salix</i> spp) and, locally, oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)	

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
 SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026

TABLE 5.4 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Occurrence	Negative indicator species, particularly non-native invasive species, absent or under control	
[1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel			
The status of the FPM as a qualifying Annex II species for the Slaney River Valley SAC is currently under review			
[1095] Sea Lamprey			
Distribution: extent of anadromy	% of river accessible	Greater than 75% of main stem length of rivers accessible from estuary	Artificial barriers can block or cause difficulties to lampreys' upstream migration, thereby limiting species to lower stretches and restricting access to spawning areas. In this site, some barrier modification is required (e.g. Clohamon weir) to permit sea lamprey passage. Juveniles burrow in areas of fine sediment in still water.
Population structure of juveniles	No. 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. Improved dispersal of spawning beds into areas upstream of barriers	
Availability of juvenile habitat	Number of positive sites in 3 rd order channels (and greater), downstream of spawning areas	More than 50% of sample sites positive	

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
 SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026

TABLE 5.4 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
[1096] Brook Lamprey			
Distribution: extent of anadromy	% of river accessible	Access to all water courses down to first order streams	Artificial barriers can block lampreys' upstream migration, thereby limiting species to lower stretches and restricting access to spawning areas. Barrier modification required to facilitate passage of adult fish within channels. Juveniles burrow in areas of fine sediment in still water.
Population structure of juveniles	No. 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 2 nd order channels (and greater), downstream of spawning areas	More than 50% of sample sites positive	
[1099] River Lamprey			
Distribution: extent of anadromy	% of river accessible	Greater than 75% of main stem and major tributaries down to second order accessible from estuary	Artificial barriers can block lampreys' upstream migration, thereby limiting species to lower stretches and restricting access to spawning areas. Barrier modification required to facilitate passage of adult fish within channels. Juveniles burrow in areas of fine sediment in still water
Population structure of juveniles	No. of age/size groups	At least three age/size groups of river/brook 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	

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026

TABLE 5.4 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Availability of juvenile habitat	Number of positive sites in 2 nd order channels (and greater), downstream of spawning areas	More than 50% of sample sites positive	
[1103] Twaite Shad			
Distribution: extent of anadromy	% of river accessible	Greater than 75% of main stem length of rivers accessible from estuary	<p>In some catchments, artificial barriers block twaite shads' upstream migration, thereby limiting species to lower stretches and restricting access to spawning areas. Barrier modification required to facilitate passage of adult fish within channels.</p> <p>Regular breeding has not been confirmed in the River Slaney in recent years.</p>
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 habitats	
Water quality-oxygen levels	Milligrams per litre	No lower than 5mg/l	
Spawning habitat quality: Filamentous algae; macrophytes; sediment	[1106] Atlantic Salmon	Maintain stable gravel substrate with very little fine material, free of filamentous algal (macroalgae) growth and macrophyte (rooted higher plants) growth	
Distribution: extent of anadromy	% of river accessible	100% of river channels down to second order accessible from 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 min sampling	

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026

TABLE 5.4 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
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 sampled by EPA	
[1106] Atlantic Salmon			
Distribution: extent of anadromy	% of river accessible	100% of river channels down to second order accessible from estuary	<p>Artificial barriers can block salmon's upstream migration, thereby limiting species to lower stretches and restricting access to spawning areas.</p> <p>Smolt abundance can be negatively affected by a number of impacts such as estuarine pollution, hydroelectric schemes, predation and sea lice (<i>Lepeophtheirus salmonis</i>)</p> <p>Salmon spawn in clean gravels.</p>
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 min 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 sampled by EPA	
[1355] Otter			
Distribution	% positive survey sites	No significant decline	<p>Otters need lying up areas throughout their territory where they are secure from disturbance.</p> <p>Broad diet that varies locally and seasonally, but dominated by fish, in particular salmonids, eels and sticklebacks</p>
Extent of terrestrial habitat	Hectares	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 64.7ha above high water mark (HWM); 453.4ha along river banks/ around ponds	
Extent of marine habitat	Hectares	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 534.7ha	

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

TABLE 5.4 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Extent of freshwater (river) habitat	Kilometres	No significant decline. Length mapped and calculated as 264.1km	<p>in freshwater</p> <p>Otters will regularly commute across stretches of open water up to 500m e.g. between the mainland and an island; between two islands; across an estuary. It is important that such commuting routes are not obstructed</p>
Extent of freshwater (lake/lagoon) habitat	Hectares	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 0.4ha	
Couching sites and holts	Number	No significant decline	
Fish biomass available	Kilograms	No significant decline	
Barriers to connectivity	Number	No significant increase	
[1365] Common (Harbour) Seal			
Access to suitable habitat	No. of artificial barriers	Species range within the site should not be restricted by artificial barriers to site use.	Attribute and target based on background knowledge of Irish populations.
Breeding behaviour	Breeding sites	The breeding sites should be maintained in a natural condition.	
Moulting behaviour	Moult haul-out sites	The moult haul-out sites should be maintained in a natural condition	
Resting behaviour	Resting haul-out sites	The resting haul-out sites should be maintained in a natural condition.	
Disturbance	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the harbour seal population at the site.	

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

Slaney River Valley SAC Conservation Status

According to the Habitat's Directive, favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

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

According to the Habitat's Directive, favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

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

The conservation statuses for the qualifying interests for the Slaney River Valley SAC are outlined below.

Table 5.5. Conservation status for the qualifying interests of the Slaney River Valley SAC.

CODE	QUALIFYING INTEREST	CONSERVATION STATUS*	SITE LEVEL CONSERVATION STATUS**
1130	Estuaries	Inadequate	Good
1140	Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats	Inadequate	Good
1330	Atlantic Salt Meadows	Inadequate	Excellent
1410	Mediterranean Salt Meadows	Inadequate	Good
3260	Floating River Vegetation	Inadequate	Good
91A0	Old Oak Woodlands	Bad	Good
91E0	Alluvial Forests	Bad	Good
1029	Freshwater Pearl Mussel	Bad	Good
1095	Sea Lamprey	Bad	Good
1096	Brook Lamprey	Favourable	Good
1099	River Lamprey	Unknown	Good
1103	Twaite Shad	Bad	Good
1106	Atlantic Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>)	Inadequate	Good
1355	Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)	Favourable	Excellent
1365	Common (Harbour) Seal	Favourable	Good

*Sourced from the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (NPWS, 2019a and 2019b)

**Sourced from NPWS (2018)

5.2. WEXFORD HARBOUR AND SLOBS (SITE CODE: 004076)

Wexford Harbour is the lowermost part of the estuary of the River Slaney, a major river that drains much of the south-east region. The site is divided between the natural estuarine habitats of Wexford Harbour and the reclaimed polders known as the north and south 'slobs'. The seaward boundary extends from the Rosslare peninsula in the south to the area just west of The Raven Point in the north, while the inner boundaries of the site extend to Ferrycarrig bridge and towards Castlebridge. Shallow marine water is a principal habitat, but at low tide extensive areas of intertidal flats are exposed. These vary from rippled sands in exposed areas to sandy muds in the more sheltered areas, especially at Hopeland and the inner estuary to the west of Wexford bridge. Salt marshes fringe the intertidal flats, especially in the sheltered areas. The slobs are two flat areas of farmland, mainly arable and pasture grassland, empoldered behind 19th century seawalls. The lands are drained by a network of channels which flow into two central channels, in parts several hundred metres in width. Water from the channels is pumped into the sea with electric pumps. The channels often support swamp vegetation. Several conifer plantations are included, especially on the south slob.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species:

TABLE 5.6. SPECIAL CONSERVATION INTERESTS		
CODE	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
A004	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
A005	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
A017	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
A028	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
A037	Bewick's Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>
A038	Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>
A046	Light-bellied Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>
A048	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
A050	Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>
A052	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
A053	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
A054	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
A062	Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>
A067	Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
A069	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>
A082	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
A125	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
A130	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
A140	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>
A141	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
A142	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
A143	Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>
A144	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
A149	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
A156	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
A157	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

TABLE 5.6. SPECIAL CONSERVATION INTERESTS		
CODE	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
A160	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
A162	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
A179	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
A183	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
A195	Little Tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>
A395	Greenland White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>
A999	Wetland and Waterbirds	

An excerpt from the site's Site Synopsis (NPWS, 2014) is included below.

“The site is of international importance for several species of waterbirds but also because it regularly supports well in excess of 20,000 waterbirds (average peak of 49,030 for the 5 winters 1996/97-2000/01). Wexford Harbour and Slobs is one of the top three sites in the country for numbers and diversity of wintering birds. The combination of estuarine habitats, including shallow waters for grebes, diving duck and seaduck, and the farmland of the polders, which include freshwater drainage channels, provides optimum feeding and roost areas for a wide range of species. Of particular importance is that it is one of the two most important sites in the world for Greenland White-fronted Goose (9,353) (all given figures for species are average peaks for the 5 winters 1995/96-1999/00). The geese feed almost entirely within the Slobs and roost at The Raven (a separate SPA). The site also has internationally important populations of Mute Swan (543), Light-bellied Brent Goose (1,469), Bartailed Godwit (1,696) and Black-tailed Godwit (790). There are at least a further 26 species of wintering waterbirds which occur in numbers of national importance, i.e. Great Crested Grebe (117), Little Grebe (82), Cormorant (495), Grey Heron (52), Whooper Swan (100), Bewick's Swan (191), Shelduck (753), Wigeon (2,752), Teal (1,538), Mallard (3,290), Pintail (66), Scaup (339), Goldeneye (182), Red-breasted Merganser (209), Coot (351), Oystercatcher (1,493), Golden Plover (5,013), Grey Plover (1,279), Lapwing (11,826), Knot (453), Sanderling (210), Dunlin (2,485), Curlew (1,771), Redshank (555), Black-headed Gull (5,977) and Lesser Black-backed Gull (1,086). Other species that use the site include Ringed Plover (69), Turnstone (41), Greenshank (12), Shoveler (24), Tufted Duck (114), Pochard (218), Common Gull (100+) and Little Egret. Several of the above populations represent substantial proportions of the national totals, especially Shelduck (5.2%), Scaup (5.3%), Red-breasted Merganser (5.7%) and Grey Plover (19.9% and the top site in the country). The Slobs is the most important and indeed one of the few sites in the country which supports a regular flock of Bewick's Swan. Numbers of wintering birds are often swelled by hard-weather movements from Britain and Europe, notably Golden Plover and Lapwing.”

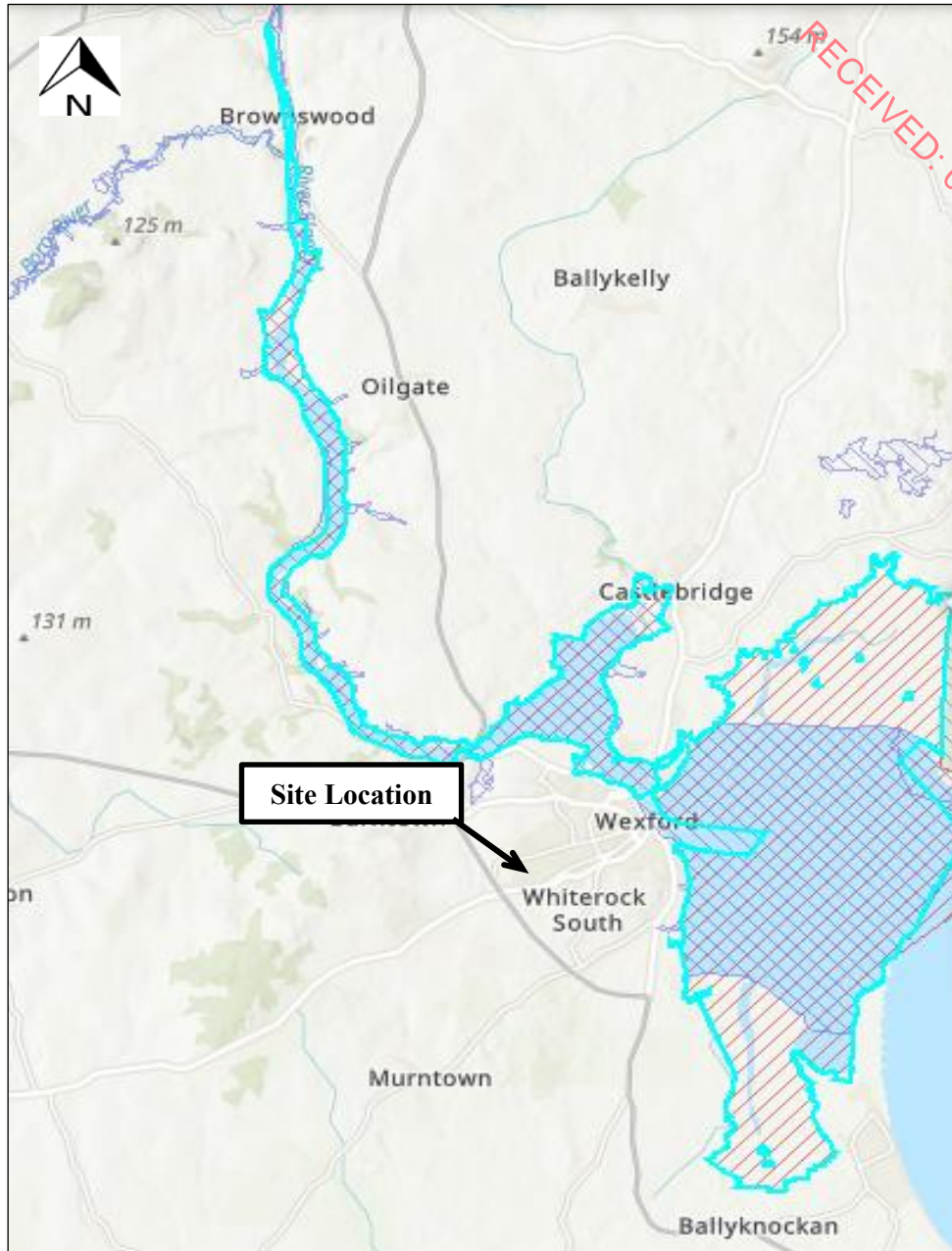


Figure 5.2: Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/10/2026

TABLE 5.7 WEXFORD HARBOUR AND SLOBS SPA CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES		
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET
[A004] Little Grebe		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A005] Great Crested Grebe		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A017] Cormorant		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A028] Grey Heron [
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A037] Bewick's Swan		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A038] Whooper Swan		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED 09/01/2026

TABLE 5.7 WEXFORD HARBOUR AND SLOBS SPA CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES		
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A048] Shelduck		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A050] Wigeon		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A052] Teal		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A053] Mallard		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A054] Pintail		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A062] Scaup		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A067] Goldeneye		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED 09/01/2023

TABLE 5.7 WEXFORD HARBOUR AND SLOBS SPA CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES		
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A069] Red-breasted		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A082] Hen Harrier		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A125] Coot		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A130] Oystercatcher		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A140] Golden Plover		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A141] Grey Plover		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A142] Lapwing		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

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TABLE 5.7 WEXFORD HARBOUR AND SLOBS SPA CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES		
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET
[A143] Knot		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A156] Black-tailed Godwit		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A157] Bar-tailed Godwit		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A160] Curlew		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A162] Redshank		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A179] Black-headed Gull		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
[A183] Lesser Black-backed Gull		
Population trend	Percentage change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
A195 Little Tern		

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

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TABLE 5.7 WEXFORD HARBOUR AND SLOBS SPA CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES		
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET
Breeding population abundance: apparently occupied nests (AONs)	Number	No significant decline
Productivity rate: fledged young per breeding pair	Mean number	No significant decline
Distribution: breeding colonies	Number; location; area (Hectares)	No significant decline
Prey biomass available	Kilogrammes	No significant decline
Barriers to connectivity	Number; location; shape; area (hectares)	No significant increase
Disturbance at the breeding site	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the breeding little tern population
[A999] Wetlands		
Wetland habitat area	Hectares	The permanent area occupied by the wetland habitat should be stable and not significantly less than the area of 4,241 ha, other than that due to natural patterns of variation
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

Wexford Harbour and Slob SPA Conservation Status

According to the Habitat's Directive, favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

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

Table 5.8. Conservation status for the Qualifying Interests of the Slaney River Valley SAC.

CODE	SPECIAL CONSERVATION INTEREST	NATIONAL CONSERVATION STATUS*	SITE LEVEL CONSERVATION STATUS**
A004	Little Grebe	Amber List	Inter Con
A005	Great Crested Grebe	Amber List	Excellent
A017	Cormorant	Amber List	Excellent
A028	Grey Heron	Green List	Excellent
A037	Bewick's Swan	Red List	Excellent
A038	Whooper Swan	Amber List	Excellent
A046	Light-bellied Brent Goose	Amber List	Excellent
A048	Shelduck	Amber List	Excellent
A050	Wigeon	Amber List	Excellent
A052	Teal	Amber List	Excellent
A053	Mallard	Amber List	Excellent
A054	Pintail	Red List	Excellent
A062	Scaup	Amber List	Excellent
A067	Goldeneye	Amber List	Excellent
A069	Red-breasted Merganser	Green List	Excellent
A082	Hen Harrier	Amber List	Excellent
A125	Coot	Amber List	Excellent
A130	Oystercatcher	Amber List	Excellent
A140	Golden Plover	Red List	Excellent
A141	Grey Plover	Amber List	Excellent
A142	Lapwing	Red List	Excellent
A143	Knot	Amber List	Excellent
A144	Sanderling	Green List	Excellent
A149	Dunlin	Red List	Excellent
A156	Black-tailed Godwit	Amber List	Excellent
A157	Bar-tailed Godwit	Amber List	Excellent
A160	Curlew	Red List	Excellent
A162	Redshank	Red List	Excellent
A179	Black-headed Gull	Red List	Good
A183	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Amber List	Excellent
A195	Little Tern	Amber List	Excellent
A395	Greenland White-fronted Goose	Amber List	Inter Con

*Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2020-2026 (G. Gilbert, A. Stanbury & L. Lewis, 2021

**Sourced from NPWS (2020)

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY IMPACTS

6.1 DISTURBANCE TO PROTECTED HABITATS AND SPECIES

The proposed development does not directly impinge on any part of a European site, and as such would not be expected to impact upon a protected site through destruction of habitat, fragmentation of habitat, disturbance of habitat or direct reduction in species density. The Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (Site Code: 004076) and the Slaney River Valley SAC (Site Code: 000781) are located approximately 1.7km and 2km to the northeast of the development site respectively.

Most of the habitats onsite that will be removed to allow for the construction of the proposed development are modified, managed and of low ecological value, therefore its loss would not be considered significant. The hedgerows/treelines may be of higher ecological value for fauna, however these are comprised of common flora species that are abundant in unmanaged habitats throughout the country. The landscape plan will include the planting of native species and non-invasive non-native species and pollinator friendly species within its planting schedule. New linear habitats will be created as part of the landscape plan, therefore the connectivity between the development site and the surrounding areas will not be significantly compromised in the long term. This will compensate for the loss of vegetation and will create new opportunities for fauna. New small wetland habitats will be created as part of the SuDS drainage and the landscape plan, which will create additional opportunities for flora and fauna associated with wetland/aquatic habitats.

It is not considered that the development site would contain the species for which the Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA has been designated. The qualifying interests of this SPA are bird species that are mostly associated with wetland habitats. None of these bird species were recorded onsite during the site walkover. There are no wetland/aquatic habitats onsite. The freshwater habitats close to the development site are the Killens stream to the west and a drainage ditch to the east. Some of these bird species, such as the White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) [A395], can also forage on agricultural grasslands. The development site contains grassland. No agricultural grasslands are present onsite. These species would find more suitable foraging habitat closer to the SPA. The development site does not contain suitable breeding habitat for wetland/waterbirds. Although there are no water quality objectives set for these qualifying interests within the Conservation Objectives document, a potential deterioration in water quality during the construction phase could indirectly affect these birds by directly affecting their diet. The potential for the proposed development to cause a deterioration in water quality is discussed in Section 6.3 below.

It is not considered that the proposed development would support the qualifying interests for which the Slaney River Valley SAC has been designated. The site is mostly comprised of semi-natural and improved grassland and artificial surfaces, and it is located approximately 2.4km (3.5km hydrological distance) from the Lower Slaney Estuary, therefore it would not contain the estuarine/ coastal habitats Estuaries [1130], Mudflats and sandflats [1140], Atlantic salt meadows [1330] and Mediterranean salt meadows [1410] for which the SAC has been designated. There are no water quality attributes set for these species within the Conservation Objectives document.

There are no freshwater habitats onsite therefore the development site would not support Floating River vegetation [3260]. The drainage ditch and the stream adjacent to the site boundary had minimal water by the time this assessment took place and would not support this

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

habitat. The nearest mapped example of this habitat within the SAC is located approximately 9.3km (17.6km hydrologically upstream) to the northwest of the development site. However, further unsurveyed areas may be present along the Slaney. The Floating River vegetation habitat is sensitive to water quality deterioration. The potential for the proposed development to cause a deterioration in water quality is discussed in Section 6.3 below.

The development site does not contain freshwater habitats that could support the protected fish or freshwater species associated with the Slaney River Valley SAC. The Killens stream and the drainage ditch to the east of the development site are unlikely to support these protected species given the limited volume of water. No works will take place within freshwater habitats, therefore no direct impact would be anticipated.

Salmon were noted within the Slaney Catchment, approximately 17.2km to the northwest (over 15km upstream) of the development site on the Boro River (Holmes et. Al, 2023). Salmon could be present in the Slaney Estuary downstream of the site. The release of sediments can have a direct impact upon Salmon spawning grounds. However, the stretch of the River Slaney that is designated Salmonid Spawning area is located approximately a considerable distance upstream of the development site. Salmon requires clean gravels for spawning: the Killens stream and the drainage ditch had a silty substrate by the time this assessment took place, therefore these waterbodies do not offer suitable breeding ground for Salmon. No direct impacts would be expected upon this species as no works will take place within a watercourse or drainage ditch. Water quality objectives have been set for this species with Q4 (good status) values set as objectives in freshwater. The potential for the proposed development to cause a deterioration in water quality is discussed in Section 6.3 below.

The proposed activity could also indirectly affect *Lamprey* sp. due to water quality deterioration during the construction phase, if present within the Slaney Estuary downstream. Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*), River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) and Brook Lamprey (*L. planeri*) all require clean gravels for spawning. Lamprey species require clean gravels for spawning: the Killens stream and the drainage ditch had a silty substrate by the time this assessment took place, therefore these waterbodies do not offer suitable breeding ground for Lamprey. The nearest record of Lamprey (*Lampetra* spp.) within the Slaney River is approximately 19km to the northwest (over 20km hydrologically upstream) of the development site (King & Linnane, 2004).

Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax*) needs stable gravel substrate with very little fine material, free of filamentous algal and plant root growth, therefore the drainage ditch and the Killens stream adjacent to the site boundaries would not offer suitable breeding ground for this species. The SAC Conservation Objectives report notes that upstream migration may be inhibited by artificial barriers, such as Clohamon weir, located upstream of the development site (NPWS, 2011). According to the Site Synopsis of the SAC Twaite Shad occur in the tidal stretches of the Slaney. The Slaney Estuary is located approximately 2.4km from the development site. A potential deterioration in water quality could significantly affect this species, should it be present downstream of the development site. The potential for the proposed development to cause a deterioration in water quality is discussed in Section 6.3 below.

No evidence of Otter (including holts, slides, spraints and tracks) was recorded during the ecological site assessment. NBDC has no records of Otter on the Killens stream or on the Whitemill stream. The nearest NBDC record of Otter is 636m (11.8km hydrologically upstream) northwest of the development site near the Newbay stream (Harm Deenen, Mammals of Ireland 2016-2025). The habitats onsite would be of limited value to Otter, should

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

this species be present within the vicinity. There is limited tall vegetation onsite that could be suitable for Otter couches. The Killens stream to the west and the drainage ditch to the east would offer limited foraging opportunities for Otter. While Otters can sometimes have their holts in the banks of small drainage channels, the location of the development site within an urban area already subject to considerable disturbance and human presence would reduce the suitability of the adjacent section of the Killens stream and the drainage ditch for breeding Otter. No works will take place within these watercourses. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposed development would significantly affect Otter due to habitat loss/ fragmentation or direct disturbance. There are no water quality objectives set for this species within the Conservation Objectives document of the SAC. However, a potential deterioration in water quality could indirectly affect Otter by directly affecting Otter prey. The potential for the proposed development to cause a deterioration in water quality is discussed in Section 6.3 below.

While the nearest point of the Slaney Estuary to the development site (2.4km to the northeast) is considered to be suitable habitat for Harbour Seals (*Phoca vitulina*) [1365], the mapped breeding, moulting and resting Harbour Seal habitats within the SAC are located approximately 5.5km (6.5km hydrologically downstream) to the east of the development site. A potential deterioration in water quality could indirectly affect this species by directly affecting its preys. The potential for the proposed development to cause a deterioration in water quality is discussed in Section 6.3 below.

There are no rivers or lakes within the development site and therefore it would not contain suitable habitat associated with Freshwater Pearl Mussels (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) [1029]. The stream and the drainage ditch adjacent to the development site are unlikely to support this species. While the status of this species is currently under review within the Conservation Objectives report for the River Barrow and River Nore SAC, it is known that this critically endangered species is at risk of morphological and hydrological changes caused by sedimentation and enrichment. Riverbeds that have become clogged with silt and vegetation are unsuitable for the survival of young mussels (NPWS, 2019c). During the construction works, the release of sediments could have an impact on filter feeding freshwater species such as Freshwater Pearl Mussel. The distribution of Freshwater Pearl Mussel within the SAC is currently unmapped. There are also no NBDC records of Pearl Mussel downstream of the development site. According to the Site Synopsis of the SAC, Freshwater Pearl Mussel have been recorded on the Dereen River, which is located a good distance upstream of the development site. Therefore, no direct effects are anticipated. However, an indirect impact could occur downstream as the larval stages rely on salmonid fish hosts, and therefore any potential impact on salmonids can indirectly affect Freshwater Pearl Mussel. The potential for the proposed development to cause a deterioration in water quality is discussed in Section 6.3 below.

No woodland occurs onsite and therefore the development site does not contain Alluvial Forests [91E0] and Oak Woodlands [91A0]. The nearest mapped example of this Alluvial forests within the SAC is approximately 7.9km (15km hydrologically upstream) to the northwest of the development site on the borders of River Slaney and the nearest mapped example of Oak Woodland within the SAC is located approximately 20.1km (34.3km hydrologically upstream) to the north of the development site. Alluvial Forests and Oak Woodlands would not be anticipated to be significantly affected by a potential deterioration in water quality.

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

It is not envisaged that protected species would be significantly affected by the proposed development due to noise generated by the proposed development or by noise generated from the associated site traffic, given the distances to the designated sites (2.4km to the northeast) and given that the development site is located within an urban context. While there would be increased noise emissions during the construction phase, these would not be considered to pose a significant risk owing to the transient nature of works and the distance to the nearest SAC/SPA. Fauna within the area would be accustomed to noises associated with residential, commercial and industrial activities, and with traffic.

The potential disturbance on protected habitats and species due to dust during the construction phase would not be considered significant, given the transient nature of construction works and the distance to the nearest SACs/SPAs. The presence of a hedgerows/treelines between the development site and the adjacent stream and drainage ditch would further reduce the potential for dust from the development site to reach these waterbodies.

It is not anticipated that there would be any significant effects on protected species as a result of light spill as lighting will be sensitive in design as to minimize any potential impact on nocturnal species.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not result in any significant risk to the protected habitats and species of the Slaney River Valley SAC or Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA due to habitat fragmentation or loss, disturbance or reduction in species density or diversity.

6.2 INVASIVE SPECIES

Under Regulation 49(2) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), save in accordance with a licence granted under paragraph (7), any person who plants, disperses, allows or causes to disperse, spreads or otherwise causes to grow in any place specified in relation to any plant which is included in Part 1 of the Third Schedule shall be guilty of an offence. Materials containing invasive species are considered “controlled waste”, and, as such, there are legal restrictions on their handling and disposal. Under Regulation 49(7) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, it is a legal requirement to obtain a license to move “vector materials” listed in the Third Schedule, Part 3.

Table 6: National Biodiversity Data Centre records of Third Schedule invasive species within 10km square (Hectad – T02) of the proposed development.

THIRD SCHEDULE INVASIVE FLORA	
Water Fern (<i>Azolla filiculoides</i>)	Common Cord-grass (<i>Spartina anglica</i>)
Giant Hogweed (<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>)	Giant-rhubarb (<i>Gunnera tinctoria</i>)
Hottentot-fig (<i>Carpobrotus edulis</i>)	Indian Balsam (<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>)
Japanese Knotweed (<i>Fallopia japonica</i>)	Rhododendron (<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>)
Sea-buckthorn (<i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>)	Three-cornered Garlic (<i>Allium triquetrum</i>)

The spread of invasive plant and animal species can negatively impact on the conservation objectives of certain Annex I/II habitats and species designated within the SACs/SPAs.

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

No Third scheduled invasive plant species were recorded onsite during the ecological assessment. Therefore, there would be no risk of invasive species being spread into protected sites as a result of the proposed development.

The risk of invasive species being introduced onto the site during the construction phase of the project is considered to be low, with no import of materials with the potential to contain invasive flora species. Any imported materials will be thoroughly checked and screened before being imported into the site.

The landscape plan by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds Land Planning & Design includes mostly native species and some ornamental non-native species. No third scheduled or High impact unscheduled invasive species have been proposed for planting. Therefore, there is no risk of third scheduled invasive species being introduced onto the site as a result of landscaping.

6.3 POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON WATER QUALITY

The proposed development is located within the Forth_Commons_SC_010 Sub-catchment (ID: 12_5) which is part of the Slaney & Wexford Harbour Catchment (ID: 12). The closest watercourse to the development site is the Killens stream (EPA Code: 12K10 – Order 1) which flows along the southwestern stretch of the site boundary. This stream flows into the Whitemill River which discharges into the Wexford Harbour. The Wexford Harbour at its closest to the development site forms part of the Slaney River Valley SAC.

There are no drainage ditches onsite. There is a drainage ditch outside of the red line boundary that runs along part of the east border of the site. This drainage ditch is culverted under the Whitemill Industrial Estate Road and it is likely connected to the Killens stream.

The development site will be hydrologically connected to the Wexford Harbour via the proposed waste water drainage network and is potentially hydrologically connected to the Killens stream/ Whitemill River (which discharges into the Wexford Harbour) via the existing and proposed surface water drainage infrastructure.

All the proposed buildings will be located at least 10m from the bank of the Killens stream. Therefore, the proposed development is compliant with Objective FRM18 of the Wexford County Development Plan "*To ensure riparian buffer zones, a minimum of 10 metres in width (in some cases buffer zones of up to 50 metres may be appropriate), are created between all watercourses and any future development. In considering the appropriate width, the Council will have regard to 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment (Inland Fisheries Ireland 2020)'*".

The proposed development site is not located within an area of fluvial or pluvial flooding. Additionally, it is highly unlikely that floodwaters would come in contact with any significant potentially hazardous or polluting substances onsite which could affect water quality. Therefore, the development site would not be anticipated to pose a significant risk upon a Natura 2000 site as a result of floodwaters.

During the operational phase, surface water comprised of rainwater runoff from roofs and hardcore areas will be directed to a new proposed drainage network that will include SuDS features such as raingardens, swales, bioretention features and detention basin. All car parking areas will be of permeable pavement, which will allow for enough microbial bio-degradation of any potential hydrocarbon spills within the sub-base material according to the Engineer's

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

calculations. Surface water collected by the proposed network of pipes will be attenuated and directed to the existing surface water drainage sewer at the site entrance. Therefore, any surface water reaching the existing surface water drainage infrastructure will be clean and attenuated.

Foul water from the proposed dwellings will be collected by a new proposed foul water drainage network which will connect to a mains sewer. It will ultimately be directed to the Wexford town Waste Water Treatment Plant, which currently has available capacity according to the Irish Water WWTP Capacity Register (accessed 7th August 2025). The Wexford town WWTP discharges treated water into the Slaney Estuary. According to the most recent Annual Environmental Report for this WWTP (2023), “*The WWTP discharge was compliant with the ELV’s set in the wastewater discharge licence*” and the “*ambient monitoring results meet the required EQS*”. A deterioration in water quality has been noted downstream of the WWTP but it is unclear whether or not it is caused by the WWTP. However, the Environmental report has determined that “*The discharge from the wastewater treatment plant does not have an observable negative impact on the Water Framework Directive status*”. No waste water will be discharged to groundwater onsite.

It is therefore considered that, due to the proposed surface and foul water drainage networks, the development would not pose a significant risk upon the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA due to a deleterious effect on surface or ground water quality during the operational phase of the development.

During the construction phase of projects, a deterioration in water quality can arise through the release of suspended solids during soil disturbance works, the release of uncured concrete and the release of hydrocarbons (fuels and oils). A potential deterioration in water quality has the potential to adversely affect the qualifying interests of the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA, particularly qualifying interests which have conservation objectives relating to water quality, such as protected species of fish.

No works will take place within 10m from the Killens stream. No walls will be built to the rear of the buildings in close proximity to the Killens stream, only timber fences will be used. Therefore, no direct effects on the Killens stream would be anticipated. There will be works taking place in close proximity to the drainage ditch to the east for the construction of a road close to the east boundary. The drainage ditch is likely connected to the Killens stream. There is a hedgerow between the place where works will take place and the drainage ditch which, if kept in place during construction works, would act as a physical barrier for any surface water runoff flowing towards the east. While works for building/reshaping the road would require minimal earth moving works, there is slight potential for sediments/hydrocarbons/pollutants associated with construction works to be washed down the existing drainage system via the existing road gullies. Surface water from the existing driveway is directed to an existing surface water drainage infrastructure which is likely connected to the Killens stream. The Killens stream is hydrologically connected to the Wexford Harbour. Water quality of the transitional water in Wexford Harbour is eutrophic and the transitional waterbody and coastal waterbodies are at risk of not attaining good WFD status.

Therefore, it is considered that there is potential for the development to cause water quality deterioration downstream during the construction phase. While the potential for impact is considered to be low, water quality mitigation measures will be put in place to further protect the nearby watercourses and the Wexford Harbour.

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

6.4 SCREENING CONCLUSIONS

In order for an effect to occur, there must be a pathway between the source and the receptor (the SAC/SPA). Where a pathway does not exist, an impact cannot occur.

The proposed development site has a potential hydrological connection to the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA via the Killens stream adjacent to the west boundary and the drainage ditch adjacent to part of the east boundary. As detailed above, it is considered that the proposed development would not result in any direct significant risk to the protected habitats and species of the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA due to habitat fragmentation or loss, disturbance, reduction in species density or species diversity.

No invasive species were present at the site and therefore the proposed development does not have the potential to impact the protected sites downstream due to spreading of invasive plants.

No impact is expected during the operational phase given the proposed surface and foul water drainage networks. However, given the proximity of the proposed works to a drainage ditch, and given the potential hydrological connection between the existing surface water drainage system along the road and the Wexford Harbour, there is slight potential for sedimentation/surface water deterioration to occur downstream of the development site during the construction phase.

The assessment has determined that during construction works, the proposed development could have slight potential to significantly affect the qualifying interests / special conservation interests of the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA due to a potential deterioration in water quality. Therefore, a Natura Impact Statement has been prepared.

7.0 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY ADVERSE EFFECTS: STAGE 2 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

Describe the significant effects, if any, on the relevant European site which have occurred, which are occurring, or which can reasonably be expected to occur as a result of the project or plan (alone or in combination).

The proposed development could potentially cause adverse effects upon the qualifying interests of the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA due to a potential deterioration in water quality during the construction phase.

During construction works, in general, there is potential for water quality deterioration through the release of suspended solids during soil disturbance works. Suspended solids could become entrained in surface water run-off and could affect aquatic qualifying interests / special conservation interests through deposition. Nutrients can be bound in suspended solids, therefore, a significant increase in suspended solids can result in excessive eutrophication, leading to the deoxygenation of waters and subsequent asphyxia of aquatic species. An increase in sediments has the potential to impact upon fish species by damaging gravel beds required for spawning, smothering fish eggs and in extreme cases, by interfering with the gills of fish. An increase in suspended solids also has the potential to reduce water clarity, which can impact

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

the light penetration of water and may also affect certain behaviours of aquatic fauna such as foraging success.

Runoff entering a watercourse has the potential to cause an impact on water quality and lead to eutrophication. A potential source of chemical contamination would be from the release of hydrocarbons (oils, fuels) from construction plant, equipment. Hydrocarbons can affect water quality, potentially resulting in toxic conditions for aquatic flora and fauna. Oil films on the water surface can disrupt oxygen diffusion from the atmosphere, resulting in de-oxygen of waters.

Another potential source of contamination would be the release of uncured concrete. In the event of uncured concrete entering a waterbody, the pH would be altered locally, potentially leading to the death of aquatic flora and fauna and an alteration to the waterbody substrate.

The Slaney Estuary is located approximately 3.5km hydrologically downstream and it is likely to contain protected aquatic species for which the SAC/SPA have been designated. A potential deterioration in water quality during the construction works of the proposed development could directly affect freshwater species that require clean waters such as Salmon, Twaite Shad and Lamprey, and indirectly affect other species such as Otter, Freshwater Pearl Mussel and wetland/coastal birds due to a reduction in prey/host availability. Therefore, mitigation measures have been included to minimise adverse effects on water quality as a result of the proposed development.

The tables below briefly outline the occurrence of the qualifying interests of the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA in relation to the proposed development site, taking cognisance of the NPWS “*Conservation Objectives: Slaney River Valley SAC 000781*” and “*Conservation Objectives: Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA 004076*”, in addition to Volumes 1, 2 and 3 of the 2019 NPWS Reports, “*The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland*”. The following tables also outline which of the qualifying interests and special conservation interests may be impacted upon by a potential deterioration in water quality from the proposed development.

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT
 SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

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TABLE 7.1 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
QUALIFYING INTEREST	LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE	POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT
[1130] Estuaries	The proposed development is located within the current known distribution, current range and favourable reference range of these qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019b). The nearest examples of these qualifying interests are located approximately 2.4km (3.5km hydrological distance) northeast of the development site (NPWS, 2011). A potential deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	Yes
[1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats	The proposed development is located within the current known distribution, current range and favourable reference range of these qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019b). The nearest examples of these qualifying interests are located approximately 2.4km (3.5km hydrological distance) northeast of the development site (NPWS, 2011). A potential deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	Yes
[1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>)	The proposed development is located within the current known distribution, current range and favourable reference range of these qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019b). While this habitat is currently unmapped in the Conservation Objectives document of the SAC, it is likely to be present along the borders of the Slaney Estuary. The Slaney Estuary is 2.4km (3.5km hydrological distance) northeast of the development site. Water quality is not listed as a conservation objective for this qualifying interest. Therefore, a potential deterioration in water quality would not be anticipated to significantly affect this qualifying interest.	No
[1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)	The proposed development is located within the current known distribution, current range and favourable reference range of these qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019b). While this habitat is currently unmapped in the Conservation Objectives document of the SAC, NBDC shows records of this habitat it is likely to be present along the borders of the Slaney Estuary. The Slaney Estuary is 2.4km (3.5km hydrological distance) northeast of the development site. Water quality is not listed as a conservation objective for this qualifying interest. Therefore, a potential deterioration in water quality would not be anticipated to significantly affect this qualifying interest.	No
[3260] Floating River Vegetation	The development is located within the current known distribution and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019a). This habitat is currently mapped in the Conservation Objectives document, but it is noted that its full distribution of this habitat and its sub-types in this site is currently unknown. The nearest mapped example of this habitat within the SAC is located approximately 9.3km (17.6km hydrologically upstream) to the northwest. It is likely that the rare species associated with the tidal sub-type are tolerant to some nutrient enrichment, but may be	Yes

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026

TABLE 7.1 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
QUALIFYING INTEREST	LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE	POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT
	sensitive to severe enrichment (Preston, 2003). Some species require marginal fine muds. A potential deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[91A0] Old Oak Woodlands	The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution, current range and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019b). According to the SAC Conservation Objectives report, old oak woodlands are only located upstream of the development site approximately 20.1km (34.3km hydrologically upstream) to the north of the development site. However, the report notes that further unsurveyed areas may be present within the SAC. Old oak woodlands are a terrestrial habitat, therefore a potential deterioration in water quality during construction works would not be anticipated to adversely affect this qualifying interest.	No
[91E0] Alluvial Forests*	The proposed development is located within the current known distribution, current range and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019b). According to the SAC Conservation Objectives report, all the examples of Alluvial Forests are upstream of the development site, being the nearest located approximately 7.9km (15km hydrologically upstream) to the northwest. However, the report notes that further unsurveyed areas may be present within the SAC. A potential deterioration in water quality would not be anticipated to adversely affect this qualifying interest.	No
[1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>)	The development is located outside the current known distribution, current range and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019a). The SAC Conservation Objectives report notes that the status of the pearl mussel as a qualifying interest for the site is currently under review. There are no NBDC records for pearl mussel within the vicinity of the development site. Low numbers of adult pearl mussels have been found in the Derry River downstream of Clonegal and in the River Slaney main channel downstream of the Derry River confluence (Moorkens, 2000), which is located a considerable distance upstream of the development site. Freshwater Pearl Mussel are sensitive to sedimentation and nutrient enrichment. Furthermore, as the larval stages rely on salmonid fish hosts, any potential impact on salmonids can adversely affect Freshwater Pearl Mussel.	Yes
[1095] Sea Lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>)	The development site is located outside the current known distribution but within the current range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019b). The SAC Conservation Objectives report notes that upstream migration may be inhibited by artificial barriers such as weirs (NPWS, 2011). King & Linnane (2004) recorded sea lamprey approximately 19km to the northwest (over 20km hydrologically upstream) of the development site. A potential deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this species.	Yes

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026

TABLE 7.1 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
QUALIFYING INTEREST	LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE	POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT
[1096] Brook Lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>)	The development is located outside the current known distribution and current range of these qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019a). Lamprey surveys have necessarily focused on juvenile lampreys. Consequently, the vast majority of available data relates to “ <i>Lampetra</i> sp.” and cannot be assigned to one species or the other. The SAC Conservation Objectives report notes that upstream migration may be inhibited by artificial barriers such as Clohamon weir, located upstream of the development site. King & Linnane (2004) recorded river/ brook lamprey approximately 19km to the northwest (over 20km hydrologically upstream) of the development site. Juvenile brook / river lamprey were recorded in 33 out of 34 sites surveyed in the main Slaney channel and were recorded in 9 out of 12 sites surveyed in the River Derry. A potential deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this species.	Yes
[1099] River Lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>)	The development is located outside the current known distribution but within the current range of these qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019a). Lamprey surveys have necessarily focussed on juvenile lamprey. Consequently, the vast majority of available data relates to “ <i>Lampetra</i> sp.” and cannot be assigned to one species or the other. The SAC Conservation Objectives report notes that upstream migration may be inhibited by artificial barriers, such as Clohamon weir, located upstream of the development site. King & Linnane (2004) recorded river/ brook lamprey approximately 19km to the northwest (over 20km hydrologically upstream) of the development site. Juvenile brook / river lamprey were recorded in 33 out of 34 sites surveyed in the main Slaney channel and were recorded in 9 out of 12 sites surveyed in the River Derry. A substantial population of adult river lamprey was encountered in the Slaney estuary in autumn surveys (King and Linnane, 2004). A potential deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this species.	Yes
[1103] Twaite Shad (<i>Alosa fallax</i>)	The development site is located outside the current known distribution and favourable reference range, but within the current range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019b). The SAC Conservation Objectives report notes that upstream migration may be inhibited by artificial barriers, such as Clohamon weir, located upstream of the development site (NPWS, 2011). Twaite shad occur in the tidal stretches of the Slaney, which are located approximately 2.4km (3.5km hydrologically downstream) of the development site. Shad is likely to be overfished in coastal waters (King and Linnane, 2004). A potential deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this species.	Yes
[1106] Atlantic Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>)	The development is located within the current known distribution, current range and favourable reference range of these qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019a). Salmon are present throughout the Slaney	Yes

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026

TABLE 7.1 SLANEY RIVER VALLEY SAC POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
QUALIFYING INTEREST	LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE	POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT
	catchment, and the River Slaney is designated as a Salmonid Water EC (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations (S.I. no. 293 of 1988). The nearest examples of these qualifying interests are located approximately 17.2km to the northwest (over 15km upstream) of the development site on the Boro River (Holmes et. Al, 2023). The conservation status of salmon in the River Slaney and its tributaries is dependent on good water quality status, as this species requires clean water (Q4) for spawning and early life stages. Salmon, particularly juveniles and spawning beds, are sensitive to sedimentation and water pollution.	
[1355] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)	The development is located within the current known distribution, current range and favourable reference range of these qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019a). Otter is widespread in the Slaney River Valley SAC and Slaney catchment (NPWS, 2011). NBDC has no records of Otter on the Killens stream or on the Whitemill stream. The nearest NBDC record of Otter is 636m (11.8km hydrologically upstream) northwest of the development site near the Newbay stream (Harm Deenen, Mammals of Ireland 2016-2025). A potential deterioration in water quality could indirectly impact upon this qualifying interest by causing a reduction in prey populations and availability.	Yes
[1365] Common (Harbour) Seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>)	The development site is located outside the current known distribution but within the current range and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019a). There is suitable habitat for this species within the Lower Slaney Estuary approximately 2.4km (3.5km hydrologically downstream). However, the mapped breeding, moulting and resting Harbour Seal habitats within the SAC are located over 5.5km (6.5km hydrologically downstream) to the southeast of the development site. A potential deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this species.	Yes

TABLE 7.2 WEXFORD HARBOUR AND SLOBS SPA POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
QUALIFYING INTEREST	LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE	POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT*
[A004] Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>)	Feeds on a range of invertebrates (particularly insect larvae), small fish and molluscs. Wintering habitats include ephemeral wetlands and are often encountered on sheltered coasts, estuaries and coastal	Yes

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026

TABLE 7.2 WEXFORD HARBOUR AND SLOBS SPA POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
QUALIFYING INTEREST	LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE	POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT*
	lakes and lagoons. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A005] Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>)	Feeds on fish, supplemented with aquatic invertebrates. Wintering habitats on coastal areas. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A017] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)	Wintering species found in marine environments it occurs in sheltered coastal areas on estuaries, salt pans, coastal lagoons and coastal bays generally avoiding deep water and rarely extending far offshore. Feeds on fish as well as crustaceans, amphibians and molluscs. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A028] Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>)	Wintering species favours a variety of habitats. When on the coast the species also frequents, saltmarshes, estuaries, tidal mudflats, muddy / sandy shores, and sand-spits. Varied diet consists predominantly of fish and eels, as well as amphibians, crabs, molluscs, crustaceans, aquatic insects, small rodents, small birds and plant matter. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A037] Bewick's Swan (<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>)	Wintering species favours low-lying wet pasture, lakes, ponds and stubble. Of conservation concern. Diet includes plant material such as tubers, shoots and leaves and they forage in water or flooded pasture. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A038] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>)	Wintering species favours lakes, estuaries and sheltered coasts, marshes, flooded lands, brackish lagoons and coastal bays. Diet includes plant material such as leaves, stems and roots of aquatic plants, grasses, sedges and horsetails. May also supplement their diet with marine and freshwater mussels. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest..	
[A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)	Wintering species mostly found on coastal estuaries. During the winter, it feeds mostly on eel-grass, which grows on muddy estuaries, and also on grasslands, usually when coastal supplies have been depleted at estuarine sites. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A048] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>)	Wintering species frequents mudflats and muddy or sandy estuaries in coastal regions. Its diet consists predominantly of salt-water molluscs, aquatic invertebrates, small fish, fish spawn and plant material. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A050] Wigeon (<i>Anas Penelope</i>)	Wintering species shows a preference for coastal saltmarshes, freshwater, brackish and saline lagoons, flooded grasslands, estuaries, intertidal mudflats and other sheltered marine habitats. Its diet is leaves,	

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026

TABLE 7.2 WEXFORD HARBOUR AND SLOBS SPA POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
QUALIFYING INTEREST	LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE	POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT*
	seeds, stems and root bulbs of pond weeds and fine grasses. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A052] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)	Wintering species along the coast on saline or brackish lagoons with abundant submergent vegetation, saltmarshes, tidal creeks, intertidal mudflats, river deltas, estuarine waters and sheltered coastal bays with a preference for marshes with mud flats. Its diet is seeds of aquatic plants, grasses, sedges and agricultural grain. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A053] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	Wintering species occurs in almost every wetland type with the exception of some habitats such as sand dunes. Its diet is omnivorous and opportunistic such as insects, molluscs, crustaceans, worms and occasionally amphibians and fish. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A054] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>)	Wintering species occurs in large inland lakes, brackish coastal lagoons, brackish and saline marshes, shallow fresh or brackish estuaries, tidal flats and river deltas with adjacent agricultural land. Its diet is omnivorous and opportunistic, consisting of algae, seeds, tubers, and the vegetative parts of aquatic plants, sedges and grasses, as well as aquatic invertebrates, amphibians and small fish. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A062] Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>)	Wintering species on shallow coastal waters less than 10 m deep, as well as sheltered bays, estuaries and brackish coastal lagoons. Its diet is omnivorous and predominantly of molluscs. Other food sources include insects, aquatic insect larvae, crustaceans such as amphipods, worms, small fish, and the roots, seeds and vegetative parts of aquatic plants such as sedges and water. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A067] Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>)	Population size 126. Wintering species on inshore waters, shallow bays, estuaries and coastal lagoons. Its diet is predominantly of aquatic invertebrates such as molluscs, worms, crustaceans, aquatic insects and insect larvae (e.g. dragonflies, damsel flies and may flies) as well as amphibians, small fish and some plant material (mainly in the autumn) such as seeds, roots and the vegetative parts of aquatic plants. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A069] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>)	Wintering species at sea, frequenting both inshore and offshore waters, estuaries, bays and brackish lagoons. Its diet consists predominantly of small, shoaling marine or freshwater fish, as well as small amounts of plant material and aquatic invertebrates such as crustaceans (e.g. shrimps and crayfish),	

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026

TABLE 7.2 WEXFORD HARBOUR AND SLOBS SPA POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
QUALIFYING INTEREST	LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE	POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT*
	worms and insects. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A082] Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>)	Post-breeding/roost species that has declined due to the loss of quality moorland habitat. Its diet consists small ground nesting birds and mammals. A potential deterioration in water quality could adversely affect the preys, thus indirectly affecting these birds.	
[A125] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>)	Wintering species, habitats include eutrophic and mesotrophic lakes, pools, ponds, reservoirs, barrages, gravel-pits, canals, drainage ditches, dykes, oxbow lakes, fish ponds, creeks, rivers and river deltas, as well as open marshes, freshwater meadows, flood-lands, freshwater and saline lagoons, salt-pans, clay-pans and sewage ponds. Its diet is omnivorous with algae the vegetative parts of aquatic and terrestrial plants (e.g. waterweeds, bulrushes, reeds and grasses), the seeds of waterweeds, sedges, water-lilies, grasses and cereal crops, clubmoss <i>Selaginella</i> and aquatic fungi. Its diet includes molluscs, adult and larval insects (especially flies, caddisflies, Odonata, Lepidoptera, beetles and bugs), worms, leeches, shrimps, spiders, small fish, fish eggs, frogs, birds and bird eggs, and small mammals. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A130] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)	Wintering species on estuarine mudflats, saltmarshes and sandy and rocky shores. Its diet consists of bivalves and gastropods are the most important food items for this species. Polychaetes and crustaceans are more important in estuaries and molluscs (e.g. mussels, limpets and whelks) are most important on rocky shores. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A140] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)	Wintering species frequents freshwater wetlands, moist grasslands, pastures, agricultural land and highland steppe also foraging on tidal shores, coastal rocky outcrops, intertidal flats and saltmarshes, shallow bays and estuaries. Its diet consists predominantly of insects, crustaceans and some plant material. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A141] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)	Wintering species frequents intertidal mudflats, saltmarshes, sandflats and beaches of oceanic coastlines, bays and estuaries. Its diet consists predominantly of marine polychaete worms, molluscs and crustaceans. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A142] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>)	Wintering species found on riverbanks, lake shores, fresh and saline marshes, drainage ditches, estuaries and mudflats. Its diet consists of adult and larval insects, spiders, snails, earthworms, frogs. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026

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QUALIFYING INTEREST	LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE	POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT*
[A143] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)	Wintering species found at coastal, frequenting tidal mudflats or sandflats, sandy beaches of sheltered coasts, rocky shelves, bays, lagoons and harbours, occasionally also oceanic beaches and saltmarshes. Its diet consists of intertidal invertebrates such as bivalve and gastropod molluscs, crustaceans, annelid worms and insects. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A144] Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>)	Wintering species inhabiting open sandy beaches exposed to the sea, the outer reaches of estuaries, rocky and muddy shores, mudflats. Its diet consists of small molluscs, crustaceans, polychaete worms and adult, larval and pupal insects, as well as occasionally fish and carrion. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A149] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)	Wintering species mainly prefer estuarine mudflats, but also frequent a wide variety of freshwater and brackish wetlands both coastal and inland, including lagoons, muddy freshwater shores, tidal rivers and sandy coasts. Its diet is consuming mostly polychaete worms and small gastropods, as well as insects, crustaceans, bivalves, plant matter and occasionally small fish. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A156] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>)	Wintering species in sheltered estuaries and lagoons with large intertidal mudflats, sandy beaches, saltmarshes and salt-flats. Its diet consists of adult and larval insects (especially beetles), annelid and polychaete worms, molluscs, ragworms, crustaceans, spiders, fish eggs, and the spawn and tadpoles of frogs. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)	Wintering species it is more common in intertidal areas along muddy coastlines, estuaries, inlets. Its diet consists in intertidal areas of annelids (e.g. <i>Nereis spp.</i> and <i>Arenicola spp.</i>), bivalves and crustaceans, although it will also take crane fly larvae and earthworms on grasslands and occasionally larval amphibians (tadpoles) and small fish. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A160] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>)	Wintering species frequents muddy coasts, bays and estuaries, tidal mudflats and sandflats, rocky and sandy beaches with many pools, saltmarshes, coastal meadows and pasture and muddy shores of coastal lagoons, inland lakes and rivers. It also utilises wet grassland and arable fields during migration. Its diet consists chiefly of annelid worms and terrestrial insects especially during the summer, although it will also take crustaceans, molluscs, polychaete worms, spiders, berries and seeds, as well as occasionally small fish, amphibians, lizards, young birds and small rodents. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026

TABLE 7.2 WEXFORD HARBOUR AND SLOBS SPA POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
QUALIFYING INTEREST	LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE	POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT*
[A162] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)	Wintering species is largely coastal occupying rocky, muddy and sandy beaches, saltmarshes, tidal mudflats, saline and freshwater coastal lagoons, tidal estuaries. Its diet consists insects, spiders and annelid worms, as well as molluscs, crustaceans (especially amphipods e.g. <i>Corophium spp.</i>) and occasionally small fish and tadpoles. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A179] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)	Wintering species is most common in coastal habitats and tidal inshore waters, showing a preference for inlets or estuaries with sandy or muddy beaches, and generally avoiding rocky or exposed coastlines. It may also occur inland during this season, frequenting ploughed fields, moist grasslands, urban parks, sewage farms, refuse tips, reservoirs, ponds and ornamental waters. Its diet consists predominantly of aquatic and terrestrial insects, earthworms and marine invertebrates (e.g. molluscs, crustaceans and marine worms) although it may also take fish (usually dead or sick), rodents, and agricultural grain. During the non-breeding season, the species may rely heavily on artificial food sources provided by man, especially in Western Europe and often scavenges from refuse tips during this period. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A183] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>)	Wintering species, largely coastal, occupying rocky, muddy and sandy beaches, saltmarshes, tidal mudflats, saline and freshwater coastal lagoons, tidal estuaries. Its diet consists of insects, spiders and annelid worms as well as molluscs, crustaceans (especially amphipods) and occasionally small fish and tadpoles. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A195] Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>)	Breeding species where the nest is a bare scrape positioned on the ground in less than 15 % vegetation cover on beaches of sand, pebbles, shingle, shell fragments, coral fragments or rock above the high tideline and often only a few metres away from shallow clear water. Alternatively, in more marshy habitats (e.g. coastal saltmarshes), the species may build a nest of shells or vegetation. The species nests in small loose colonies, with neighbouring nests usually placed more than 2 m apart. Little tern nest in well-camouflaged shallow scapes on sand and shingle beaches, spits or inshore islets (Mitchell et al., 2004). Due to the dynamic nature of Wexford Harbour, colony locations can vary from year to year. Its diet consists predominantly of juvenile, fish; invertebrates, especially crustaceans and insects. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	
[A395] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>)	Wintering species that roosts on tidal marshes, in sheltered bays or in estuaries. Its diet is herbivorous consisting of the roots, leaves, stems, seeds and fruits of terrestrial plants such as herbs, grasses and sedges. A significant deterioration in water quality could adversely affect this qualifying interest.	

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA Conservation Objectives

The relevant site-specific conservation objectives for the qualifying interests which have been identified as being potentially affected by the proposed development are outlined below.

Floating River Vegetation

The concentration of suspended solids in the water column should be sufficiently low to prevent excessive deposition of fine sediments. Concentration of nutrients in the water column should be sufficiently low to prevent changes in species composition or habitat condition.

Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*)

The status of this species as a qualifying species for this site is currently under review and no conservation objectives are available. A potential deterioration in water quality may still adversely affect this species.

Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*)

No water quality objectives have been set for this species. However, a potential deterioration in water quality could adversely affect Sea Lamprey.

Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*) and River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*)

No water quality objectives have been set for this species. However, a potential deterioration in water quality could adversely affect Brook/River Lamprey.

Twaiite Shad (*Alosa fallax*)

Oxygen levels in the water no lower than 5mg/l

Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*)

Water quality (EPA Q value): At least Q4 at all sites sampled by EPA

Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

Fish biomass available: A potential deterioration in water quality may affect fish populations and availability.

Harbour Seal (*Phoca vitulina*)

Fish biomass available: A potential deterioration in water quality may affect fish populations and availability.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*)

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Teal (*Anas crecca*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Scaup (*Aythya marila*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

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NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*)

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

Wetland and Waterbirds

A potential deterioration in water quality may affect the diet of this species.

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8.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

This assessment has determined that the proposed development has the potential to impact upon the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA due to a potential spread of invasive species. Mitigation measures regarding water quality were also included for prevention.

As discussed in Section 7.0, it is considered that the proposed development has the potential to cause adverse effects upon the following qualifying interests of the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA:

- [3260] Floating River Vegetation
- [1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel
- [1095] Sea Lamprey
- [1365] Harbour Seal
- [A004] Little Grebe
- [A005] Great Crested Grebe
- [A017] Cormorant
- [A028] Grey Heron
- [A037] Bewick's Swan
- [A038] Whooper Swan
- [A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose
- [A048] Shelduck
- [A050] Wigeon
- [A052] Teal
- [A053] Mallard
- [A054] Pintail
- [A183] Lesser Black-backed Gull
- [A195] Little Tern
- [A395] Greenland White-fronted Goose
- [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds
- [1096] Brook Lamprey
- [1099] River Lamprey
- [1106] Atlantic Salmon
- [1355] Otter
- [A062] Scaup
- [A067] Goldeneye
- [A069] Red-breasted Merganser
- [A082] Hen Harrier
- [A125] Coot
- [A130] Oystercatcher
- [A140] Golden Plover
- [A141] Grey Plover
- [A142] Lapwing
- [A143] Knot
- [A144] Sanderling
- [A149] Dunlin
- [A156] Black-tailed Godwit
- [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit
- [A160] Curlew
- [A162] Redshank
- [A179] Black-headed Gull

8.1 General Measures

- Training of relevant personnel on monitoring and mitigation measure requirements;
- Daily visual inspection of proposed development/construction works will be completed and signed by suitably trained staff member;
- Record of all visual inspections to be kept on file and available for review by relevant authorities;
- Should a protected fauna species such as Otter (*Lutra lutra*) or Badger (*Meles meles*) be found during the construction phase of the project, an officer of the NPWS would be notified prior to the resumption of construction works.

8.2. Water Quality

The proposed development will require works in close proximity (approximately 2m) to the drainage ditch that borders the site to the east. The standard water quality measures that will be employed to ensure that there would be no adverse effect to the listed habitats or species of the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA due to a potential deterioration in water quality are listed below:

- The construction works contractor will adhere to standard construction best practice, taking cognisance of the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) guidelines “*Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites; guidance for consultants and contractors*” 2001 and “*Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites – Guide to Good Practice*”, 2002;
- A buffer zone of $\geq 10\text{m}$ from the Killens stream where no construction works take place will be kept where possible (in line with the best practice guidelines by Inland Fisheries Ireland and with Objective FRM18 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-20280);
- Construction works will be planned to minimise machinery access and movement along the borders of the drainage ditch to the east and to the Killens stream;
- The existing vegetation between the proposed road and the drainage ditch to the east will be retained during the construction works to act as a physical barrier for surface water runoff;
- Road gullies will be covered with silt mats prior to works commencing and will remain in place until works have ceased;
- Silt fencing or sand bags will be placed along the near side of the hedgerow that borders the site to the east in any potential area where debris or sediment could enter the drainage ditch to the east (See Appendix D for Silt Fencing Specifications). Silt fencing will remain in place and maintained as appropriate until the completion of construction works;
- Stockpiling of loose materials will be a minimum of 20m from drains and watercourses;
- Fuel, oil and chemical storage will be sited within a bunded area, which will be at least 50m away from drains, excavations and other locations where it may cause pollution;
- Excavations and earth-moving activities will be planned outside periods of heavy rainfall, to limit the potential for suspended solids to become entrained within surface water run-off;
- Only clear vegetation when works are required to prevent leaving exposed ground for long periods of time;
- Infilling works for ground levelling will be planned during dry weather conditions;
- Re-seeding of exposed areas should be undertaken as soon as possible to stabilise the soil and prevent runoff;
- Regular visual inspections will be undertaken of the site access road to ensure no silt-laden surface water runoff leaves the site, with the potential to either join with any adjacent surface water drainage systems within the vicinity or travel to along the road network;

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

- Where spoil is generated, this will only be stored temporarily. A designated spoil area will be established by the construction works contractor within the site footprint. This will be located away from any watercourse or any drainage ditch;
- Where possible, spoil will be covered or alternatively, graded to avoid ponding or water saturation;
- Should water be encountered during excavation works, water will be pumped to a silt control feature, such as a lagoon/infiltration area used for settlement;
- This lagoon/infiltration area must have adequate capacity and water must be filtered before discharging. Water must not be directly discharged to a drainage ditch or to the Killens stream;
- The lagoon/infiltration area will be located away from any steep sloping ground;
- Pumping operations will be supervised at all times;
- All construction plant machinery and equipment will be maintained in good working order and regularly inspected;
- The construction works contractor will ensure the relevant site personnel are trained in spillage control;
- Where construction plant shows signs of hydrocarbon leakage, site personnel will cease the operation of the item in plant in question. Any defective plant will be kept out of service until the necessary repairs are undertaken;
- A designated area for the storage of hydrocarbons will be established by the construction works contractor and inspected on a regular basis;
- Spill kits, adequately stocked with spill clean-up materials such as booms and absorbent pads, will be readily available onsite;
- Any fuels, oils or chemicals will be stored in accordance with the EPA guidance on the storage of materials, in designated bunded areas at the temporary site compound, with adequate bund provision to contain 110% of the largest drum volume or 25% of the total volume of containers;
- Material storage areas will be appropriately labelled and marked;
- In the unlikely event of a suspected deterioration in water quality within the Killens stream, the Whitemill stream or the Wexford Harbour due to construction works at the development site, works will immediately cease, an investigation into the cause undertaken and the relevant NPWS and Inland Fisheries Ireland personnel informed;
- If weed control is required then herbicide application should only be carried out by suitably qualified contractors or operators with strict reference to the product label, local land use, health and safety considerations and any pertinent regulations. All herbicide treatment must comply with the pesticide regulations S.I. No. 155/2012 - European Communities (Sustainable Use of Pesticides) Regulations 2012 or any amended or current regulations at the time of use.

Reference documents:

- *Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites; guidance for consultants and contractors* 2001;

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

- Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) guidelines “Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites; guidance for consultants and contractors” 2001
- Guidelines for the treatment of Otters prior to the construction of national road schemes, (National Roads Authority, 2008)

It is therefore considered that due to the nature of the proposed works, the distance between the proposed dwellings and the nearby waterbodies, the presence of vegetated area between the proposed works and the nearby waterbodies, and with the implementation of the measures listed above, there would be no adverse effect to water quality and the protected habitats and species of the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA during the construction phase of the proposed development.

9.0 IN COMBINATION EFFECTS

- Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028;
- Wexford Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028 (Socio-Economic Statement);
- Proposed and permitted developments in the area available on Wexford County Council planning system.

The proposed development is located in the west outskirts of Wexford town, approximately 2.5km from the village centre. Wexford town is the key town of county Wexford. The proposed development will be accessed via the existing vehicular access off the Whitemill Industrial Estate Road. The N11/N25 national roads are located approximately 1km to the west of the site via the local road network, providing link to Enniscorthy to the north and Rosslare Harbour to the southeast. The Recent planning applications granted within the vicinity are shown in the table below.

Table 9: Recent planning applications close to the development site.

Application No.	Development Type	Outcome	Approximate Distance
20210784	Permission for the amendment to the previously approved 3 storey apartment block - under planning application reference 20180014 - to include an additional caretaker's office with bedroom and bathroom, the provision of a lift, the relocation of the block on site and the reduction from 4 to 3 parking bays together with all associated site works on site at 57-59 Cluain Beag, Clonard Road.	Granted-Conditional	Adjacent
20210838	Permission for A) a covered external store (Circ. 100m ²) for plant hire storage, B) alterations to North East and South East site boundary types from that previously granted (planning ref. 20200750) and all associated site works, all on the grounds of a proposed merchant warehouse (planning ref. 20200750) at Clonard Little.	Granted - Conditional	58m SE
20150742	Permission for the construction of a single storey extension to the rear, side and front of house for ancillary accommodation (granny flat) at no 1 kencar court, Clonard Road, Town Parks , Wexford	Granted - Conditional	143m N

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

Application No.	Development Type	Outcome	Approximate Distance
20171129	Permission for the construction of a dwelling house & a domestic garage at Clonard Road	Granted Conditional	212m N
20151010	permission to demolish an existing disused production building and related structures and to extend and retain an existing mesh panel perimeter fence, all at its site in the whitemill industrial estate, wexford	Granted - Conditional	224m E
20231258	Permission for retention and permission for the following development comprising of: The relocation (& part demolishing) of the existing ESB sub-station, the construction of a storage area (approx. 150sqm) not greater than 10m high, the demolition and replacement of existing plant room and storage space with additional multipurpose production space. Planning permission for the retention of : Loading bay extension (87sqm), plant room extension (24sqm), relocated access stairs (20sqm), and temporary storage containers (108sqm). And the modifications to the existing car parking layout together with associated site works.	Granted - Conditional	290m SE
20220792	Permission for (a) the proposed erection of 11 no. light industrial units on site together with (b) new boundary wall to northern boundary of site with a new vehicular and pedestrian entrance gates and (c) all associated site works and ancillary services on site	Granted - Conditional	311m SE
20221652	A 10 year permission for a Large-scale Residential Development (LRD) with a gross application site area of c. 5.67 ha, (developable area of c. 4.31 ha), on lands at Clonard Little, Wexford Town. The proposed development will include construction of a new link road between Clonard village at the south of the application site and Clonard Road at the north including cycle lanes, bus stop and the erection of 167 no. residential units and ancillary facilities comprising: 28 no. single bedroom maisonettes, 10 no. two-bedroom two-storey houses, 75 no. three-bedroom two storey houses, 18 no. four-bedroom two-storey houses, 8 no. four-bedroom three-storey houses, 28 no. apartments in two separate blocks; Block 1 comprising 16 no. apartments in 4 storeys with 5 no. one-bedroom and 11 no. two-bedroom apartments; Block 2 comprising 12 no. apartments in 3 storeys with 4 no. one-bedroom and 8 no. two-bedroom apartments. A 292sq.m Creche (40 Child Spaces) with ancillary outdoor play area. A total of 289 residential car parking spaces are proposed with 18 dedicated for use by the creche, 9 cycle spaces. Realignment of boundary wall, provision of a pedestrian footpath and left turning lane at Clonard Road North. The proposed development includes provision of private, communal, and public open space; internal roads and pathways; pedestrian access points; hard and soft landscaping; boundary treatments; refuse storage, two no. ESB substations; public lighting; and all associated ancillary site development and drainage works. The application is accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).	Granted - Conditional	355m SW
20180241	Permission for construction of 46 no. fully serviced dwelling houses including all associated and ancillary site development works	Granted - Conditional	467m SW

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

Most of the recent planning applications in the vicinity of the development site are associated with residential dwellings and industrial units, and the majority of these have been granted permission.

9.1 Habitat Loss / Fragmentation

The proposed development does not directly impinge on any part of a European site, and as such would not be expected to impact upon a protected site through destruction of habitat, fragmentation of habitat, disturbance of habitat or direct reduction in species density. No protected habitats associated with the Slaney River Valley SAC were recorded onsite. Therefore, it is not expected that the proposed development would have any direct in-situ effects upon a protected site through loss or destruction of habitat or fragmentation of habitat. The development site is mostly comprised of common habitats that are abundant in the general area and throughout the country. The hedgerows to the west of the existing driveway are relatively disconnected between them and from the wider landscape, and its removal would not be considered significant. The treeline that borders part of the site to the east will be retained. The treeline to be removed is of higher ecological value. However, it only occupies a small area and it contains a good proportion of non-native species. Additionally, an abundance of native trees will be planted as part of the landscape plan, which will enhance biodiversity in the area.

The existing habitats onsite are unlikely to be of ecological importance to the protected species of the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour SPA.

The surrounding land-use of the proposed development site is mainly residential and commercial/industrial, which can be considered modified and of lower biodiversity value. Developments were identified on the Wexford County Councils planning site within the vicinity of the applicants proposed site are mostly residential or industrial, and most of these have been granted permission. Should future planning applications be submitted for the area, it is likely that they would also be located within areas of low ecological value designated for residential/industrial purposes. Therefore, it is unlikely that future proposed developments would result in the loss or fragmentation of designated habitats of the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA. Therefore, no in-combination effects on habitat loss / fragmentation are anticipated.

9.2. Disturbance to Species

Disturbance to species may arise through noise emissions and human activity. The main in-combination noise and human activity effects would be from any residential, commercial and vehicular activities within the area. However, fauna within the SAC/SPA and the general area around the proposed development site would be accustomed to noise associated with urban settlements, and agricultural activities. It is considered that there will be no additional cumulative noise impacts, or other disturbance effects due to human activity which would pose an adverse effect to designated sites or species.

A small treeline and will be removed to facilitate the proposed development. Any tree removal works would not be undertaken during the bird nesting season (1st of March - 31st of August). Should tree removal works be required during the bird nesting season, the sections would be inspected for the presence of breeding birds by a qualified ecologist prior to any clearance

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

works taking place. Where nests are identified, the ecologist would determine if a licence from the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) is required, or if it is possible to establish a suitable buffer zone around the active nest, with removal works rescheduled until chicks have fledged. Additionally, the number of trees onsite will be increased by the proposed development as per the landscape plan. Therefore it is considered that any disturbance to fauna due to tree removal would be temporary until the planting schedule becomes established.

Owing to the surrounding residential/commercial land use and busy road network, it is considered that the proposed development will not significantly increase cumulative noise impacts, or other disturbance effects due to human activity, which would pose an adverse risk to designated sites or species and habitats within the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA.

9.3 Air Quality

The proposed heating system for this development is air to water heat pumps. Air emissions would be typical of a residential being primarily from heating and therefore low impact in-and-of-itself. Any potential in-combination residential impacts would be controlled by national energy policies, grant schemes and motor fuel emission targets. Therefore it is considered that there would be no cumulative air quality impacts which would pose an adverse effect to designated sites.

9.4 Deterioration in Water Quality

Continued implementation of the Water Framework Directive would result in achieving, or maintaining, improvements to water quality in the Slaney & Wexford Harbour Catchment. Developments such as this proposed development could act in combination with existing environmental pressures on the Slaney & Wexford Harbour Catchment, including agriculture, anthropogenic, domestic and urban wastewater, urban run-off, industry and forestry.

As noted in Section 6.3, it is not considered that the development would pose a significant risk upon any Natura 2000 site due to a deleterious effect on water quality, during the operational phase. Surface water will be clean and attenuated prior to discharging to the existing surface water drainage infrastructure. Foul water from the proposed development will ultimately be directed to the Wexford town WWTP (D0030), which does not have an observable negative impact on the Water Framework Directive status according to the most recent environmental assessment.

Regarding the construction phase, the proposed works along the existing/proposed driveway in close proximity to the drainage ditch to the east have a slight potential to cause an increase in sedimentation downstream and therefore mitigation measures will be put in place to protect the watercourses during the construction works. These measures will include silt control features between the works area and the drainage ditch, and to cover road gullies. This will limit any adverse effect on the water quality of the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA.

10.0 CONCLUSION

It is not anticipated that the proposed development, subject to recommended mitigation measures, by itself or in combination with other developments, would impact negatively upon the Natura 2000 network during the site preparation or operational phases of the project.

The proposed development site is located approximately 826m from the Slaney River Valley SAC (Site Code: 000781) and the Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (Site Code: 004076). It is considered that there would be no potential risk of an adverse effect upon the qualifying interests / special conservation interests of the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA due to the proposed mitigation measures to be employed.

It is the conclusion of this Natura Impact Statement that, subject to recommended mitigation measures, there would be no potential for an adverse effect on European sites as a result of the proposed development and mitigation measures to be employed. This conclusion refers to the development by itself or in combination with other developments.

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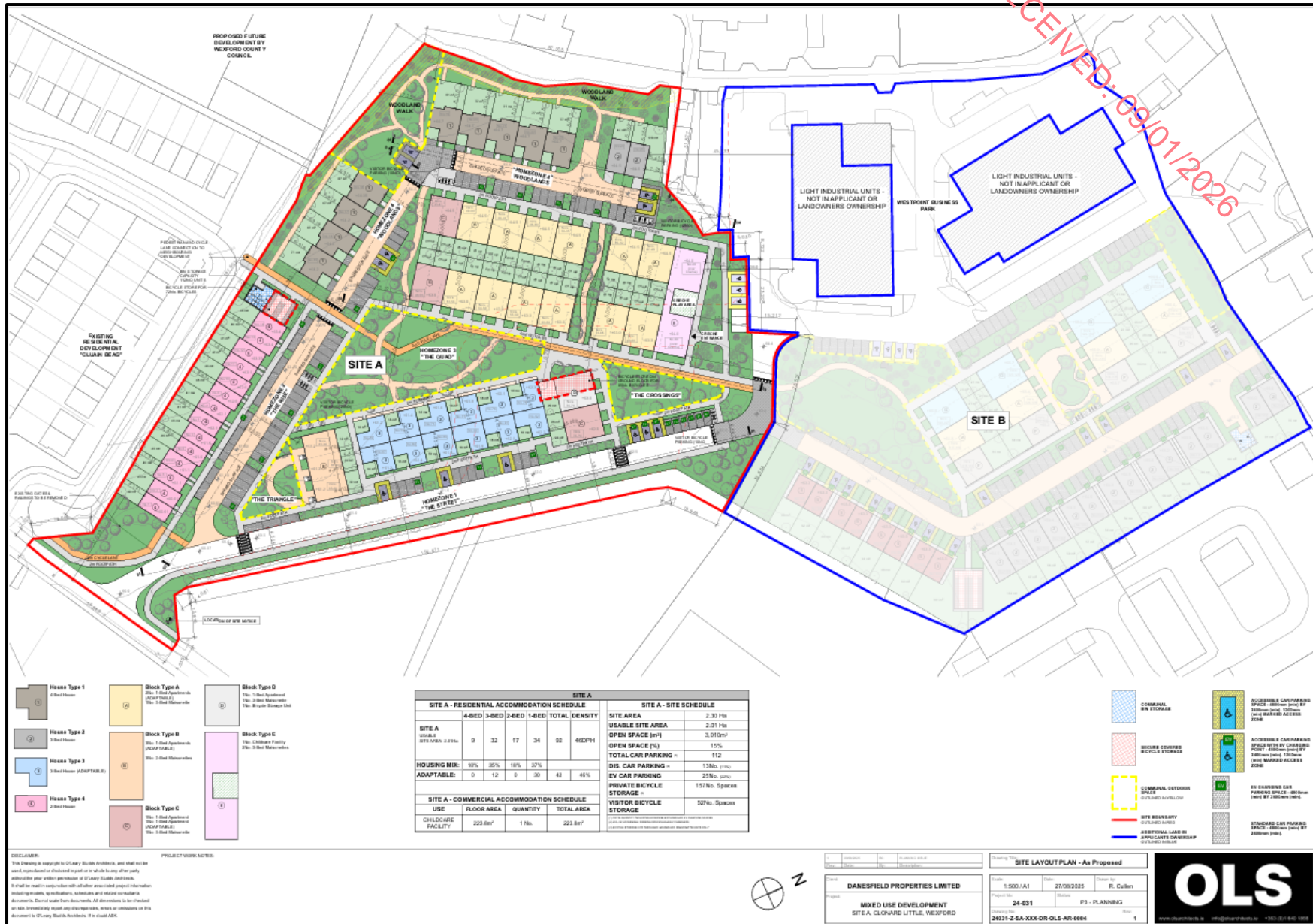
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APPENDIX A
PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT

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- House Type 1
2 Bed House
- House Type 2
3 Bed House
- House Type 3
3 Bed House (ADAPTABLE)
- House Type 4
3 Bed House
- Block Type A
2 No. 1 Bed Apartments (ADAPTABLE)
2 No. 2 Bed Apartments
- Block Type B
2 No. 1 Bed Apartments (ADAPTABLE)
2 No. 2 Bed Apartments
- Block Type C
2 No. 1 Bed Apartments
2 No. 2 Bed Apartments
- Block Type D
2 No. 2 Bed Apartments
2 No. 3 Bed Apartments
2 No. 4 Bed Apartments
- Block Type E
2 No. 1 Bed Apartments
2 No. 2 Bed Apartments

SITE A - RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEDULE					
	4-BED	3-BED	2-BED	1-BED	TOTAL DENSITY
SITE A	9	32	17	34	92
USABLE SITE AREA 2.37Ha					ADZPH
HOUSING MIX: 9% 35% 18% 37%					
ADAPTABLE:	0	12	5	30	47
					48%

SITE A - COMMERCIAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEDULE		
USE	FLOOR AREA	TOTAL AREA
CHILD CARE FACILITY	223 Sqm	1 No.
		223 Sqm

SITE A - SITE SCHEDULE	
SITE AREA	2.37 Ha
USABLE SITE AREA	2.01 Ha
OPEN SPACE (sqm)	3,010sqm
OPEN SPACE (%)	15%
TOTAL CAR PARKING =	112
DIS. CAR PARKING =	13No. (11%)
EV CAR PARKING	25No. (22%)
PRIVATE BICYCLE STORAGE =	157No. Spaces
VISITOR BICYCLE STORAGE	52No. Spaces

- COMMERCIAL NEW STORAGE
- BICYCLE COVES
- COMMERCIAL OUTDOOR SPACE
- SITE BOUNDARY
- APPLICANT'S OWNERSHIP
- ACCESSIBLE CAR PARKING SPACE WITHIN 50M OF ADAPTABLE ACCESS ZONE
- ACCESSIBLE CAR PARKING SPACE WITHIN 50M OF ADAPTABLE ACCESS ZONE
- BY CHANGING CAR PARKING SPACE, 100% OF ADAPTABLE ACCESS ZONE
- STANDARD CAR PARKING SPACE - 4800mm (16ft) BY 2400mm (8ft)

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All dimensions to be checked on site. Measurements shall only be taken on site. Measurements on this drawing are for information only.

PROJECT WORK NOTES:



SITE LAYOUT PLAN - As Proposed			
Client: DANESFIELD PROPERTIES LIMITED	Date: 15/07/21	Drawn By: R. Cullen	Check By:
Project: MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT	Sheet: 24-031	Phase: P3 - PLANNING	
24931-2-54-XXX-OR-OLS-AR-0004			



NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT

SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2025



NOTES A1

1. Figure Dimensions Only to be taken from this drawing. All dimensions to be checked on site.
2. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all other Architectural and Engineering drawings and documents.
3. Levels within development site are generated from site survey. Levels within the development site are provided from CS User Data.
4. Existing conditions are indicated based on the best currently available information. However it is the contractor's responsibility to check the location and level of services indicated and to advise the site and work services providers for other services that are not indicated.
5. Proposed Cover Levels are indicative only.
6. All Green Swales are to be constructed & installed in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works. All storm drains to be constructed and located in accordance with the Code of Practice of the Building Regulations. All storm and drains to be installed in accordance with the Manual for Green Swales and Drains to be installed in accordance with the Manual for Green Swales and Drains. All new proposed drainage structures shall have a minimum service life of 100 years.
7. All storm and drains to be surveyed by means of CCTV survey in accordance with the Manual for Storm Drainage Classification.
8. The stormwater drainage system shall be installed in accordance with the Manual for Storm Drainage Classification. All new proposed drainage structures shall have a minimum service life of 100 years.
9. Typical section layout reference (theoretically and practically) as per DPA-40-05.
10. Contractor to provide an unobstructed survey drainage in accordance with the specification.
11. No wastewater to be discharged into the surface water system under any circumstances. To be confirmed by observation during dry season.

Typical SuDs Planter Detail

PLANNING APPLICATION

Client: Michael Stafford & Conor O'Driscoll

Project: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT CLONARD LITTLE, WEXFORD SITE A

Drawing Title: EXISTING, PROPOSED AND PROPOSED DIVERTED SURFACE WATER SEWERS

Scale: 1:500

Date: 25 June '25

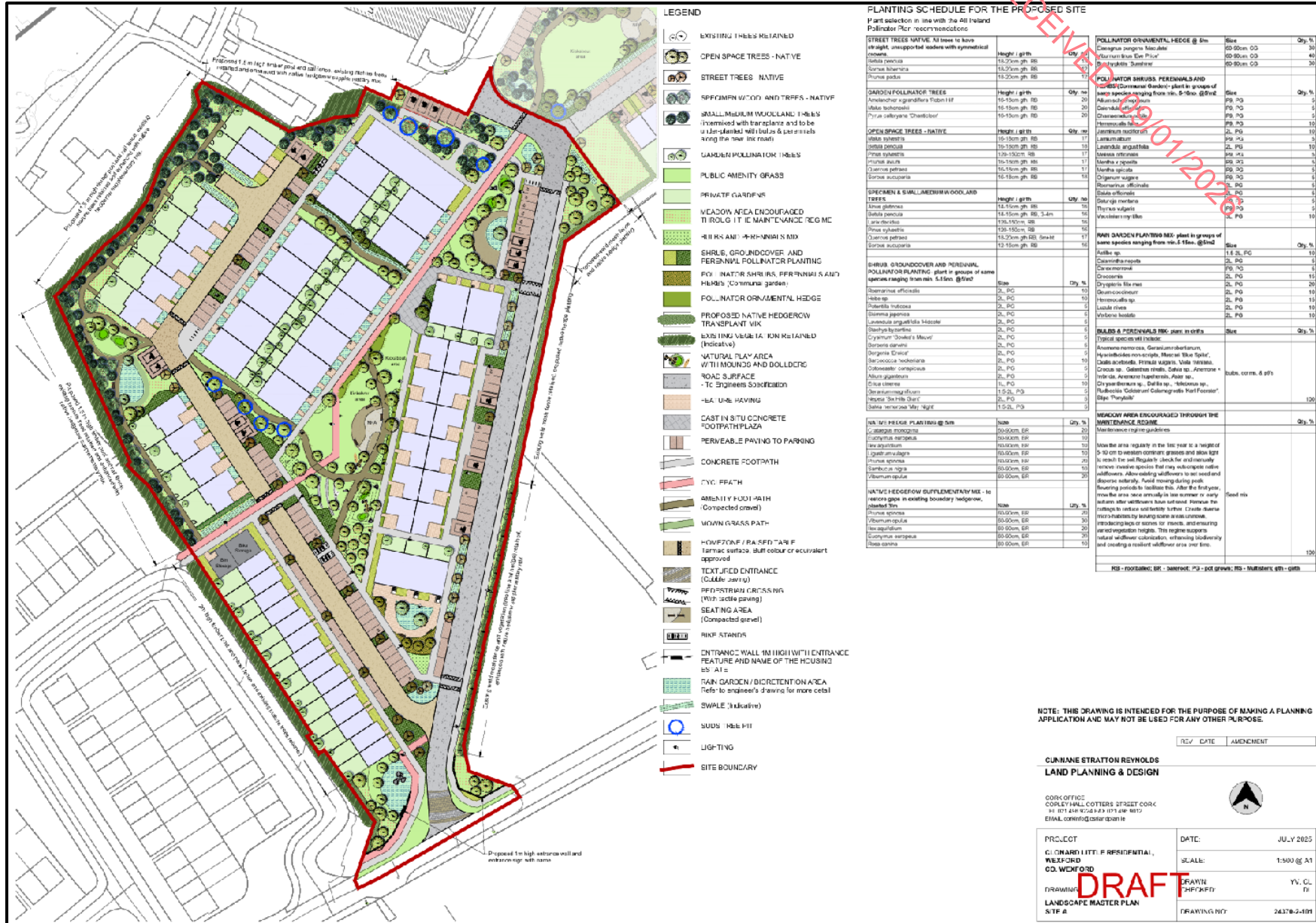
Drawn by: GW **Checked by:** GW

Project No.: G15/76-103

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT

SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED 20/01/2024



NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT

SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

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NOTES:

All dimensions in metres.
Do not scale from drawing.
For any discrepancies found please consult with design office.
This drawing should be read in conjunction with all contract drawings, documents and specifications.

Legend:

- Proposed Philips Luma Gen 2 Nano BGP701 DM50 3000K 6.0 km Flux on 6.0m lighting columns
- Proposed Philips Luma Gen 2 Medium BGP704 DX50 3000K 15.0 km Flux on 8.0m lighting columns
- Proposed Philips Luma Gen 2 Nano BGP703 DRXN1 3000K 1.0 km Flux on 6.0m lighting columns

All lanterns within 2,700K-3,000K range.
Public Lighting Design to EN 13201:2015
Public Lighting Class P3 (EN 13201 Part 1:2022)

Lighting shall be dimmed to U15
Reduce power to 95% to above 10pm according to P4 design standard from midnight to 06:00
Energy saving from 0.37 kWh/sqm reduced to 0.25 kWh/sqm

Lighting Specification to comply with Wexford County Council Public Lighting Specification 2023

Lanterns should comply with IS EN 60598-2-3
Columns are to have a double locked framed door and should be multi-bolt galvanneal to The Local Authority specifications
Columns shall be manufactured to BS 5649.
Public lighting to be fed from new power supply connections.
All lighting columns should be sited min 0.4m back from any road edge and at the back of footpath where appropriate.

Notes on Landscaping
No trees to be located within 10m of lighting columns on the same side of the road.
Trees shall not be planted within 10m of a public lighting standard or in such a manner that the foliage is likely to obstruct the light in the future.

Lighting Design to EN 13201: 2015 Parts 1-4
Lighting Class P3 Housing Estate Roads
Eav Lux 7.50 - 11.25 Emin - 1.50



Philips Luma Gen 2 Nano Lantern

Rev/By	Date	Description

Drawing Status: PLANNING
NOT SUITABLE FOR CONSTRUCTION

Project Title:
Development at Clonard Little, Wexford.
Site A

Drawing Title:
Public Lighting Layout.

Client:
Danesfield Properties Limited

Martin Hanley
Traffic & Transportation
Consulting Engineers.
74 Lisacorb, Clonsilla, Wexford, Co. Wexford.
Tel: 051 4667959
E: martin.hanley@mtte.ie

Designed: MH

Scale: 1/500 at A3 **Date:** August 2025

Job No: 25-09TT **Drawing No:** WP-PL-P01 **Revision:**

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT

SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

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NOTES:

All dimensions in metres.
Do not scale from drawing.
For any discrepancies found please consult with design office.
This drawing should be read in conjunction with all contract drawings, documents, and specifications.

Legend:

- Proposed Philips Luma Gen 2 Nano BGP701 DM50 3000K 6.0 km Flux on 6.0m lighting columns
- Proposed Philips Luma Gen 2 Medium BGP704 DX50 3000K 6.0 km Flux on 8.0m lighting columns
- Proposed Philips Luma Gen 2 Nano BGP703 DRXN1 3000K 1.4 km Flux on 6.0m lighting columns

All lanterns will be white 200k-3,000k range.
Public Lighting Design to EN 13201:2015
Public Lighting Class II BSI Part 1-2020

Lighting shall be dimmed to profile 0.5
Reduce power to 50% to achieve dimming to P4 design standard from midlight to 06:00.
Energy saving from 0.37 kWh/spm reduced to 0.25 kWh/spm

Lighting Specification to comply with Wexford County Council Public Lighting Specification 2023

Lanterns should comply with IS EN 60598-2-3
Columns are to have a double locked framed door and should be multi-locked galvanneal to The Local Authority specification.
Columns shall be manufactured to BS 5489.
Public lighting to be fed from new power supply connections. All lighting columns should be located min 0.45m back from any road edge and at the back of footpath where appropriate.

Notes on Landscaping
No trees to be located within 10m of lighting columns on the same side of the road.
Trees shall not be planted within 10m of a public lighting standard or in such a manner that the foliage is likely to obstruct the light in the future.

Lighting Design to EN 13201:2015 Parts 1-4
Lighting Class P3 Housing Estate Roads
Eav Lux 7.50 - 11.25 E_{min} = 1.50



Philips Luma Gen 2 Nano Lantern

Rev/By	Date	Description

Drawing Status: PLANNING
NOT SUITABLE FOR CONSTRUCTION

Project Title: Development at Clonard Little, Wexford, Site A

Drawing Title: Public Lighting Layout.

Client: Danesfield Properties Limited

Martin Hanley
Traffic & Transportation
Consulting Engineers.
23 Lisacorb
Wexford, Co. Wexford
Tel: 051 4627639
E: martin.hanley@martinhanley.ie

Designed: MH

Scale: 1/500 at A3 **Date:** August 2025

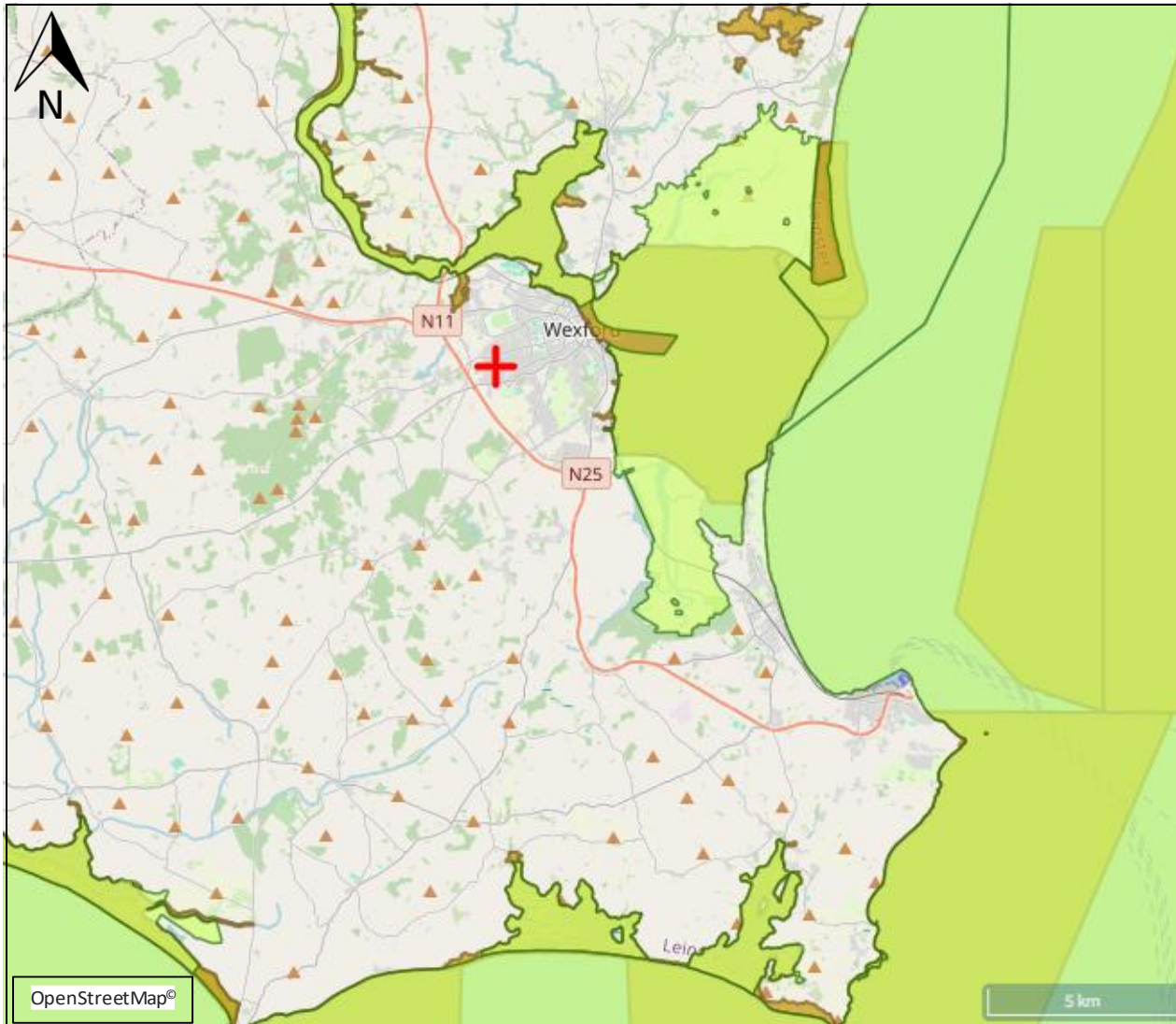
Job No: 25-09TT **Drawing No:** WP-PL-P02 **Revision:**

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APPENDIX B
PROTECTED SITES MAP

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
 SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

RECEIVED: 09/01/2026



Notes

Site Location -

S.P.A. -

S.A.C. -

Project Title:
PROTECTED SITES MAP

Client Name:

**PHASE 1, WESTPOINT
 BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD,
 CO. WEXFORD**



UNITS 3 & 4
 INNOVATION CENTRE
 GREEN ROAD
 CARLOW
 R93 W248

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Drawing Status:	Scale:	NTS	A4
Report:	Datum:	EPA Evasion	
Drawing Number: AA 10302	Drawn:	PE	
Revision:	Checked:	MF	
RU	Approved:	-	
	Date:	24/03/2025	

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OpenStreetMap®

5 km

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APPENDIX C
PHOTO LOG

NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
 SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

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Plate 1: Site entrance (BL3/GA2)



Plate 2: Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2)



Plate 3: Recolonising bare ground (ED3)



Plate 4: Treeline (WL2) along the east boundary, to be retained

Notes:

APPENDIX D
 PHOTO LOG



UNITS 3 & 4
 INNOVATION
 CENTRE
 GREEN ROAD
 CARLOW

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file location:	scale:	N/A	A4
drawing status:	REPORT	datum:	N/A
		drawn:	PES
drawing no.	rev	checked:	MF
AA_10302	A	approved:	-
		date:	11/03/2025

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NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT
 SITE A, WESTPOINT BUSINESS PARK, WEXFORD, CO. WEXFORD

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Notes:



Plate 5: Treeline (WL2) to the northeast, to be removed



Plate 6: Scrub (WS1)



Plate 7: Killens stream (FW2) adjacent to the southwest boundary



Plate 8: Drainage ditch (FW4) outside of the red line boundary to the west

APPENDIX D
 PHOTO LOG



UNITS 3 & 4
 INNOVATION
 CENTRE
 GREEN ROAD
 CARLOW

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file location:	scale:	N/A	A4
drawing status:	REPORT	datum:	N/A
		drawn:	PES
drawing no.	rev	checked:	MF
AA_10302	A	approved:	-
		date:	11/03/2025

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