

AN BORD PLEANÁLA	
LDG-	<u>077631-25</u>
ABP-	
28 JAN 2025	
Fee: €	<u>110</u> Type: <u>PMO</u>
Time:	<u>9.57</u> By: <u>Rogier</u>

Registered Mail

27th January 2025

An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1.

Re: DC 24/9 - Section 5 Referral – Peat Extraction in a total area of 27.13ha at Derrymore, Moydow, Co. Longford is or is not development and is or is not exempted development within the meaning of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (As Amended).

Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to the above and request that An Bord Pleanála determine “Peat Extraction in a total area of 27.13ha at Derrymore, Moydow, Co. Longford” is or is not development and is or is not exempted development within the meaning of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (As Amended)”.

Attached for information all details relating to the application and Planner’s consideration of the file along with the fee of €110.

Yours sincerely



Planning Section.

Encl.

Longford County Council
Planning Report

Note: This Section 5 Declaration report should be read in conjunction with planning report prepared on '04/06/04'.

1.0 Site Location and Description:

The application site is located in the townland of Derrymore near Moydow and covers a large area within the range of 80-90ha. The bog is located approximately 3km to the south-east of Longford Town, 3.4km to the east of Stonepark settlement and 4.8km to the north-west of Ardagh village.

The subject site is accessed off the Local Road L51952 which connects to the junction with the L5195.

The subject site is not located within any Natural Heritage Area, SAC, SPA or Broadzone, nor are there any sites or monuments or protected structures in close proximity to the site. The closest Natura 2000 sites are as follows:

- Mount Jessop Bog SAC (002202) located 2.25km south-west of the subject site.
- Brown Bog SAC (002346) located 5.5km north-west of the subject site.
- Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101) located 7.2km north-west of the subject site.
- Lough Forbes Complex SAC (001818) located 7.2km north-west of the subject site.
- Lough Ree SPA (004064), SAC (000440) located approximately 14.5km west of the subject site.

The Royal Canal pNHA (002103) located 2.3km to the west and north-west of the subject site.

2.0 The Question:

The applicant is seeking a referral determination under Section 5 (1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) as to whether the extraction of peat in a total area of 27.13ha at Derrymore, Moydow, Co. Longford constitutes development or is exempted development.

3.0 Further Information

The Planning Authority sought further information on '07/06/24' which outlined as follows:

"In order to consider your application for Exempted Development of Peat Extraction in a total area of 27.13ha at Derrymore, Moydow, Co. Longford and submitted to the Planning Authority on 13th of May 2024 and whether the development of peat extraction constitutes exempted development under Article 6 (1) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and as set out under Class 17 – of Part 3 of Schedule 2(b) of these regulations.

Given the significant history associated with the subject site, the recent and on-going planning enforcement case relating to the peat extraction works and the EPA licence it is considered appropriate that Further Information shall be sought which should include the following matters:

- *The full area of lands in the ownership of the applicant in respect of the Derrymore Bog site.*
- *Confirmed details of the historical areas of peat extraction within the immediate area undertaken by the applicant/landowner. Evidence exists to identify substantial areas of peat extraction works that have been undertaken in recent years dating back to 2011. The Planning Authority require a clear statement and maps confirming the full extent of these works within the immediate area.*
- *To provide a justification for the identification and selection of the two areas proposed for peat extraction identified in this application and how the additional lands and areas not included for peat extraction will be screened and protected from potential working.*
- *The applicant shall prepare and submit a detailed Appropriate Assessment screening report and determination statement Stage 1 and Stage 2 (Natura Impact Statement Report) given the subjects sites location and proximity to nearby Natura 2000 sites including SAC and SPA."*

The applicant has submitted a response to the further information request on '13/01/25' as follows:

- Clarified that there is no ongoing planning or environmental enforcement proceedings.
- The full area of peatlands in the control of Derrymore Peat Limited is 49.01ha.
- Reference has been made to historical areas of peat extraction. Works commenced in the early 1990's growing to 49.01ha and reduced over time to 21.13ha. This has been illustrated on an aerial view map submitted labelled 'Derrymore Bog: Map 1' included within the further information documents.

- The applicant has stated that the application areas identified for peat harvesting are the only areas suitable for the Irish Horticultural industry.
- Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been submitted.

It is unclear based on the information submitted on '13/05/24' and by way of further information on '13/01/25' as to whether the extraction of peat in a total area of 27.13ha at Derrymore, Moydow, Co. Longford constitutes development or is exempted development. I therefore recommend that the Planning Authority requests the determination of An Bord Pleanála on the matters outlined above in this report.

4.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that a request be submitted to An Board Pleanála seeking a section 5 Declaration determination on the matters set out above.

Kathryn Hosey

Kathryn Hosey

Executive Planner

Date: 17/01/25

Signed:



Rita Connaughton
Senior Planner

Date: 20/01/2025

Ref No: DC24-9

15th January 2025

Derrymore Peat Ltd
c/o – John Dillon
TOBIN, Block 10-4
Blanchardstown Corporate Park
Blanchardstown
Dublin 15

Email: john.dillon@tobin.ie

Re: DC24-9 - Derrymore Peat Ltd Section 5 Declaration – Peat Extraction in a total area of 27.13ha at Derrymore, Moydow, Co. Longford.

Dear Sir/Madam,

We wish to acknowledge receipt of **Further Information** on the above application on 13/01/2025.

Yours Faithfully,

P.P. _____

Administrative Officer





UNA 1278

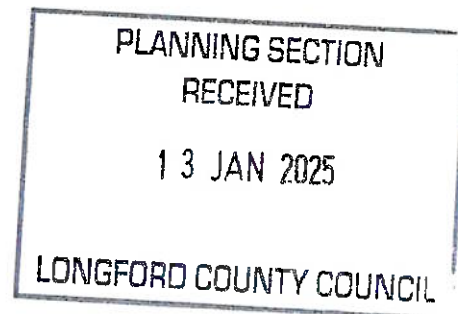
RQ DERRYMORE PEAT LTD.

CLONCAULFIELD, MOYDOW, CO. LONGFORD.

MOBILE: 087 2521138 • EMAIL: derrymorepeat@gmail.com



Director of Services,
Planning Department,
Longford County Council,
County Buildings,
Great Water Street,
Co. Longford
10th January 2025.



Dear Sirs,

We refer to your letter of the 7th June 2024 requesting further information on our application for Exempted Development of horticultural peat harvesting in a total area of 27.13 hectares at Derrymore, Moydow, Co Longford.

With regard to the third paragraph of your letter, we can confirm, that there is no on-going planning or environmental enforcement proceedings against Derrymore Peat Limited or Ronan Quinn. In this regard we refer to a decision of Justice Bernadette Owens at the Longford District Court on the 16th June 2023 in relation to this property. The case by the EPA was that Derrymore Peat Limited "did carry out an activity, namely the extraction of peat in the course of business which involves an area exceeding 50 hectares, without there being a licence or revised licence in force in relation to the said activity, in contravention of section 82(2) of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 (as amended).

Justice Owens ruled "Having considered the evidence and the facts in the case and applying the various constituent elements set out in paragraph 232 page 76 of the Harte Peat decision. I am not satisfied that the Prosecution have established the required threshold of 50 hectares and on that basis, I am dismissing all the charges against both defendants"

Full area of peatlands

The full area of the peatlands in the control of Derrymore Peat Limited is 49.01 hectares.



CLONCAULFIELD, MOYDOW, CO. LONGFORD.

MOBILE: 087 2521138 • EMAIL: derrymorepeat@gmail.com

Historical areas of peat extraction

Harvesting of horticultural peat commenced in the early 1990's on a small portion of this site and grew over the years to a maximum size of 49.01 hectares by the end of 1996. However, during the intervening period, this area has gradually reduced to 27.13 hectares, including storage area, roadways and silt ponds. The attached map 'Derrymore Bog: Map 1' shows grey colouration in the centre of the bog which reflects the exposure of the peat substrate. Once the substrate is encountered in drain beds in an area, horticultural peat harvesting ceases due to the presence of inorganic matter. Peat containing inorganic matter is totally unsuitable for horticultural growing material

Proposed Harvesting Areas

The two areas identified for harvesting, are the only areas containing peat suitable for the Irish horticultural industry. The remaining areas are not suitable for horticultural peat harvesting due to the presence of excess inorganic material. The unworked area is clearly distinguishable from the worked area due to the presence of cutover bog habitat.

Derrymore Peat Limited are exploring the possibility of using the area for renewable energy. (See photo 1, photo 2 and photo 3 attached)

We have also attached a brief summary of a recent Court judgement delivered by Ms Justice Flaherty in the Court of Appeal in the matter of Harte Peat Limited v The Environmental Agency and Ors (2024) IECA 202 on the 31st July 2024.

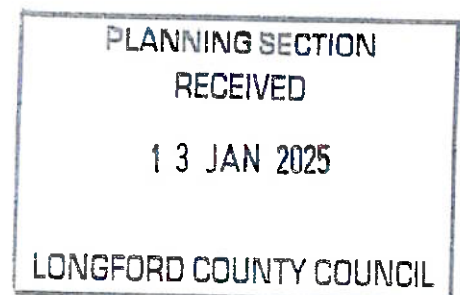
Please find attached a detailed Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and Determination Statement.

Yours sincerely

Ronan Quinn
Ronan Quinn

Director

Derrymore Peat Limited.



Summary of Harte Peat Limited v The Environmental Protection Agency and Ors (2024) IECA 202.

LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Background

On the 31st July 2024, Ms Justice Flaherty delivered judgment in the Court of Appeal in the matter of Harte Peat Limited v The Environmental Agency and Ors (2024) IECA 202

The proceedings concerned Harte Peat Limited's (HP) appeal of Ms Justice Phelan's High Court judgment of 16th March 2022 during which two principles arose.

- a) whether the Environmental Protection Agency's (the EPA) decision to refuse to consider HP's application for an Integrated Pollution Control licence (IPC licence) on the basis that HP's peat extraction activities required planning permission, which decision was upheld in the High Court, was valid (the Judicial Review Proceedings); and
- b) whether the High Court correctly interpreted the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 (the 1992 Act) in granting the injunctive relief sought by the EPA in respect of HP's peat extraction activities (the Injunctive Proceedings).

On point (a), the Court of Appeal upheld the decision of the EPA and the High Court.

On point (b), it was held that there was no legal basis for the injunction granted by the High Court.

In 2022, The EPA applied to the High Court for an order pursuant to section 99H of the 1992 Act on the basis that HP was engaging in commercial peat extraction in an area which exceeded 50 hectares without a licence in contravention of section 82(2) of the 1992 Act. The High Court ultimately granted the injunction sought by the EPA on the basis that it was satisfied that HP engaged in peat extraction in the course of business in an area significantly in excess of 50 hectares without a licence. In concluding that the 50-hectare licensing threshold had been met, the High Court noted, inter alia, that:

- a) It was obliged to apply the law in such a way that projects likely to have significant environmental effects are made subject to EIA and a consent procedure.
- b) The definitions of "installation" and "plant" in the 1992 Act capture not merely the footprint of the land from which peat is removed, but also any land used for purposes incidental to peat extraction, including lands drained (deliberately or incidentally), access roads, storage areas, buffer zones and sedimentation ponds, all of which should be included in reckoning the threshold.
- c) Nothing in the wording of Class 1.4 requires that lands must be contiguous and to interpret the threshold in this manner would be inconsistent with EU and domestic authorities on project splitting.

d) It was "legitimate" to aggregate lands separated by a road or stream where the land involves peat extraction.

e) It is appropriate to reckon all areas under the control of an operator that have a technical or hydrological connection to an area where extraction is occurring.

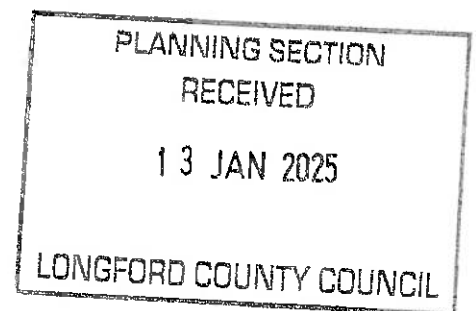
f) To confine reckonable lands solely to areas where peat extraction is actively occurring, is impermissible under EU law and would defeat the legislative intent for regulation.

It was obliged to apply the law in such a way that projects likely to have significant environmental effects are made subject to EIA and a consent procedure.

On appeal, HP contended that the High Court had erred in its decision to grant the injunction under section 99H.

Accordingly, the matter to be determined on appeal was whether Ms Justice Phelan correctly established that the requisite 50 hectares threshold was met for the purposes of making an order under section 99H.

In considering this question, the Court of Appeal noted that the Court's jurisdiction to grant an injunction under this section is limited to situations where an activity "is being carried on in contravention of the requirements of the Act". (emphasis added). In other words, in order for the injunction to be granted, it must be established that peat extraction within the meaning of Class 1.4 of the First Schedule of the 1992 Act i.e., "the extraction of peat in the course of business which involves an area exceeding 50 hectares", was actually being carried out at the time the injunction was applied for. With this interpretation in mind, the Court of Appeal held that the evidence clearly showed that HP's activities were confined to an area which comprises 26.5 hectares – a sub threshold activity which falls outside the licensing regime operated by the EPA. The three other areas under the ownership/ control of HP, but not in production were not included by Ms Justice Flaherty in calculating the threshold. In all of the circumstances, Ms Justice Faherty concluded that there was no legal basis for the injunction granted by the High Court.



- Derrymore Bog: Photograph 1 of unworked area



- Derrymore Bog: Photograph 2 of unworked area



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- Derrymore Bog: Photograph 3 of unworked area



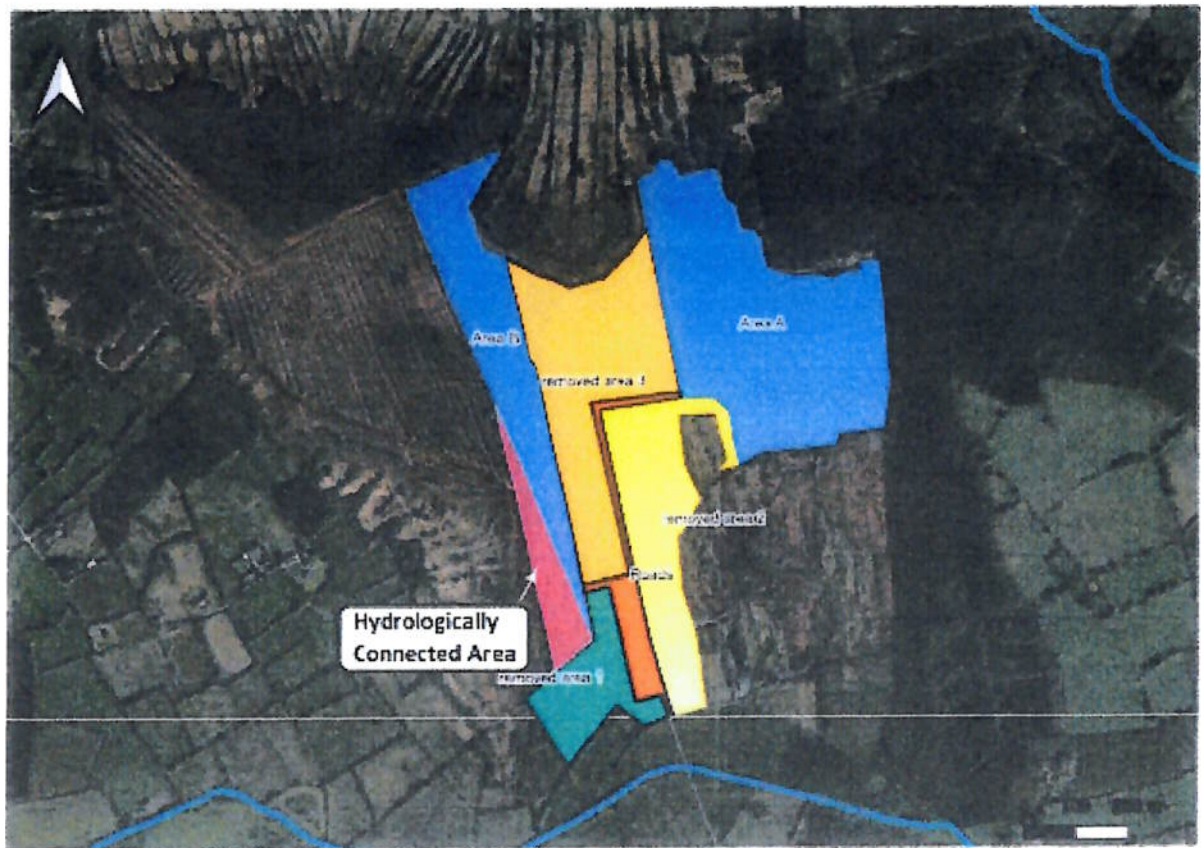
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Jerrymore Bog: Map 1



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Derrymore Bog: Map 2



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Forestry, Ecology & Environment

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Proposed horticultural peat extraction

Derrymore and Cloncaulfield, Moydow, Co. Longford

Compiled by: Veon Ecology,
Anna Paula Moreira
B.Sc. (Hons) in Environmental Science.

Prepared for: TOBIN Consulting Engineers

On behalf of: Derrymore Peat Ltd

Completion Date: 18th October 2024



Table of Contents

Table of Figures.....	2
Table of Tables.....	2
Table of Photographs.....	2
Executive Summary.....	3
General details.....	4
Section 1: INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Legislative Background	5
1.2 Methodology & Report Structure	6
1.2.1 Appropriate Assessment Methodology	7
1.2.2 Assessment Approach	8
1.2.3 Desk Study	9
1.3 Guidance and Legislation.....	9
Section 2: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.....	11
2.1 Project Location.....	11
2.2 Project Description.....	13
2.3 Potentially Affected Natura 2000 Sites.....	14
2.4 Potentially Affected Habitats/Species	14
2.5 Assessment of Likely Effects.....	14
Section 3: EXISTING ENVIRONMENT	18
3.1 Baseline Ecology	18
3.2 Field Study.....	18
Section 4: STAGE 1. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT	20
4.1 Overview of Potential Impacts	20
4.2 Determining the Likely Zone of Influence	20
4.3 Identification of Relevant European Sites	21
4.4 Stage 1: Screening of Relevant European Sites	22
Section 5: ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS	24
5.1 Identification of potential significant effects	25
Section 6: IN-COMBINATION AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS.....	26
Section 7: SCREENING DETERMINATION	27
Section 8: REFERENCES	28
Section 9: APPENDICES	30
Appendix 1. MAPS & FIGURES	30
Appendix 2. ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS & INVESTIGATIONS	34
Appendix 3. PHOTOGRAPHS	44

Table of Figures

Figure 1.1: Stages of Appropriate Assessment.....	7
Figure 2.1: Project site location and working areas	12
Figure 9.1: Proposed Development Site Boundary	30
Figure 9.2: WFD River Sub Basins.....	30
Figure 9.3: GSI vulnerability (EPA,2024)	31
Figure 9.4: GSI Bedrocks Polygons 100K (EPA,2024).....	31
Figure 9.5: National Soils (EPA,2024).....	32
Figure 9.6: National Sub Soils (EPA,2024).....	32
Figure 9.7: Natura Sites 15km.....	33
Figure 9.8: pNHA and NHA sites within 15km.....	33
Figure 9.9: Habitat Map.....	34

Table of Tables

Table 2.1: Summary of likely significant effects of the proposed development	15
Table 4.1: Screening assessment of the potential effects arising from the proposed development using SPR model. ...	22
Table 6.1: Other plans and projects in the locality.	26
Table 9.1: Bat Suitability Index for the site and its surrounding area (NBDC, 2024).	38
Table 9.2: Bird species observed and recorded during the phase 1 habitat survey site visit.	39
Table 9.3: Protected bird species (amber/red listed) recorded in 10km ² grid surrounding the site (NBDC, 2024).	41
Table 9.4: Protected Mammal species recorded in 10km ² grid surrounding the site (NBDC, 2024).....	42
Table 9.5: Protected amphibian species recorded in 10km ² grid surrounding the site (NBDC, 2024).	43
Table 9.6: Protected bird species (amber/red listed) recorded in 2km ² grid surrounding the site.....	43
Table 9.7: Protected Mammal species recorded in 2km ² grid surrounding the site (NBDC, 2024).....	43

Table of Photographs

Photograph 9.1: Cutover bog - PB4 at the site	44
Photograph 9.2: Stands of Soft Rush (<i>Juncus effusus</i>) and Great Willowherb (<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>)..	44
Photograph 9.3: The vegetation is a diverse mix of remnant bog species and grasses.....	45
Photograph 9.4: Cutover bog - PB4 at the site.....	45

Executive Summary

This report presents the outcome of a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) for a proposed horticultural peat extraction in the townland of Derrymore and Cloncaulfield, Moydow, Co. Longford. The proposed site is located in Moydow, with the area divided into Area A, Area B, and the access roads (the Peat Harvesting Areas). The areas between Area A and Area B are not actively harvested. Peat depths in the Peat Harvesting Areas are limited and will gradually come out of operation within the next 5 years.

This report details the results of field surveys and a desktop study that have informed this Screening for AA for the proposed development. It assesses any potential impacts on EU-designated sites, particularly focusing on potential hydrological pathways during the peat extraction phase.

The Screening Report examines whether any potential effects on a Natura 2000 site will be significant, determining whether the AA process for the proposed development at Derrymore and Cloncaulfield, Moydow, Co. Longford, alone or in combination with other developments in the area, should proceed to a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

Having regard to the limited nature and scale of the proposed development and the absence of any significant environmental sensitivity in the vicinity or any connectivity to sensitive locations, there is no likelihood of significant environmental effects arising from the proposed development. The nature and scale of the project are minimal, and there will be no loss of habitats for which the European sites are designated, nor any indirect disturbance to habitats. There is no evidence that this limited site functions as a roost or foraging area for species of conservation interest. Furthermore, there are no operational emissions to the European sites.

It is reasonable to conclude, based on the information available—which I consider adequate for a screening determination—that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would not likely have a significant effect on any European site, in view of the site's Conservation Objectives. Therefore, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

In relation to the status of the site itself, Derrymore Moydow is not currently designated as a Natural Heritage Area (NHA), but it was listed as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA). A letter dated 16th May 2012 from the Department of Arts, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht (signed by Sue Moles, Conservation Ranger for County Longford) confirms that the site was assessed during the 2002 Raised Bog Survey. Due to recent drainage work, it was determined that the site would not be designated as a raised bog NHA. The letter further states that it is unlikely the site will be designated as either an NHA or SAC unless a significant discovery is made in the cut-over or scrub areas. As of now, the site remains a proposed NHA, but it will not achieve full NHA designation under the revised classifications.

The contents of this Screening for AA, prepared by Veon Ecology, are true and have been compiled with due regard to the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct.

General Details

Details of Author(s)

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Details of relevant qualifications/ affiliations/years of experience B.Sc. (Hons) in Environmental Science
University of Galway

Several years of experience working as the Green School Committee & Habitat Management Planner at Saint Joseph’s Park in Tuam Co. Galway. During this time, I successfully completed and achieved several key projects, including securing Green Flag Award Parks and Green Flags Award School.

Describe scope of contribution in preparing this Report Desktop Survey, Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Ecological Assessment, Mitigation Proposals, Setback Proposals, Finalising report.

Veon Ltd. Veon Ecology							
Revision	Description	Author:	Date	Reviewed By:	Date	Authorised by:	Date
1	Draft Report	AM	08/08/2024	DP	08/08/2024	DP	08/08/24
2	Final Report	AM	18/10/2024	PM	18/10/2024	PM	18/10/24

Section 1: INTRODUCTION

Veon Ltd. (Veon Ecology) has been appointed by TOBIN Consulting Engineers, on behalf of Derrymore Peat Ltd, to carry out a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) for a proposed works associated with the proposed horticultural peat extraction in the townland of Derrymore and Cloncaulfield, Moydow, Co. Longford, and all associated infrastructure works. The location of the proposed works is presented in **Figure 2.1**.

The Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been prepared to provide the competent authority, with the relevant scientific information to conduct the Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with the requirement of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43) and in accordance with the provisions of section 177T of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended). This information will allow the competent national authorities (in this case Longford County Council) to determine, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed project, individually or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect on a European site and, where necessary, to ascertain whether or not the proposed project would adversely affect the integrity of a European site(s).

A Screening for Appropriate Assessment for the proposed project has been prepared and is provided in **Section 4**. The screening assessment concluded as follows:

It can be concluded, in view of best scientific knowledge on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites, that the proposed project (i.e. The works associated with the proposed horticultural peat extraction in the townland of Derrymore and Cloncaulfield, Moydow, Co. Longford), individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would not have a likely significant effect on any European Site.

1.1 Legislative Background

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as “The Habitats Directive”, provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000.

Natura 2000 sites are defined under the Habitats Directive (Article 3) as a coherent European ecological network of special areas of conservation, composed of sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, shall enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. In Ireland, these sites are designated as European Sites and include Special Protection Areas (SPAs), established under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC, as codified by 2009/147/EC) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), established under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC for habitats and species.

The Habitats Directive has been transposed into Irish law by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 - 2021 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477/2011) as amended. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to adversely affect the integrity of European Sites (Annex 1.1).

Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA):

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish Law relevant to this project includes Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000-2021 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

Natura 2000 sites in Ireland (herein referred to as European sites) that form part of the Natura 2000 network of protected sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated due to their significant ecological importance for species and habitats protected under Annexes I and II respectively of the Habitats Directive, and Special Protected Areas (SPAs), designated for the protection of populations and habitats of bird species protected under the EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/409/EEC). Features for which SACs and SPAs are designated are termed Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests respectively. Collectively, Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests are herein referred to as Qualifying Features.

As the proposed project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European Site, the competent authority, is obliged to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on European Sites.

The appropriate assessment process undertaken to meet Article 6(3) obligations is described in **Section 1.2.1** below.

1.2 Methodology & Report Structure

The above regulations require that before consent for a project or development is given, a Screening for Appropriate Assessment of a project for which an application for consent is received (which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site), must be carried out by the relevant public authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the site, if that project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.

The proposed development is described in detail in **Section 2** of this report. Following on from this the results of the desk and field surveys that were undertaken and presented in **Section 3** and **Appendix 2**, to provide the necessary details of the ecological baseline conditions of the site for the proposed development. The proposed operations of the project are considered in the context of potential effects on the baseline environment, with particular reference to the potential for adverse effect on the integrity of the relevant European Sites.

Finally, a concluding statement is provided in **Section 7** of the report. This includes a summary of the results of the assessment along with a summary statement of the potential of adverse effects on the integrity of any European Site (in light of the Conservation Objectives of the site as per Box 10 of EC, 2001). As per EC (2001) the meaning of integrity is defined as follows:

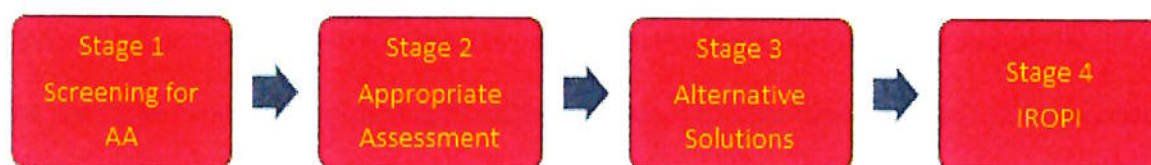
The integrity of a site involves its ecological functions. The decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on and be limited to the site's conservation objectives (MN2000, paragraph 4.6(3)). The information contained in this report will allow the Competent Authority to determine that the Proposed Project either individually or in combination with other projects will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site.

1.2.1 Appropriate Assessment Methodology

The purpose of an Appropriate Assessment (AA) is to establish whether a particular plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 Site, either individually or in combination with other plans and/or projects. Natura 2000 sites in Ireland are European sites, including Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

The four distinct stages in the AA process are summarised diagrammatically in **Figure 1.1**. Stages 1-2 deal with the main requirements for assessment under Article 6(3). Stage 3 may be part of the Article 6(3) Assessment or may be a necessary precursor to Stage 4. Stage 4 is the main derogation step of Article 6(4).

Figure 1.1 Stages of Appropriate Assessment.



Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

Screening is the process that addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3):

Whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site, and whether a plan and/or project, alone or in combination with other plans and/or projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European site in view of its conservation objectives.

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). Screening should be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation, unless potential impacts clearly can be avoided through the modification or redesign of the plan or project, in which case the screening process is repeated on the altered plan. The greatest level of evidence and justification will be needed in circumstances when the process ends at screening stage on grounds of no impact.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement).

The aim of Stage 2 of the AA process is to identify any adverse impacts that the plan or project might have on the integrity of relevant European sites. As part of the assessment, a key consideration is 'in combination' effects with other plans or projects. Where adverse impacts are identified, mitigation measures can be proposed that would avoid, reduce or remedy any such negative impacts and the plan or project should then be amended accordingly, thereby avoiding the need to progress to Stage 3.

This stage considers whether the plan or project, alone or in combination with other projects or plans, will have adverse effects on the integrity of a European site, and includes any mitigation measures necessary to avoid, reduce or offset negative effects. The proponent of the plan or project will be required to submit a Natura Impact Statement, i.e., the report of a targeted professional scientific examination of the plan or project and the relevant European sites, to identify and characterise any possible implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives, taking account of in-combination effects. This should provide information to enable the public authority to carry out the AA.

Section 177T(1)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) provides that "[a] *Natura impact statement means a statement, for the purposes of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive of the implications of a proposed*

development, on its own or in combination with other plans or projects, for one or more than one European site, in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites”.

Section 177T(2) states that “[w]ithout prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), [...] a Natura impact statement, [...], shall include a report of a scientific examination of evidence and data, carried out by competent persons to identify and classify any implications for one or more than one European site in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites”.

Section 177T(7)(a) states that “[w]ithout prejudice to subsection (1) [...] a Natura impact statement shall include all information prescribed by regulations under section 177AD”.

Section 177T(b) states that “[w]here appropriate, [...] a Natura impact statement shall include such other information or data as the competent authority considers necessary to enable it to ascertain if the [...] proposed development will not affect the integrity of the site”.

Where appropriate, an Appropriate Assessment shall include, in addition:

- (i) The alternative solutions that have been considered and the reasons why they have not been adopted.
- (ii) The imperative reasons of overriding public interest that are being relied upon to indicate that the plan or project should proceed notwithstanding that it may adversely affect the integrity of a European site.
- (iii) The compensatory measures that are being proposed.

If the assessment is negative, i.e., adverse effects on the integrity of a site cannot be excluded, then the process must proceed to Stage 3, or the plan or project should be abandoned. The competent authority must make a determination to that effect before proceeding to the next stage.

Stage 3 includes the Assessment of Alternative Solutions: Should the Appropriate Assessment determine that adverse impacts are likely upon a Natura 2000 site, this stage examines alternative ways of implementing the project that, where possible, avoid these adverse impacts.

Stage 4 involves the assessment of where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain: Where imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist, an assessment to consider whether compensatory measures will or will not effectively offset the damage to the Natura site will be necessary.

1.2.2 Assessment Approach

The approach taken in preparing this screening report is set out below and is broadly based on standard methods and best practice guidance, as listed in the **Section 1.3** below.

The nature of the likely interactions between the project and the integrity of a European Site will depend upon the sensitivity of the European Site's qualifying features to potential impacts arising from the project; the current conservation status of the European Site and its qualifying features; and any likely changes to key environmental indicators (e.g. water quality) that underpin the conservation status of European Site(s) and their qualifying features, in combination with other projects and plans. The European Commission (2001) Guidelines outline the stages involved in undertaking a Screening Assessment of a project that has the potential to have likely significant effects on European Sites.

The approach considered in preparation of this screening report and followed for this assessment are outlined below:

- Identify the Natura 2000 site(s), within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.

- Identify the features of interest of the Natura 2000 site(s) and review their conservation objectives.
- Assess whether there is potential for the proposed development to affect the features of interest of the relevant Natura 2000 site(s) based on information such as the vulnerabilities of the European site(s), proximity to the development site and the nature and scale of the works associated with the proposed development.
- Take into consideration the likelihood of potential impacts occurring based on professional judgement and the collated information.
- Identify the likelihood of significant effects on Natura 2000 sites occurring because of the proposed development.
- Take into consideration the likelihood of cumulative impacts arising from the proposed development in combination with other projects and plans.

1.2.3 Desk Study

A desk study was carried out to collate the available information on the ecological environment with respect to Natura 2000 sites identified within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.

The desktop study comprised a review of the following key datasets and information sources:

- Identification of European sites within the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the Proposed Development area through the identification of potential pathways/links from the Proposed Development area and European sites and/or supporting habitats.
- Review of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) site synopsis, Natura 2000 data forms and Conservation Objectives for European sites identified through potential pathways from the Proposed Development (<https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites>).
- Review of available literature and web data. This included a detailed review of the NPWS and National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) websites including mapping and available reports for relevant sites and in particular Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests described and their Conservation Objectives.
- GIS Online mapping (<http://dcnr.maps.arcgis.com>; and EPA Mapping database (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/AAGeoTool>).

In addition, aerial photography (Google Earth, Bing Maps) and mapping (Ordnance Survey of Ireland, Geological Survey of Ireland) were used to identify non-designated habitats such as rivers, woodlands, and hedgerows of local ecological importance.

1.3 Guidance and Legislation

This Screening for AA report has been prepared with regard to the relevant provisions of the EU Council Directive 92/43/EEC and Ireland's EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended). The methodology considered in preparation of this report and additional guidance and legislation followed for this assessment are outlined below:

- DoEHLG (2009, rev. 2010) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government.
- European Commission (EC) (2018), Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission.
- EC (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, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission.

- EC (2021) Assessment of Plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- EC (2007a) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC - Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission. European Commission.
- EC, (2007b), Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission.
- EC (2013) Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. European Commission.
- EC (2021) Assessment of Plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Version 1.2 (April 2022), Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland.
- NPWS (2019). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 2: Habitat Assessments. Unpublished NPWS report.
- NPWS (2019). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 3: Species Assessments. Unpublished NPWS report.
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021) Practice Note PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.
- The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended.
- The Planning and Development Act 2000-2023 as amended.
- The Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2023 as amended.

Section 2: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Project Location

The proposed development site is located within the townlands of Derrymore and Cloncaulfield, Moydow, Co. Longford (**Location Map, Figure 2.1**). The proposed development site is centred around Irish Grid Reference: E 615951, N 771416. The area of the proposed development redline boundary is 27.13 hectares. This includes access roadways, storage areas, settlement lagoons, and drainage areas within the Peat Harvesting Area.

The proposed development works area does not fall within or adjacent to any designated site. Derrymore Moydow is not currently designated; however, it was listed as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA). The site is currently not classified as an NHA. As confirmed in a letter dated 16th May 2012 from the Department of Arts, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht (Sue Moles, Conservation Ranger for County Longford), the site was assessed during the 2002 Raised Bog Survey, and a decision was made not to designate this site as a raised bog NHA due to the recent drainage undertaken. Under these circumstances, the letter stated that it was unlikely the site would be designated as an NHA or SAC unless something of major importance was found on the cut-over or scrub areas. The site remains a proposed Natural Heritage Area, but it is not going to make the full NHA designation under the revised classifications.

The site is located in a small rural area. There are no designated protected views, prospects, or scenic routes listed within the proposed development area. There are no cultural heritage features of interest present in the proposed works area. A previous archaeological walkover of the drains (2019) did not encounter any archaeological features. The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) maintained by the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht was examined as part of the baseline study. This review indicated that there are no monuments included in the SMR within the application area. There is one monument included in the study area, a holy well (SMR LF014-138) in the Feraghfad townland. This well is situated approximately 370m north-east of the application area and is considered too far to be directly or indirectly impacted by the development.

Derrymore forms part of the Shannon River Basin, with water leaving the site via several drains, flowing westwards and entering the Shannon River approximately 0.5km south of the river's outlet from Lough Forbes. The principal rivers draining Derrymore are the northwesterly flowing Feraghfad River, which drains the northern part of the Derrymore, and the westerly flowing Cloonkeen River, which drains the southern side of the site.

The bedrock is overlain by a sequence of younger, unconsolidated deposits. These inorganic deposits surrounding the bog, occurring principally on higher ground, consist mainly of glacial till derived from Carboniferous and Lower Palaeozoic sandstones and shales. Localised river deposits (alluvium) occur close to, and within 1km of, the site's southern boundary; both the till and alluvium are shown to have moderate permeability.

Cutover and Raised Bog Peat form the subsoil immediately below Derrymore Bog, including below Ronan Quinn's property and the area immediately to the west, where mechanical harvesting has also taken place. The peat is classified as a low-permeability deposit, and the bog is shown to have low groundwater vulnerability.

A site survey was undertaken on the 8th of August 2024 by lead ecologist Amy Haigh from Veon Ecology, along with Veon Ltd. The proposed development site consists mainly of cutover bog (PB4). No invasive plant species were recorded within the proposed development site or its immediate surroundings. For further details on the existing environment at the proposed site, refer to the Ecological Impact Assessment accompanying the planning application (Veon Ecology, 2024).

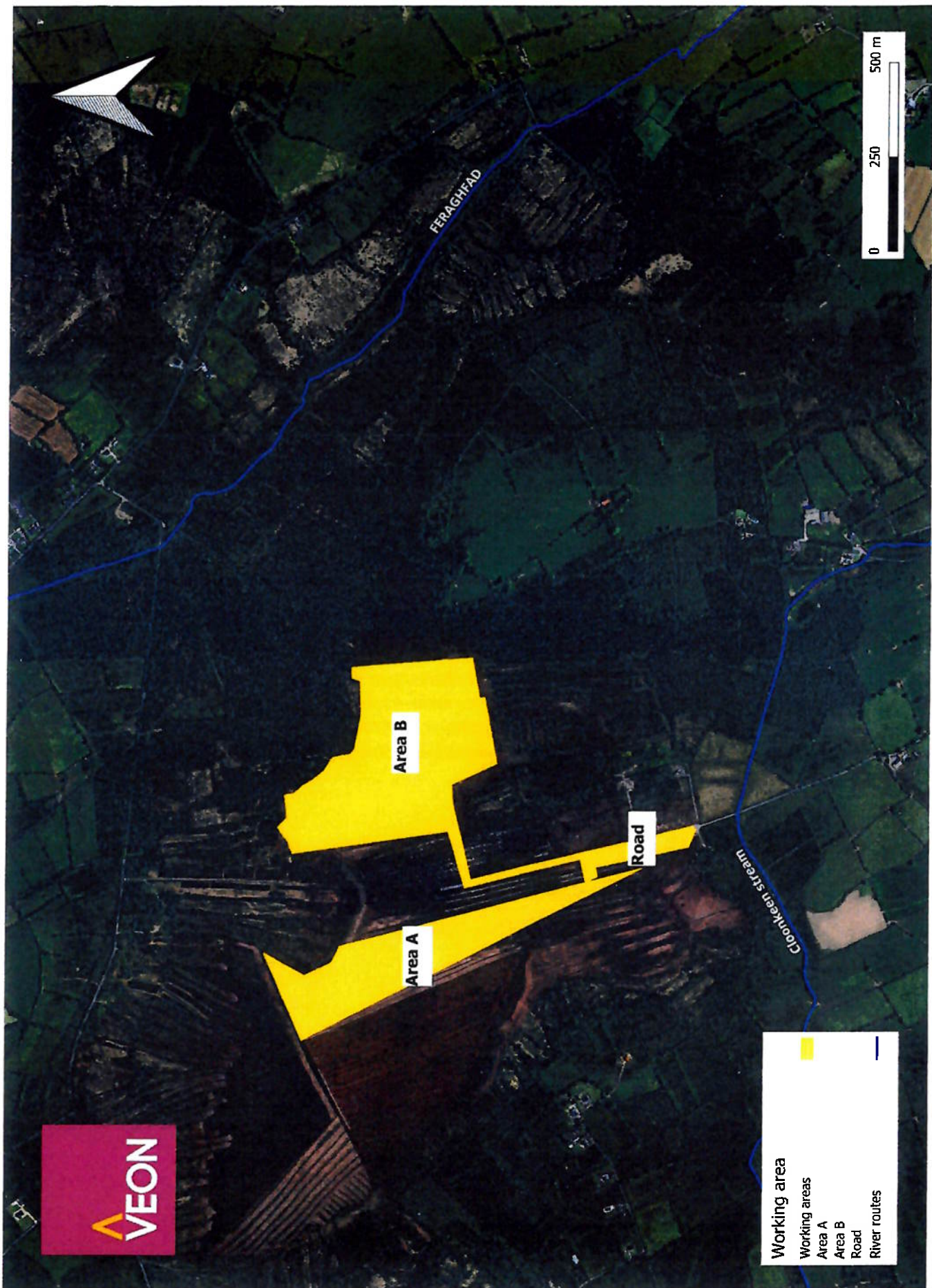


Figure 2 1: Project site location and working areas

2.2 Project Description

Derrymore Peat Ltd is proposing to harvest horticultural peat over the next five years, with operations scheduled to commence in 2024. The proposed development will cover an area of 27.13 hectares and will include the following activities:

- Maintenance of existing drainage systems.
- Harvesting of peat to support the Irish horticultural industry.
- Landscaping and rehabilitation of the peatland following extraction.
- The primary goal of this development is to harvest peat within the designated peat harvesting areas. The necessary infrastructure to facilitate these activities is already in place at the site.

The existing drainage and water management systems are largely sufficient, with only minor improvements planned. A summary of the proposed infrastructure is provided below.

In March 2023, Dr. Raymond Flynn, Senior Lecturer in Environmental Hydrology at the School of the Natural and Built Environment, Queen's University Belfast, completed a report on the hydrological conditions at Derrymore Bog, Co. Longford. The report confirmed the presence of two surface water outfalls and existing drainage systems. The northern portion of the site drains into the north-westerly flowing Feraghfad River, while the southern portion drains into the westerly flowing Cloonkeen River. Both rivers are tributaries of the River Camlin.

Along the edges of each peat harvesting field, surface water drains (also known as toe drains) have been constructed to direct surface water from the harvesting areas to the main drains and settlement lagoons. These settlement lagoons are designed to accommodate the proposed 27.13-hectare development. The main drains will also provide additional storage capacity for surface water during periods of heavy rainfall.

At the end of the drainage system, a pipe connects the field drains to the main drain, which ultimately leads to the settlement lagoons. This system controls the flow rate to ensure it is manageable for effective treatment by the settlement lagoons. The lagoons will be sized according to BATNEEC peat extraction guidelines, which recommend 50 m³ of lagoon capacity per hectare of harvested peat. The locations of the settlement ponds are detailed in the hydrological report by Dr. Raymond Flynn.

2.3 Potentially Affected Natura 2000 Sites

Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity of the proposed development and with a direct physical/hydrological connection to this development were checked for on the mapping system of the NPWS website <http://webgis.npws.ie/npwsviewer/>. Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the subject site are shown in **Appendix 1**.

The Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed works include:

Special Areas of Conservation

- Mount Jessop Bog SAC (002202)
- Brown Bog SAC (002346)
- Lough Forbes Complex SAC (001818)
- Clooneen Bog SAC (002348)
- Lough Ree SAC (000440)
- Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101)
- Glen Lough SPA (004045)
- Lough Ree SPA (004064)

There are no pathways (physical or hydrological connections which could act as a route for potential direct impacts) from the source site to any of these European Sites listed above.

In total there are No. 8 Natura 2000 sites (Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Special Protection Area (SPA)) within 15km of the proposed development site. The relevant Natura 2000 site(s) are discussed in more detail in **Section 5**.

2.4 Potentially Affected Habitats/Species

The area of potential impact during peat extraction phase is taken as being the site of the proposed development and the downstream aquatic habitat. While the aquatic zone of potentially highest impact is from the location of a proposed development to 5km downstream (Escauriaza *et. al.*, 2017), potential impacts on protected habitats and species in the entire downstream section of the adjoining watercourses are also considered.

No annex I Habitats were identified onsite so there is no potential for direct impacts on the QI Annex Habitats for which the relevant Natura 2000 site(s) are designated. There are no European Sites within the approximate 2km Zol of the proposed development.

A number of proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) are also located within 15km of the proposed project site. While pNHAs are designated for nature conservation they are not included within the Natura 2000 network and are therefore outside of the scope of an Appropriate Assessment Screening.

2.5 Assessment of Likely Effects

This Screening Assessment determines whether the peat extraction, operational and subsequent decommissioning phases of the proposed development, alone or in combination with other projects and plans, will have the potential to result in likely significant effects on the above relevant European Sites. The likely significant effects of the proposed works are outlined in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2 1: Summary of likely significant effects of the proposed development

Assessment Criteria	
Describe any likely direct, indirect, or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Relevant European Site(s):	
Size and Scale	The proposed works are outlined in Section 2.2 . The overall site wherein the proposed development works are to take place is approximately 27.13 hectares in size. The site is located approximately 3km southwest from the nearest European Sites (i.e., Mount Jessop Bog SAC). None of the listed QIs for any of the relevant European sites were recorded within the proposed development site.
Land take	There are no European sites present within the redline boundary and the closest European site is 3km away. Similarly, there were no Annex I habitats or supporting habitat for Annex II species identified on site. Therefore, there will be no effects posed to European sites in this respect. Therefore, the proposed works will not result in land take from any of the European Sites.
Distance from European Sites or key features of the site	The proposed development site is not located within any Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Areas of Protection (SPAs). The closest European site is the Mount Jessop Bog SAC (002202) which is located c. 3km southwest of the proposed development site. There are no Annex habitats within or adjacent to the site of works. There are no pathways (physical or hydrological connections which could act as a route for potential impacts) from the source site to any European Site.
Excavations and Resource requirements	The purpose of this development is to facilitate peat harvesting within the designated Peat Harvesting Areas. The required infrastructure for these activities is already in place at the site. Both the drainage and water management systems are operational, with only minor improvements planned. A summary of the existing and proposed infrastructure is outlined below. In March 2023, Dr. Raymond Flynn, Senior Lecturer in Environmental Hydrology at the School of the Natural and Built Environment, Queen's University Belfast, completed a report on the hydrological conditions at Derrymore Bog, Co. Longford. The report confirmed that the site has two surface water outfalls and an existing drainage network. The northern part of the site drains into the north-westerly flowing Feraghfad River, while the southern part drains into the westerly flowing Cloonkeen River. Both rivers are tributaries of the River Camlin. Surface water drains, also known as toe drains, have been constructed along the edges of each peat harvesting field to channel surface water from the harvesting areas into the main drains and settlement lagoons. These settlement lagoons are designed to manage surface water for the proposed 27.13-hectare development. The main drains will also provide additional storage capacity for surface water during periods of heavy rainfall. At the end of the drainage system, pipes connect the field drains to a main drain, which ultimately leads to the settlement lagoons. This system controls the flow rate to ensure it is effectively managed and treated by the settlement lagoons. The lagoons will be sized in accordance with the BATNEEC guidelines for peat extraction, which recommend 50 m³ of lagoon capacity per hectare of harvested peat. The specific locations of the settlement ponds are detailed in Dr. Raymond Flynn's hydrological report.

Transportation	During the peat extraction phase of the proposed development delivery of machinery and material to site will be via the existing road network and access roadway.
Emissions	There are no operations on site that could result the generation of significant air pollution due to the limited scale and separation distances to dwellings. The proposed development is not a COMAH site (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) nor is the site location near a nuclear installation. There will be some temporary negative impacts on residents and businesses immediately adjacent to the development due to increased traffic, noise, dust, nuisance etc. however these issues will be localised and temporary in nature. Derrymore Peat Limited aim to maintain the existing good relations with all neighbours. There are no proposed road works. The proposed works will have minimal impact on tourism and amenities in the area. Impacts to human beings are not likely to be significant and will be temporary in nature. The proposed development works have the potential to lead to localised increase traffic and dust within the works area and immediate area. This will be localised and temporary in nature. It is anticipated that this impact which is not significant.
In Combination Effects	Longford County Council's planning website gives details on all proposed development applications, a review of the relevant planning applications was assessed and detailed below in Section 6 of this report.
Describe any likely changes to the Relevant European Site(s) arising as a result of the following:	
Disturbance of key species	The proposed development area does not fall within or adjacent to any designated site. While Derrymore Moydow is not currently designated, it was previously listed as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA). However, the site has not been classified as a Natural Heritage Area (NHA). The closest designated site is the Mount Jessop Special Area of Conservation (SAC), located more than 3 km to the west of the proposed works. Additionally, the Lower Lough Forbes SAC is approximately 12 km downstream, via the Cloonkeen River. As confirmed in a letter dated 16th May 2012 from the Department of Arts, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht (Sue Moles, Conservation Ranger for County Longford), the site was evaluated during the 2002 Raised Bog Survey. Due to recent drainage activities, it was decided not to designate this site as a raised bog NHA. The letter also indicated that, under current conditions, it is unlikely that the site will be designated as an NHA or SAC unless something of significant ecological importance is discovered in the cut-over or scrub areas. While the site remains listed as a proposed Natural Heritage Area, it is not expected to attain full NHA status under the revised classifications.
Habitat or Species Fragmentation	The proposed works area does not fall within or adjacent to any designated site. Derrymore pNHA is not currently designated (it was a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA)). Mount Jessop (SAC) is approximately 3km west and the proposed works area or the river does not form part of the SAC. The proposed works and concludes that the proposed works, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, will not have a likely significant effect on any European site. No flora or habitats of importance exist within the site. No significant impact is determined with regards to aquatic ecology as the river. No botanical species of interest have been recorded in this area.

Changes in key indicators of conservation status	No wetlands, coastal zones, mountain or forest areas or nature reserves will be impacted by the proposed works. The Cloonkeen River is located south of proposed development works. There will be no works within the Cloonkeen River as part of the proposed development works. The proposed development works area does not fall within or adjacent to any European site. The Mount Jessop SAC (Site Code: 002202) is located approximately 3km west of the proposed development site. Mount Jessop SAC is not hydraulically linked to the harvesting site. Lower Ree SAC (Site Code: 002137) is located approximately 21km downstream of the proposed development site. Ecological monitoring, using the EPA's Q score system, showed that the nearest downstream samples to Derrymore, taken the Bridge Southeast of Cloonkeen site (RS26C110700), was "Good" (Score 4). The sampling point further downstream at the Bridge W.N.W of Stonepark (RS26C110900) scored 4-5, suggesting an improvement in ecological condition, and was classified as "High". Moreover, the available data for Derrymore and its surroundings provide no evidence that activities at the site have impacted designated sites downstream of Mount Jessop, notably Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (Site Code 004101), the Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code 001818) and the Lough Ree SAC/SPA (Site Code 000440/004064).
Describe any likely impacts on the European Site(s) as a whole in terms of:	
Interference with key relationships that define the structure and function of the European Site(s)	The proposed development works area does not fall within or adjacent to any designated site. Derrymore Moydow is not currently designated however it was listed as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA). The site is currently not classified as an NHA. The nearest designated site Mount Jessop Special Area of Conservation (SAC)), which is located over 3km west of the proposed works area. The Lower Lough Forbes (SAC) is approximately 12km downstream of the Cloonkeen River. Given the limited and confined nature of the proposed works and extensive intervening buffers between the proposed works and relevant Natura 2000 sites it is unlikely that there will be any significant impacts on these European Sites.
Describe from the above the elements of the project or plan or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale of magnitude of impacts is not known.	
likely significant impacts/ unknown scale or magnitude of impact.	It is considered that the impacts of the peat extraction of the proposed development to the relevant Natura 2000 sites (nearest 3km) are not likely to have adverse effects on the water quality and listed QIs of the relevant designated sites. Once peat extraction is complete there will be no adverse effects on the relevant European Sites. Longford County Council's planning website gives details on all proposed development applications, a review of the relevant planning applications was assessed and detailed below in Section 6 of this report.

Section 3: EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Baseline Ecology

The habitats within the study area have been surveyed, following a desktop study and phase 1 habitat walkover survey, and were cross referenced with 'A Guide to Habitats in Ireland' (Fossitt, 2000). The findings of the Phase 1 habitat survey are described below.

The proposed development works area does not fall within or adjacent to any European site. The Mount Jessop SAC (Site Code: 002202) is located approximately 3km west of the proposed development site. Mount Jessop SAC is not hydraulically linked to the harvesting site. Lower Ree SAC (Site Code: 002137) is located approximately 21km downstream of the proposed development site.

Ecological monitoring, using the EPA's Q score system, showed that the nearest downstream samples to Derrymore, taken the Bridge Southeast of Cloonkeen site (RS26C110700), was "Good" (Score 4). The sampling point further downstream at the Bridge W.N.W of Stonepark (RS26C110900) scored 4-5, suggesting an improvement in ecological condition, and was classified as "High".

Moreover, the available data for Derrymore and its surroundings provide no evidence that activities at the site have impacted designated sites downstream of Mount Jessop, notably Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (Site Code 004101), the Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code 001818) and the Lough Ree SAC/SPA (Site Code 000440/004064). The site is predominantly composed of cutover bog (PB4).

In the cutover bog habitat, dense stands of Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and vibrant patches of Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) intermingle with the lush Marsh Grass (*Glyceria spp. or Schoenoplectus spp.*) and fluffy Bog Cotton (*Eriophorum spp.*), while Buttercup (*Ranunculus spp.*) and Redshank (*Persicaria maculosa*) brighten the landscape. The area is dotted with Willow Trees (*Salix spp.*) and Birch Trees (*Betula spp.*), alongside a variety of other species such as Great Burdock (*Arctium lappa*), Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium*), and Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*). Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) add color and texture, while Ferns (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*) contribute to the habitat's rich diversity, complemented by the distinctive presence of Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) and the occasional Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) and Fireweed (*Chamerion angustifolium*).

3.2 Field Study

Ecological field surveys were undertaken by Amy Haigh, Veon Ecology. A site investigation at the proposed development area located near Balbriggan, Co. Dublin, was undertaken on the 08th of August 2024, following best practice guidance methodologies for multi-disciplinary walkover surveys, as per the National Road Authority (NRA) (2008). The Site was searched for evidence of Annex I habitats and Annex II species listed on the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The site was also searched for the presence of invasive plant species listed in Part 1 of the Third Schedule of S.I No. 477 of 2011, European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations (2011). Findings of the surveys were used to inform this AA screening report and are summarised below.

The purpose of the investigation was to define the site in terms of conservation status, habitat type and general composition, to identify any Annex I habitats or Annex II species and to take cognisance of the fact that some Annex species may not be present or easily observed, and as such should identify if suitable habitat for the species is present. It may then be assumed, using the precautionary principle, that the species is potentially present on the site. Note that Annex I habitats may be defined using indicator species which may not be present at time of survey.

The site was divided into different habitats and observations of fauna species present and surrounding land uses were also made in addition to research of available information from Biological Records Centre (NBDC, 2023) presented in **Appendix 2**.

The following methodologies were adopted for this study:

Habitat identification follows:

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

Plant species identification follows:

- Webb, D. A., Parnell, J. and Doogue, D. 1996. An Irish Flora. Dundalgan Press, Dundalk
- Hubbard, C. E. 1992. Grasses: A Guide to their Structure, Identification, Uses and Distribution in the British Isles. Penguin Books, Middlesex.
- Smith, A. J. E. 2004. The Moss Flora of Britain & Ireland. 2nd Ed. Cambridge
- Jermy, A. C., Chater, A. O. & R. W. David. 1982. Sedges of the British Isles: BSBI Handbook No. 1. BSBI, London.

Nomenclature follows:

- Stace, C. 2010. New Flora of the British Isles. Cambridge University Press.

Mammals:

- Hayden, T. Harrington, R. 2000. Exploring Irish Mammals. Town House & Country House Ltd. Dublin.

Avifauna:

- Cleave, A. 1995. Birds of Britain & Europe. Chancellor Press, Hong Kong.

Overview of Habitat Survey:

The site is predominantly composed of cutover bog (PB4). In the cutover bog habitat, dense stands of Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and vibrant patches of Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) intermingle with the lush Marsh Grass (*Glyceria* spp. or *Schoenoplectus* spp.) and fluffy Bog Cotton (*Eriophorum* spp.), while Buttercup (*Ranunculus* spp.) and Redshank (*Persicaria maculosa*) brighten the landscape. The area is dotted with Willow Trees (*Salix* spp.) and Birch Trees (*Betula* spp.), alongside a variety of other species such as Great Burdock (*Arctium lappa*), Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium*), and Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*). Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) add color and texture, while Ferns (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*) contribute to the habitat's rich diversity, complemented by the distinctive presence of Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) and the occasional Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) and Fireweed (*Chamerion angustifolium*).

The nearest downstream samples to Derrymore, taken at the bridge southeast of Cloonkeen (RS26C110700), showed a "Good" ecological status with a score of 4. Further downstream, at the bridge west-northwest of Stonepark (RS26C110900), the ecological condition improved, scoring between 4 and 5, and was classified as "High."

Birds/Avifauna

The bird community recorded at the study site is representative of a rural and agricultural environment and is characterised by the presence of mostly common and widespread bird species. Bird species that were seen or heard during the survey period are presented in **Appendix 2 (Table 9.1)**.

No underground mammal dwellings including badger setts were encountered during the survey. No evidence of badger was encountered but this species is common in an agricultural and rural setting and is likely to occur, at least occasionally, within the surrounding area. The results of the Phase 1 habitat survey and photographs of the proposed development site are presented in **Appendix 2** and **3**.

Section 4: STAGE 1. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

4.1 Overview of Potential Impacts

A screening matrix of unmitigated impacts on the Natura 2000 habitats and species found to be present, or considered possibly present, is presented as part of this assessment. The reasons for decision in the screening matrix are detailed. Potential impacts on habitats and species not occurring within the zone of impact can be screened out.

There are a number of elements associated with the proposed peat extraction works that may give rise to direct and indirect impacts. The significance of these impacts depends on the scale of the impact as well as the ecological condition and the sensitivities of the qualifying interests. Elements of the proposed development that may give rise to impacts which have been considered with regards to potential likely significant effects to European sites are as follows:

- Release of sediment and pollutants which may be discharged into surface water, particularly during high rainfall events.
- Movement of vehicles and machinery associated with peat extraction works and the potential for spillages of oils, fuels or other pollutants which could be transported to the surface water system during rainfall events.
- Transportation, pouring of concrete onsite and washing of concrete lorry flume - risk for entry into surface water.
- Increased silt loading, which may stunt aquatic plant growth, limit dissolved oxygen capacity and overall reduce the ecological quality of watercourses, with the most critical period associated with low flow conditions.
- The introduction or spread of invasive alien species due to peat extraction works.
- Disturbance to fauna (e.g., through noise from peat extraction activity and/or human presence) resulting in the displacement of affected species.
- Accidental mortality of wildlife from peat extraction machinery.

These potential impacts listed above are associated with the peat extraction, and not the operational phase.

4.2 Determining the Likely Zone of Influence

Guidance on AA of Plans and Projects in Ireland notes that a distance of 15km is recommended in the case of plans, derived from UK guidance. In some cases, the distance could be much less, or much more than 15km, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the proposed development, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors and for the in-combination effects (OPR, 2021). Using the source-pathway-receptor model an examination of the potential effects of the proposed development was undertaken (alone and in-combination with other plans and projects) to identify what European sites, and which of their Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interest species were potentially at risk. This examination was used to determine the Zone of Influence (Zoi) for the Proposed Development.

It is vital that an assessment of potential pathways is undertaken to assess potential impact links between the receptor (European sites) and source (proposed development) to establish the risk of any likely significant effects. Additional designated sites including proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA's), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's) sites were also

reviewed, although they do not form part of the AA, they often provide important supporting functions to European sites.

With regards to potential habitat degradation effects associated with the release of sediment and other pollutants to surface water, the Zol of the proposed development is considered to include receiving water bodies in close proximity to, or downstream of, the proposed development site during the peat extraction phase.

The distance downstream is associated with the current biological condition of the accepting water body and its capacity to accept and assimilate sediment and other pollutants. The distance downstream is also associated with the sensitivity of the Qualifying Interests of the European Site which may be hydrologically connected to the proposed development site.

Noise from peat extraction activities has the potential to cause disturbance to resting, foraging, and commuting Qualifying Interest and Special Conservation Interest species. With regards to disturbance effects, the potential Zol is considered to be in the local vicinity (within 300m) of the proposed development during the peat extraction phase. The proposed works during the peat extraction phase are anticipated to generate relatively low levels of noise and only during permitted peat extraction hours. In general, machinery will be designed to ensure that the maximum noise level 10m outside the site boundary do not exceed an equivalent continuous sound level beyond what is recommended in the BSI British Standards (BS5228-1:2009+A1:2014). It should be noted, no night works are anticipated.

Where the proposed development site does not have the potential to impact on the qualifying Annex II species of the EU Habitats Directive or Annex I species of the EU Birds Directive of a European Site or if the terrestrial qualifying habitats of the European sites occur at a remote distance from the proposed works site, (i.e. buffered from the proposed development site), then these European Sites are not considered to be within the Zol of the proposed development.

Given the location and scale of the development, the zone of influence is considered likely to be limited to the immediate vicinity of the project. Taking this particular case (i.e. telecommunications mast Installation) into consideration and the requirements for an effective Screening for Appropriate Assessment as outlined above in previous sections, it has been deemed appropriate to reduce the recommended 15km distance to 2km for an assessment of potential influence on European Designated Sites. The proposed development site is not hydrologically connected to any European Sites. In addition, the nearest Natura 2000 site to the proposed development site is located c. 3km from the proposed works (outside the Zol).

4.3 Identification of Relevant European Sites

The source-pathway-receptor (S-P-R) conceptual model was used to identify a list of 'relevant' European sites (i.e. those which could be potentially affected by the Proposed Development). This conceptual model is a standard tool in environmental assessment (OPR, 2021). In order for an effect to occur, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism means there is no likelihood for the effect to occur. In the context of the Proposed Development, the model comprises:

- Source (s) – e.g., Sediment run-off from proposed development works.
- Pathway (s) – e.g., Rivers and drains connecting to a European site.
- Receptor (s) – e.g., Special Conservation Interests (SCI) or Qualifying Interests (QI).

There are currently No. 8 European sites within 15km of the Proposed Development. These include Mount Jessop Bog SAC (002202); Brown Bog SAC (002346); Lough Forbes Complex SAC (001818); Clooneen Bog SAC (002348); Lough Ree SAC (000440); Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101), Glen Lough SPA (004045) and Lough Ree SPA (004064).

There are no pathways (physical or hydrological connections which could act as a route for potential direct impacts) from the source site to any of these European Sites listed above. Of these sites listed above, none are considered

relevant for further consideration based on proximity to the proposed development and source-pathway-receptor relationships.

4.4 Stage 1: Screening of Relevant European Sites

Potential impacts and their significance, if any, within the Relevant European sites are considered below. Impacts are considered considering the Conservation Objectives/Special Conservation Interests for which these European sites are designated.

Table 4.1: Screening assessment of the potential effects arising from the proposed development using SPR model.

Site Code	Site Name	Distance To (m)	Qualifying Interests (* denotes a priority habitat)	Assessment
002202	Mount Jessop Bog SAC	3000.10	Habitats 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration 91D0 Bog woodland*	This European Site is located entirely outside the proposed development site. At its nearest the designated site is c. 3km to the west of the proposed developments site. There is no hydrological connectivity between the site and this European site (i.e., through surface or ground water pathways). Based on this rationale, Mount Jessop Bog SAC has been screened-out for potential impacts.
002346	Brown Bog SAC	9302.15	Habitats 7110 Active raised bogs* 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion	This European Site is located entirely outside the proposed development site. At its nearest the designated site is c. 9.3km to the northwest of the proposed developments site. There is no hydrological connectivity between the site and this European site (i.e., through surface or ground water pathways). Based on this rationale, Brown Bog SAC has been screened-out for potential impacts.
001818	Lough Forbes Complex SAC	8346.14	Habitats 3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation 7110 Active raised bogs* 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion 91E0 Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*	This European Site is located entirely outside the proposed development site. At its nearest the designated site is c. 8.3km to the north of the proposed developments site. There is no hydrological connectivity between the site and this European site (i.e., through surface or ground water pathways). Based on this rationale, Lough Forbes Complex SAC has been screened-out for potential impacts.
002348	Clooneen Bog SAC	13537.42	Habitats 7110 Active raised bogs* 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion 91D0 Bog woodland*	This European Site is located entirely outside the proposed development site. At its nearest the designated site is c. 13.5km to the north of the proposed developments site. There is no hydrological connectivity between the site and this European site (i.e., through surface or ground water pathways). Based on this rationale, Clooneen Bog SAC has been screened-out for potential impacts.
000440	Lough Ree SAC	14963.49	Habitats 3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid	This European Site is located entirely outside the proposed development site. At its nearest the designated site is c. 14.9km to the west of the proposed developments site. There is no hydrological connectivity between the site and this European site (i.e., through surface or ground water pathways).

			sites) 7110 Active raised bogs* 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration 7230 Alkaline fens 8240 Limestone pavements* 91D0 Bog woodland* 91E0 Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)* Species 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)	Based on this rationale, Lough Ree SAC has been screened-out for potential impacts.
004101	Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA	8341.54	Birds A395 Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>)	This European Site is located entirely outside the proposed development site. At its nearest the designated site is c. 8.3km to the north of the proposed developments site. There is no hydrological connectivity between the site and this European site (i.e., through surface or ground water pathways). Disturbance effects are known to be negligible beyond 1.5km and this SPA is 8.3 km from the proposed site. Given the distance between the proposed project and the SPA, the small-scale temporary nature of the project and the absence of direct pathways there are no effects identified to the ecological integrity of the SPA. Based on this rationale, Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA has been screened-out for potential impacts.
004045	Glen Lough SPA	12703.90	Birds A038 Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>)	This European Site is located entirely outside the proposed development site. At its nearest the designated site is c.12.7km to the southeast of the proposed developments site. There is no hydrological connectivity between the site and this European site (i.e., through surface or ground water pathways). Disturbance effects are known to be negligible beyond 1.5km and this SPA is 12.7km from the proposed site. Given the distance between the proposed project and the SPA, the small-scale temporary nature of the project and the absence of direct pathways there are no effects identified to the ecological integrity of the SPA. Based on this rationale, Glen Lough SPA has been screened-out for potential impacts.
004064	Lough Ree SPA	14933.94	Birds A004 Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) A038 Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) A050 Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) A053 Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) A056 Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) A061 Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) A065 Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) A067 Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) A125 Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) A142 Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) Habitats Wetlands	This European Site is located entirely outside the proposed development site. At its nearest the designated site is c.14.9km to the north-west of the proposed developments site. There is no hydrological connectivity between the site and this European site (i.e., through surface or ground water pathways). Disturbance effects are known to be negligible beyond 1.5km and this SPA is 12.7km west from the proposed site. Given the distance between the proposed project and the SPA, the small-scale temporary nature of the project and the absence of direct pathways there are no effects identified to the ecological integrity of the SPA.

				Based on this rationale, Lough Ree SPA has been screened-out for potential impacts.
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The Hydrology map in the Appendices is taken from the EPA website <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/AAGeoTool>. The watercourse(s) are labelled along with directional flow (See Appendix 1). Where the flow of the watercourses is away from or does not flow into European sites mentioned, no Qualifying Interests have been recorded within 10km of the site and/or there is no hydrological connection to the European sites, these sites have been screened out.*

European sites (SPA/SAC) downstream with direct hydrological connections, or any European sites within 15km where Qis have been recorded on or within 10km of site have been screened in.

Section 5: ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

The available information on the relevant Natura 2000 sites, was reviewed to establish whether the proposed development site is likely to have a significant effect on any European Site. The potential for impacts on the features of interest is identified using information collated from the desk study in conjunction with the receiving baseline environmental data provided during the site survey and presented below in **Section 3**.

The likelihood of impacts occurring are established in light of the type and scale of the project, the location of the project with respect to the Natura 2000 sites and the features of interest and conservation objectives of the relevant Natura 2000 sites.

The assessment was carried out following the source-pathway-receptor model. The potential impacts are summarised into the following categories for screening process.

- Direct impacts which refer to habitat loss or fragmentation arising from possible land-take requirements for development. Direct impacts can be as a result of a change in land use or management (e.g., the removal of agricultural practices which prevent scrub encroachment).
- Indirect and secondary impacts do not have a straight-line route between source and receptor. As a result, it is often difficult to ensure that all the possible indirect impacts of the plan or development, in combination with other plans and projects are established.
- Indirect and secondary impacts can occur when a development alters the hydrology of a catchment area, which in turn affects the movement of groundwater to a site and the qualifying interests that rely on the maintenance of water levels.
- Deterioration in water quality can occur as an indirect consequence of a development, which in turn changes the aquatic environment and reduces its capacity to support certain plants and animals.
- Disturbance to fauna can occur directly through the loss of habitat (e.g., potential bat roosts) or indirectly through noise, vibration and increased activity associated with peat extraction and operation.

Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) have been prepared for a number of European sites. These detailed SSCO aim to define favourable conservation condition for the qualifying habitats and species at that site by setting targets for appropriate attributes which define the character habitat. The maintenance of the favourable condition for these habitats and species at the site level will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Favourable conservation status of a species can be described as being achieved when:

‘Population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced or likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.’

Favourable conservation status of a habitat can be described as being achieved when:

'Its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing, and the ecological factors that 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'.

A Generic Conservation Objective for a SAC is as follows:

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.

A Generic Conservation Objective for a SPA is as follows:

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.

5.1 Identification of potential significant effects

The features of special conservation interests for the relevant European Sites are presented above in **Table 4.1**. Potential impacts, both direct and indirect, as a result of the proposed development were identified in the previous section and summarised below. The potential for cumulative impacts to occur and likelihood of effects being significant are also discussed below.

Direct Impacts

The proposed works and concludes that the proposed works, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, will not have a likely significant effect on any European site. No flora or habitats of importance exist within the site. No significant impact is determined with regards to aquatic ecology as the river. No botanical species of interest have been recorded in this area.

Indirect Impacts

It is anticipated that there is a probability of localised noise and vibration and potential for air pollution (increased dust). These are not anticipated to be significant and will be short-term and temporary in nature. However, these impacts are not considered to be significant considering landscape sensitivity. There is a small probability that the proposed works could impact fauna and water although the proposed works will be designed and undertaken following appropriate guidance and procedures to ensure significant impacts do not occur.

The Site is too distant from any European Site for the proposed works to cause any disturbance or displacement of species listed as conservation interest for these designated sites (**See Table 4.1**). Disturbance effects are known to be negligible beyond 1.5km and the nearest European Site is located 3km from the proposed development site.

Given the distance between the proposed project and the relevant European Sites, the small-scale temporary nature of the project and the absence of direct pathways there are no effects identified to the ecological integrity of any European Site. Thus, these European Sites cannot be considered potential receptors and impacts on these European sites Conservation Objectives are not expected.

The proposed development site is approximately 27.13ha in size of primarily cutover bog (PB4) and does not offer habitats suitable for species listed as conservation interest for the relevant European Sites which may forage terrestrially, outside the designated site boundaries. Given the minor scale of the proposed development and distance between the proposed development site and the relevant European Sites, it is not likely that species listed as conservation interest will be negatively impacted by noise or activity during the peat extraction phase of the proposed development.

Thus, it is considered that the proposed development does not have the potential to impact, directly or indirectly, any of the species or habitats listed as features of interest of the relevant European Sites (i.e. Mount Jessop Bog SAC (002202); Brown Bog SAC (002346); Lough Forbes Complex SAC (001818); Clooneen Bog SAC (002348); Lough Ree SAC (000440); Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101), Glen Lough SPA (004045) and Lough Ree SPA (004064).

Section 6: IN-COMBINATION AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

The proposed development was considered in combination with other plans and projects in the locality that could result in cumulative/in-combination effects on the relevant European Sites. Cumulative effects can result from individually insignificant but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time or concentrated within an area or location.

Cumulative effects can occur where a proposed development results in impacts that when considered in-combination with impacts caused by other proposed or permitted projects and plans may result in a cumulative effect. Plans or Projects Which Might Act in Combination Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that, any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the European site(s) 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(s) in view of the site's conservation objectives.

A search of the Longford County Council planning enquiry system (<https://www.eplanning.ie>), and the EIA portal was carried out on the 01st of August 2024. Finalised applications lodged within the vicinity of the proposed development within the last 5 years were examined. Planning applications within the last 5 years in the locality of the proposed development site consisted primarily of applications for alterations and extensions to existing buildings, along with the peat extraction of small-scale developments (See Table 6.1).

The majority of these developments are small scale in nature and given the scale of the proposed development and the distance between the development site and the relevant Natura 2000 sites, it is not considered that potential cumulative effects and resulting impacts from the proposed works will occur.

In the absence of any potential impacts to the relevant Natura 2000 Sites due to the proposed development there is no pathway for other existing permitted or proposed plans and projects to act in-combination and to give rise to cumulative impacts.

A review of planning applications within 500 metres of the site indicates that there are no significant development proposals within the vicinity of the site that could act in cumulation with the project. In addition, the small-scale nature and operation of the proposed development is unlikely give rise to any significant cumulative environmental effects.

Table 6.1: Other plans and projects in the locality.

Planning reference	location	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Are significant in-combination effects likely
20134	Trillickacurry, Longford, Co Longford	This project involves the construction of a one-and-a-half-storey extension to an existing bungalow dwelling and the construction of a garage.	No	No
2151	Trillickacurry, Longford, Co. Longford	This is a project involves the construction of domestic store and garage and conversion of existing attached garage with new window to front of dwelling and all ancillary site works.	No	No
20309	Clooncaulfield, Moydow, Co Longford	This is a project involves the construction an existing single storey extension to the rear of an existing single storey type dwelling house and ancillary site works	No	No
2460010	Trillickatemple, Co. Longford	This is a project involves the construction of a new two storey traditional pitched roof detached dwelling house, new vehicular entrance, new boundary treatment, permeable driveway, landscaping works, onsite wastewater treatment system to include percolation area and all other associated ancillary site development works	No	No

Section 7: SCREENING DETERMINATION

In accordance with the Habitats Directive, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been carried out on the proposed development, in relation to any potential impacts upon the relevant European Sites.

The proposed development works are unlikely to have any significant impact on any European Site due to the scale and remote distance of the proposed development site from the relevant designated sites (c. 3km to nearest European Site) and the extensive intervening buffers including industrial development and agricultural land. All the relevant European Sites can therefore all be screened out.

It can be concluded with certainty that, in view of best scientific knowledge, and on the basis of objective information that the proposed works will not have a likely significant effect on any European Site. While no significant adverse effects are anticipated during the peat extraction phase of the proposed development, measures will be taken prevent any potential pollution from the proposed peat extraction works.

As the potential effects that could arise from the proposed development have been examined in the context of several factors that could potentially affect the integrity of any Relevant European Site(s). On the basis of the findings of this Screening for AA, it is concluded that the proposed development:

- Is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European Site(s).
- And will not have a likely significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European Site(s).

Therefore, in conclusion a Stage 2 AA is not required for the proposed development. On the basis of this screening assessment which determined that, in view of best scientific knowledge and in the absence of mitigation measures, potential likely significant effects from the proposed development can be ruled out, in view of the conservation objectives of these European Sites. In addition, there is no potential for significant adverse effects from the proposed development, alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of these European Sites.

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Section 9: APPENDICES

Appendix 1. MAPS & FIGURES

Figure 9.1: Proposed Development Site Boundary



Figure 9.2: WFD River Sub Basins



Figure 9.3: GSI vulnerability (EPA, 2024)

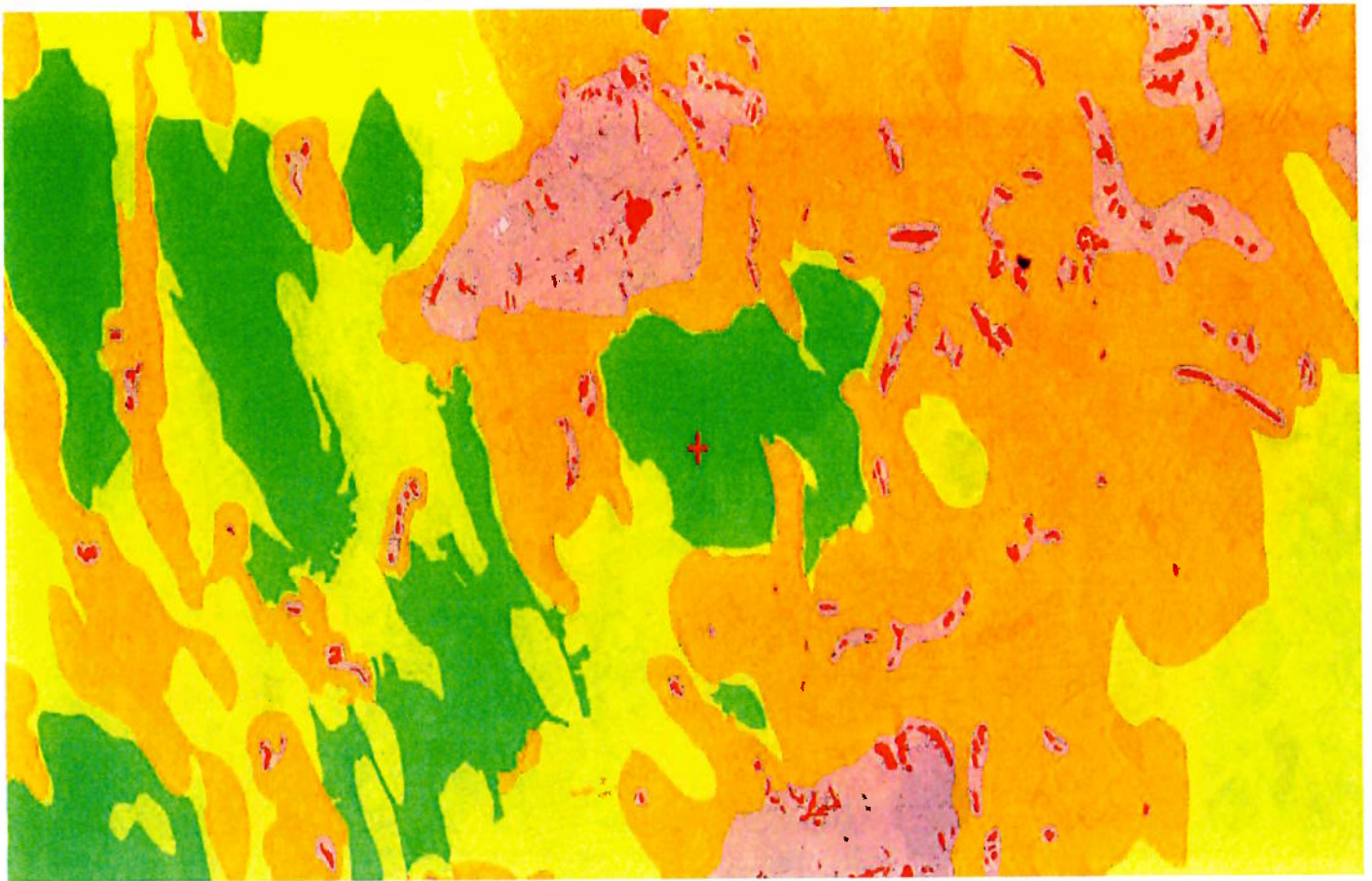


Figure 9.4: GSI Bedrocks Polygons 100K (EPA, 2024)

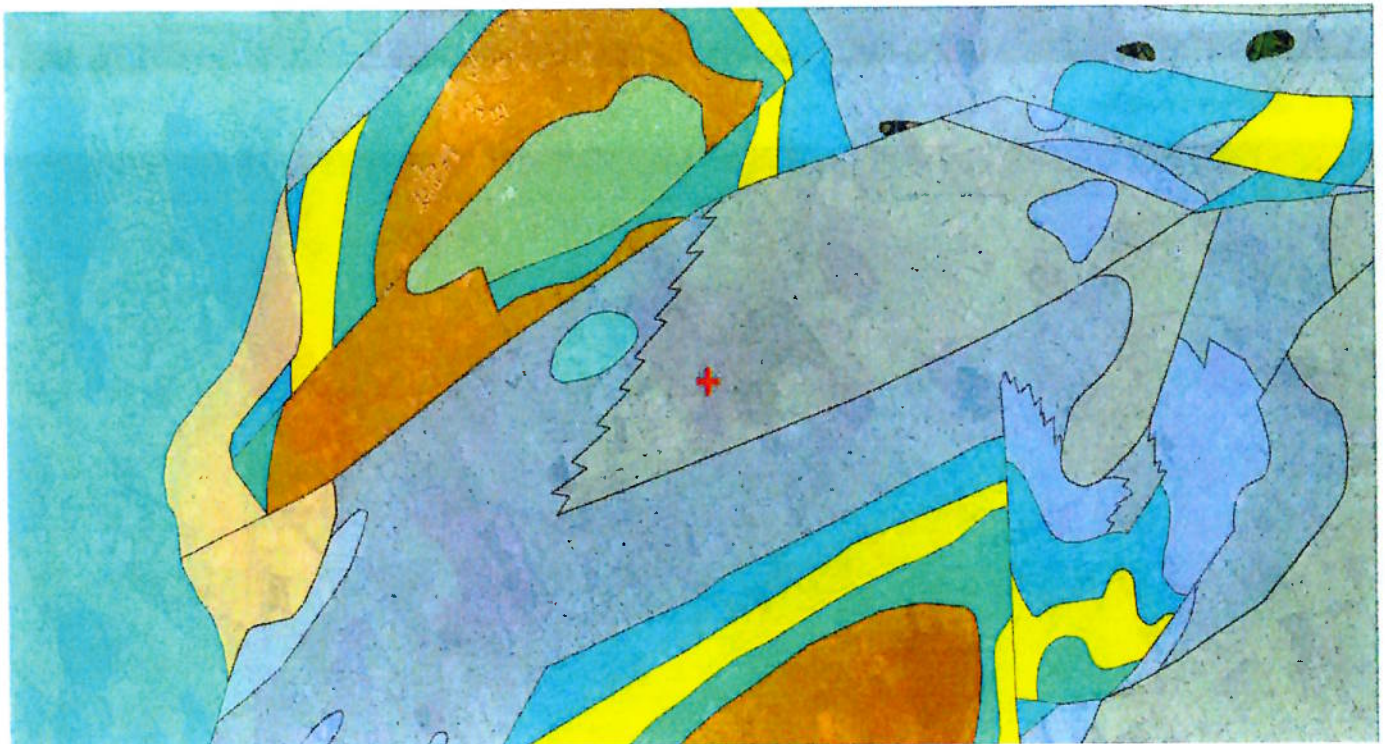


Figure 9.5: National Soils (EPA,2024)

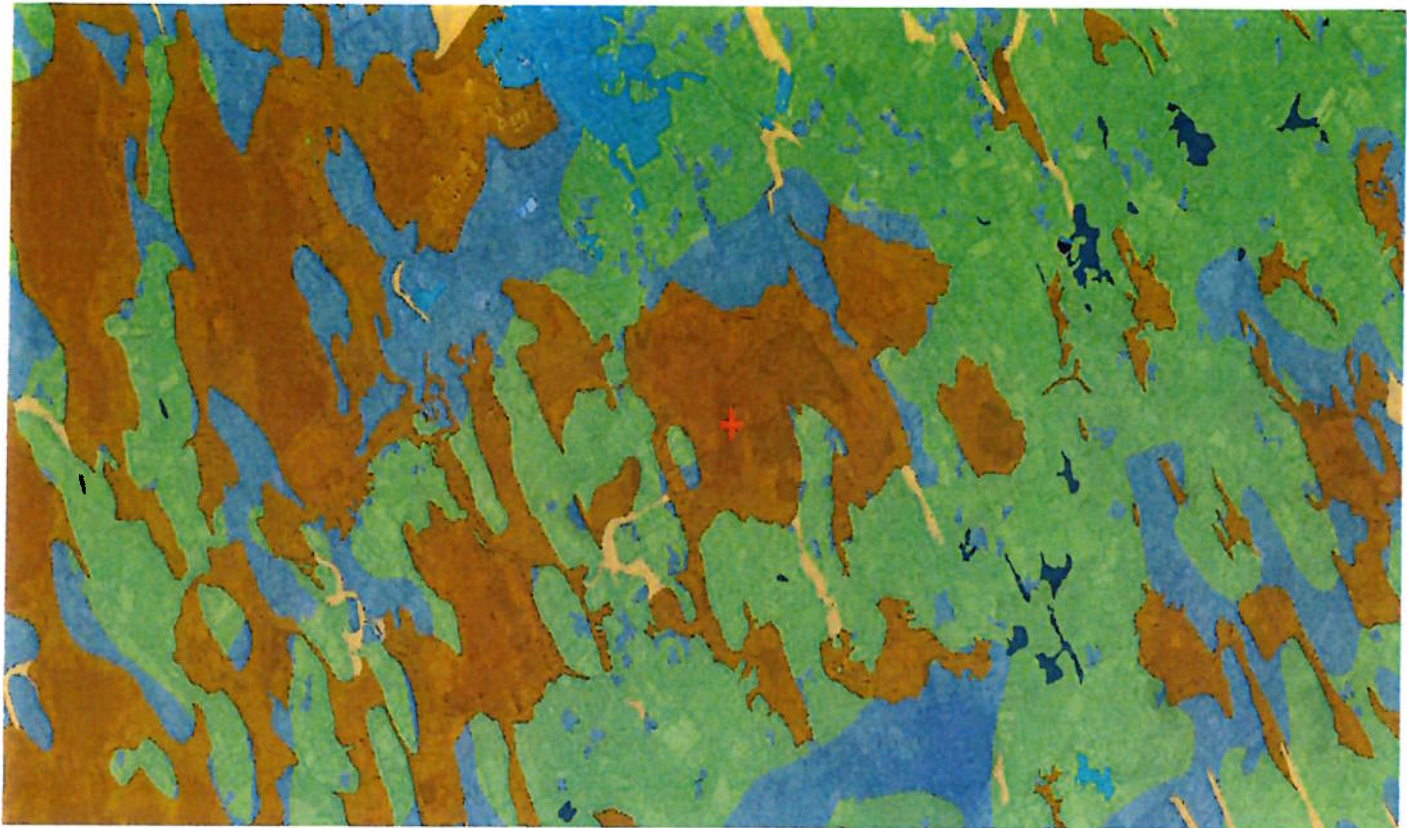


Figure 9.6: National Sub Soils (EPA,2024)



2

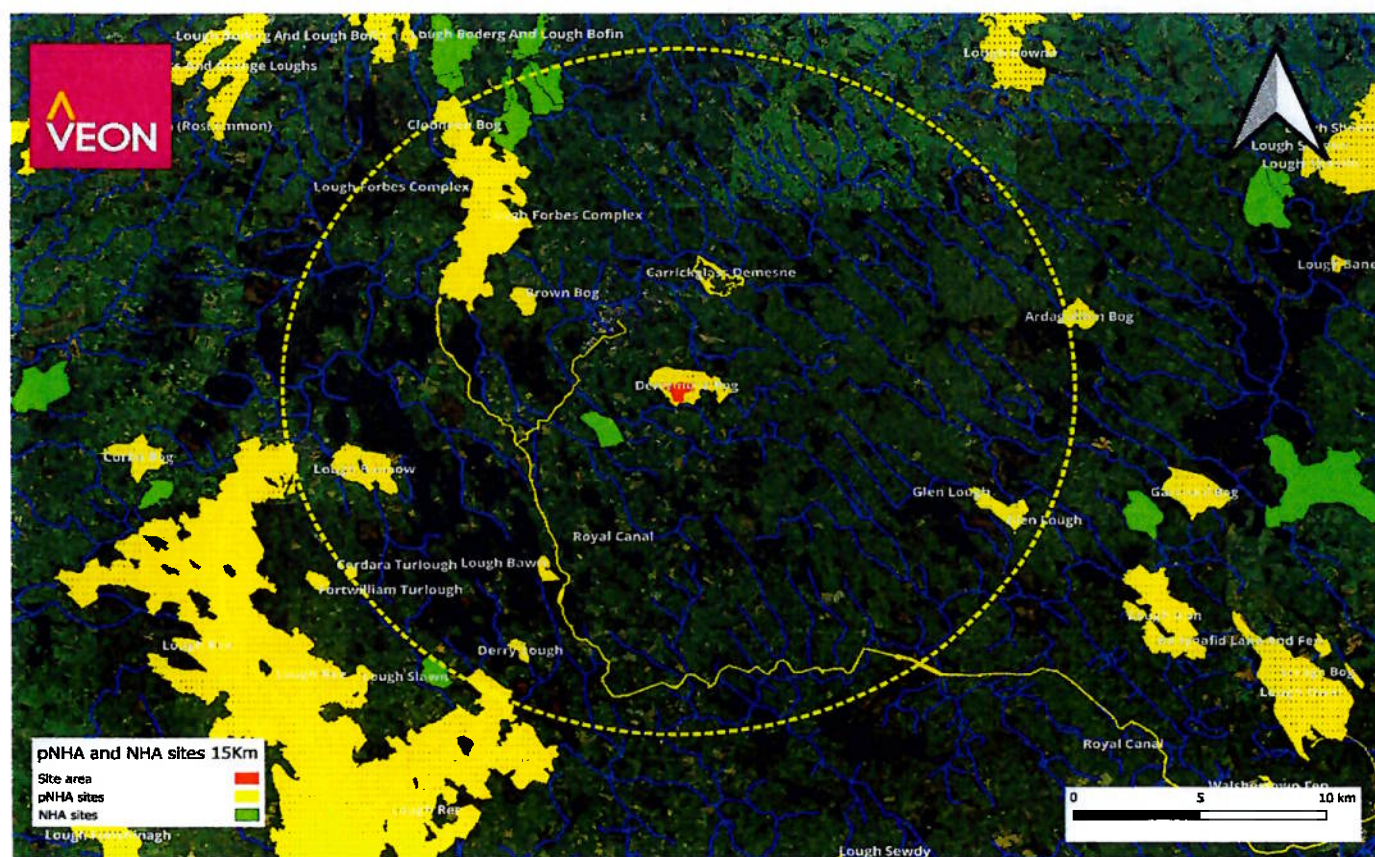
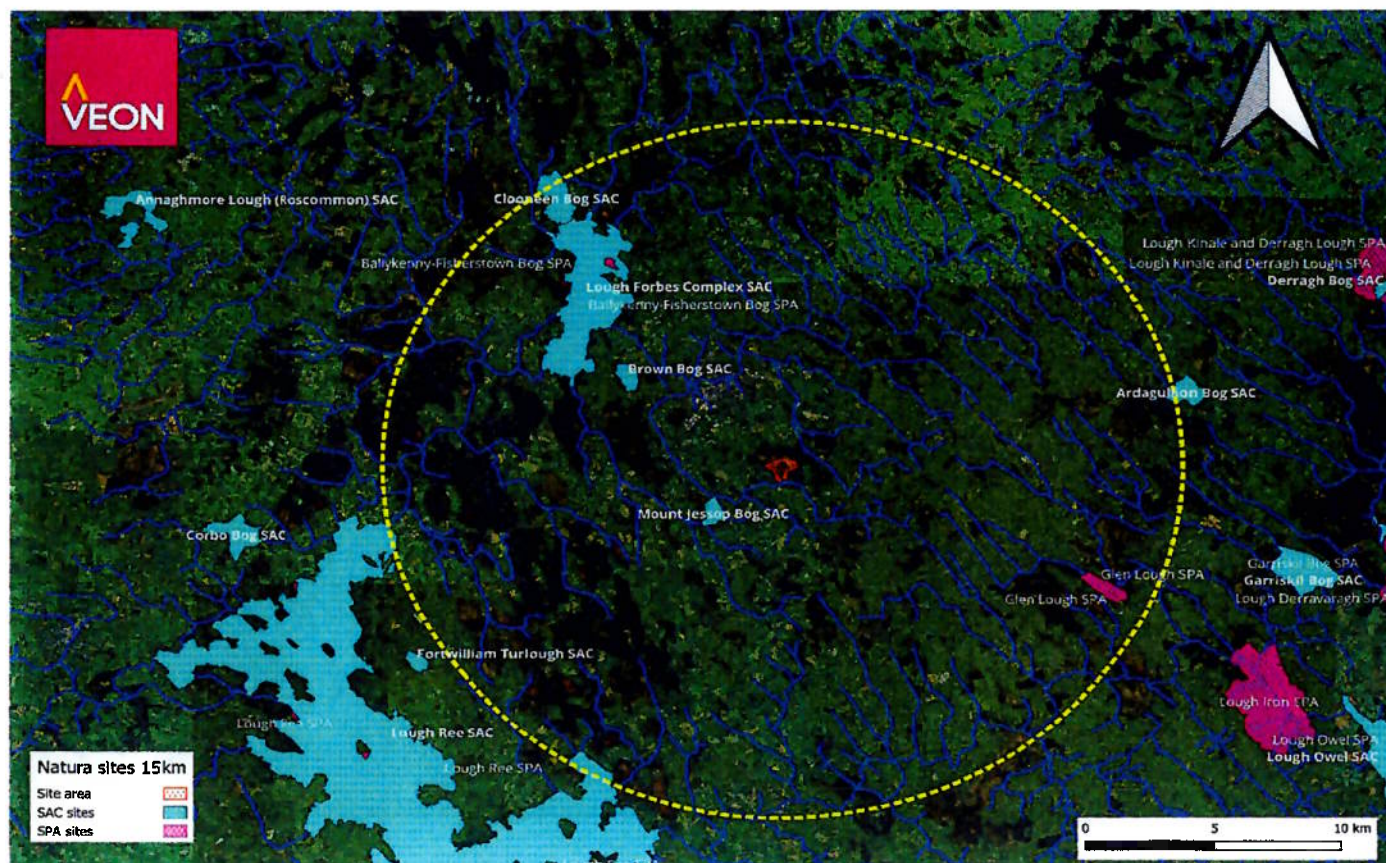


Figure 9.9: Habitat Map



Appendix 2. ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS & INVESTIGATIONS

1. Introduction

This phase 1 habitat survey report has been prepared to inform a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) undertaken by Veon Ecology. The site walkover survey was carried out on the 08th of August 2024 by Amy Haigh, Veon Ecology. The proposed development site is located within the townlands of Derrymore and Cloncaulfield, Moydow, Co. Longford. The proposed development site is centred around Irish Grid Reference: E 615951, N 771416). The area of the proposed development redline boundary is 27.13 hectares. This includes, access roadways, storage areas, settlement lagoons and drainage areas within the Peat Harvesting Area. The area of the proposed development redline boundary is 27.13ha

1.1 Objective

The Phase 1 Habitat Survey is conducted at early-stage planning. The survey determines whether there is a requirement for additional species-specific surveys. If such a requirement exists, then an extended Phase 1/2 Habitat Survey will be conducted to encompass additional habitat preservation and/or protected species.

The primary objective of the phase 1 habitat survey is to record the biodiversity and habitat types present within the site. This ecological report will be used to assess the sites potential habitat suitability for the proposed project. This report gives a summary of the biodiversity and habitat types observed and recorded during the walkover survey in advance of a Screening for AA report.

1.2 Phase One habitat Surveys

The survey identified a variety of different Macro habitat types across the proposed development site, each supporting a variety of different flora and fauna species within them. It should be noted that due to the timing of the survey, the results provide details of the site's current ecological situation and not all species may have been visible for observation.

This phase one habitat and ecological report has been prepared in accordance with the current guidance (Heritage Council, 2011). The purpose of the phase one habitat survey is to designate the site in terms of conservation status, habitat classification, and to identify any potential Annex I habitats or Annex II species present on site and/or identify the sites suitability for Annex II species. Through the application of the precautionary principle, Annex I habitats may still be defined using indicator species which may not be present at the time of surveys.

The results of the survey will inform the subsequent AA report. The AA screening was undertaken on the basis that potential negative impacts and subsequent negative effects to European sites may occur from the proposed project.

The following research has been carried out to inform this report:

- Ecological data search
- Phase 1 habitat survey
- Site specific Habitat mapping

1.3 Survey Methodology

A phase 1 habitat survey was carried out to determine the types of vegetation present, species composition, their extent, and location. Site boundaries within and around the survey area were mapped and their structure (hedge, drain, etc) recorded.

The results of the survey are presented in accordance with the standard Phase 1 habitat survey format with habitat descriptions and mapping provided. In addition, information gathered relating to recorded species, habitat type and structure are also presented in this report.

Desk study

An ecological data search for the survey site and the surrounding area was reviewed through the NBDC and biodiversity Ireland. In addition, aerial mapping and ordnance survey maps were reviewed to identify any features of interest within and surrounding the survey site (e.g., large ponds).

Field surveys

The phase 1 habitat survey follows the methodology given in "Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey" (JNCC, 2003). The vegetation communities and habitats present are described to level three using Fossitt (2000).

Faunal Surveys

Faunal species were recorded during the habitat survey, including inter alia; birds, mammals, and amphibians, observed or heard. Specific attention was also given to the presence of any protected or invasive species.

2. Site Overview

The habitats within the study area have been surveyed, following a desktop study and phase 1 habitat walkover survey, and were cross referenced with 'A Guide to Habitats in Ireland' (Fossitt, 2000). The findings of the Phase 1 habitat survey are described below.

The site is predominantly composed of cutover bog (PB4). No coastal zones, mountain or forest areas or nature reserves will be impacted by the proposed works. The Cloonkeen River is located south of proposed development works. There will be no works within the Cloonkeen River as part of the proposed development works.

The proposed development works area does not fall within or adjacent to any European site. The Mount Jessop SAC (Site Code: 002202) is located approximately 3km west of the proposed development site. Mount Jessop SAC is not hydraulically linked to the harvesting site. Lower Ree SAC (Site Code: 002137) is located approximately 21km downstream of the proposed development site.

Ecological monitoring, using the EPA's Q score system, showed that the nearest downstream samples to Derrymore, taken the Bridge Southeast of Cloonkeen site (RS26C110700), was "Good" (Score 4). The sampling point further downstream at the Bridge W.N.W of Stonepark (RS26C110900) scored 4-5, suggesting an improvement in ecological condition, and was classified as "High".

Moreover, the available data for Derrymore and its surroundings provide no evidence that activities at the site have impacted designated sites downstream of Mount Jessop, notably Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (Site Code 004101), the Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code 001818) and the Lough Ree SAC/SPA (Site Code 000440/004064).

In the cutover bog habitat, dense stands of Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and vibrant patches of Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) intermingle with the lush Marsh Grass (*Glyceria spp. or Schoenoplectus spp.*) and fluffy Bog Cotton (*Eriophorum spp.*), while Buttercup (*Ranunculus spp.*) and Redshank (*Persicaria maculosa*) brighten the landscape. The area is dotted with Willow Trees (*Salix spp.*) and Birch Trees (*Betula spp.*), alongside a variety of other species such as Great Burdock (*Arctium lappa*), Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium*), and Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*). Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) add color and texture, while Ferns (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*) contribute to the habitat's rich diversity, complemented by the distinctive presence of Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) and the occasional Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) and Fireweed (*Chamerion angustifolium*).

3. Habitat & Vegetation Description

The habitats identified within the survey area are outlined below:

Bogs (PB)

- Cutover bog (PB4)

The features of these habitats and associated micro-habitats are described below with their suitability for biodiversity conservation within the context of the project. Photographs of the individual macro-habitats identified within the survey site are included for illustration purposes.

3.1 Bogs (PB)

Cutover bog (PB4)

The site is characterized by a cutover bog (PB4), shaped by historical peat extraction, resulting in a patchwork of wet and dry areas. The vegetation is a diverse mix of remnant bog species, grasses, and early successional plants, reflecting

the altered hydrology and partially drained conditions. Within this habitat, dense stands of Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and vibrant patches of Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) intermingle with lush Marsh Grass (*Glyceria spp. or Schoenoplectus spp.*) and fluffy Bog Cotton (*Eriophorum spp.*). Bright accents are provided by Buttercup (*Ranunculus spp.*) and Redshank (*Persicaria maculosa*), while Willow Trees (*Salix spp.*) and Birch Trees (*Betula spp.*) dot the landscape. Additional plant species include Great Burdock (*Arctium lappa*), Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium*), and Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*). Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) add color and texture, complemented by Ferns (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*). The habitat is further enriched by the distinctive presence of Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), and occasional Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) and Fireweed (*Chamerion angustifolium*).

4. Ecological Appraisal & Species Recorded

The subsequent list of Flora and Fauna are based on recordings made during the walkover survey of the site undertaken on 08th of August 2024. A multi-disciplinary ecological survey approach was taken during the walkover survey. The walkover survey was used to record the presence, or likely presence, of a range of protected species, including bats, non-volant mammals, amphibians, and birds. Potential suitable habitats were investigated for any signs of faunal presence. As part of this report the relevant historic records from the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) will be accessed and the findings included as part of the overall biodiversity summary of a site.

4. Ecological Appraisal & Species Recorded

The subsequent list of Flora and Fauna are based on recordings made during the walkover survey of the site undertaken on the 08th of August 2024. A multi-disciplinary ecological survey approach was taken during the walkover survey. The walkover survey was used to record the presence, or likely presence, of a range of protected species, including bats, non-volant mammals, amphibians, and birds. Potential suitable habitats were investigated for any signs of faunal presence. As part of this report the relevant historic records from the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) will be accessed and the findings included as part of the overall biodiversity summary of a site.

4.1 Volant & Non-Volant Mammals

Historic NBDC records for protected volant and non-volant mammals observed within the 10km grid squares are listed below:

Volant mammal species:

- Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*)
- Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu stricto*)
- Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)
- Lesser Noctule (*Nyctalus leisleri*)
- Nathusius's Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*)
- Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*)
- Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu lato*)
- Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)

Non-volant mammal species:

- Eurasian Badger (*Meles meles*)
- European Otter (*Lutra lutra*)
- Eurasian Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus*)
- Eurasian Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)
- Pine Marten (*Martes martes*)
- West European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)

Bat Habitat Appraisal

The walkover survey of the site was carried out during daylight hours (9:30 – 12:00) on the 08th of August 2024. Relevant features on the site were visually assessed for potential foraging and roosting habitats for bats. Trees on site were surveyed at ground level through exterior inspections.

Results:

Historic records of bats were recorded within the 10km grid square on which the site is located. The overall suitability of the area for bat activity was relatively moderate (25.44). The habitat suitability index for 'All bats' and for each individual species of bat is presented below (See Table 9.1 below). The index ranges from 0 to 100, with 100 being most suitable for bats. The area is deemed as more favourable for bat activity with local areas of abundance present due to the suitable habitats surrounding the survey area, thus it cannot be ruled out that bats may use the site for foraging and/or commuting through the site or along its boundaries, particularly along the hedgerows and treelines.

Table 9.1: Bat Suitability Index for the site and its surrounding area (N8DC, 2024)

Suitability index for different bat species:		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Suitability Score
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	41
Brown long-eared bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	33
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	44
Lesser horseshoe bat	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	1
Leisler's bat	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	40
Whiskered bat	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	8
Daubenton's bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	25
Nathusius' pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	7
Natterer's bat	<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	30
Total Score for All Bat Species		25.44

Eurasian Badger (*Meles meles*)

Badgers were recorded within the 10km and 2km grid square on which the site is located. Due to the suitable habitats surrounding the survey area, it cannot be ruled out that badgers may use the site for passageway between sites.

Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

Otters were recorded within the 10km grid square on which the site is located. No otter spraints were identified within the site of proposed works during the survey and no evidence of any footprints, actual possible or potential resting sites nor slides or other well-used access points to watercourses.

Other non-volant mammals

No evidence of other protected mammal species such as Eurasian red squirrel, Irish hare, stoat and/or pine marten were recorded during the site visit. Suitable habitats for these species are frequent in the larger geographic area. Thus, it cannot be ruled out that these species may use the site for foraging and/or passageway between areas.

4.2 Amphibians

The Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) and Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) was recorded in the 10km grid square surrounding the site. During the walkover survey no incidental signs of amphibians were recorded.

4.3 Reptiles

The Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) was not recorded in the 10km grid square, no reptiles were recorded in the 2km grid squares wherein the site is located. In addition, no observations of reptiles were recorded during the site walkover.

4.4 Birds/Avifauna

A variety of bird species were recorded flying over or within the proposed development area during the site visit (See **Table 9.2**). Protected birds recorded in the NBDC 10km grid squares which may utilise the site, wider site, or adjacent habitats are listed below in **Section 6: Further Appendices**.

Table 9.2 Bird species observed and recorded during the phase 1 habitat survey site visit

Bird species recorded during the phase 1 habitat survey		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Designations/Conservation Status
Kestrel	(<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>)	Green List
House Martin	(<i>Delichon urbicum</i>)	Green List
Hooded Crow	(<i>Corvus cornix</i>)	Green List
Swallow	(<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)	Green List
Willow Warbler	(<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>)	Green List

5. Further References

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6. Further Appendices

Table 9.3 Protected bird species (amber/red listed) recorded in 10km² grid surrounding the site (HBD, 2024)

Protected Bird species recorded in 10km ²	
Species Name	Designations/Conservation Status
Barn Owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Barn Swallow (<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Black-headed Gull (<i>Larus ridibundus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Kestrel (<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species
Common Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Linnet (<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Pheasant (<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Snipe (<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II Bird Species
Common Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Swift (<i>Apus apus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Common Wood Pigeon (<i>Columba palumbus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Corn Bunting (<i>Emberiza calandra</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Corn Crane (<i>Crex crex</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section II Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Eurasian Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Eurasian Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II Bird Species
Eurasian Woodcock (<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Great Bittern (<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Grey Partridge (<i>Perdix perdix</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II Bird Species
House Martin (<i>Delichon urbicum</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
House Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List

Northern Goshawk (<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Northern Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II Bird Species
Red Grouse (<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Sand Martin (<i>Riparia riparia</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Sky Lark (<i>Alauda arvensis</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Snowy Owl (<i>Bubo scandiaca</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Spotted Flycatcher (<i>Muscicapa striata</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Stock Pigeon (<i>Columba oenas</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Whinchat (<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Yellowhammer (<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List

Table 9 4: Protected Mammal species recorded in 10km² grid surrounding the site (NBDC, 2024).

Protected Mammal species recorded in 10km ²	
Species Name	Designations/Conservation Status
Brown Long-eared Bat (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>)	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> <i>sensu stricto</i>)	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Daubenton's Bat (<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>)	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Eurasian Badger (<i>Meles meles</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Eurasian Pygmy Shrew (<i>Sorex minutus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Eurasian Red Squirrel (<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
European Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex II Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Lesser Noctule (<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>)	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Nathusius's Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>)	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Natterer's Bat (<i>Myotis nattereri</i>)	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Pine Marten (<i>Martes martes</i>)	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex V Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu lato</i>)	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>)	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
West European Hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts

Table 9.5: Protected amphibian species recorded in 10km² grid surrounding the site (NBDC, 2024)

Protected Amphibian species recorded in 10km ²	
Species Name	Designations/Conservation Status
Common Frog (<i>Rana temporaria</i>)	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex V Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Smooth Newt (<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts

Table 9.6: Protected bird species (amber/red listed) recorded in 2km² grid surrounding the site (NBDC, 2024)

Protected Bird species recorded in 5km ²	
Species Name	Designations/Conservation Status
Barn Swallow (<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Common Kestrel (<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species
Common Pheasant (<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Wood Pigeon (<i>Columba palumbus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Eurasian Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Sand Martin (<i>Riparia riparia</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Sky Lark (<i>Alauda arvensis</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Whinchat (<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List

Table 9.7: Protected Mammal species recorded in 2km² grid surrounding the site (NBDC, 2024)

Protected Mammal species recorded in 2km ²	
Species Name	Designations/Conservation Status
Eurasian Badger (<i>Meles meles</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
West European Hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts

Appendix 3. PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph 9.1: Cutover bog - PB4 at the site



Photograph 9.2: Stands of Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*)



Photograph 9.3: The vegetation is a diverse mix of remnant bog species and grasses.



Photograph 9.4: Cutover bog – PS4 habitat

Date: 07/06/2024

Derrymore Peat Ltd
C/O – John Dillon
TOBIN, Block 10-4
Blanchardstown Corporate Park
Blanchardstown
Dublin 15

Email: john.dillon@tobin.ie

Dear Mr. John Dillon,

The planning authority wishes to acknowledge receipt of your request for a declaration of works considered to be development or exempted development under Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) on the 13/05/2024.

In order to consider your application for Exempted Development of Peat Extraction in a total area of 27.13ha at Derrymore, Moydow, Co. Longford and submitted to the Planning Authority on 13th of May 2024 and whether the development of peat extraction constitutes exempted development under Article 6 (1) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and as set out under Class 17 – of Part 3 of Schedule 2(b) of these regulations.

Given the significant history associated with the subject site, the recent and on-going planning enforcement case relating to the peat extraction works and the EPA licence it is considered appropriate that Further Information shall be sought which should include the following matters:

- The full area of lands in the ownership of the applicant in respect of the Derrymore Bog site.
- Confirmed details of the historical areas of peat extraction within the immediate area undertaken by the applicant/landowner. Evidence exists to identify substantial areas of peat extraction works that have been undertaken in recent years dating back to 2011. The Planning Authority require a clear statement and maps confirming the full extent of these works within the immediate area.
- To provide a justification for the identification and selection of the two areas proposed for peat extraction identified in this application and how the additional lands and areas not included for peat extraction will be screened and protected from potential working.
- The applicant shall prepare and submit a detailed Appropriate Assessment screening report and determination statement Stage 1 and Stage 2 (Natura Impact Statement Report) given the subjects sites location and proximity to nearby Natura 2000 sites including SAC and SPA.

Yours Sincerely


Director of Services
Planning Department



NSAI Certified

Má scríobhann tú chugainn as Gaeilge, freagróimid tú i nGaeilge.


Midlands Ireland
gateway to growth

Planner's Report and Recommendation

This is a referral under Section 5(1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) for a determination by the Planning Authority on a question, as to whether works constitute development or exempted development.

The question to be determined is:

1. Whether Peat extraction in a new or extended area of less than 10 hectares, or Peat extraction in a new or extended area of 10 hectares or more, where the drainage of the bogland commenced prior to the coming into force of these Regulations - is or is not exempted development.

Site Description

The Bog site is located in the townland of Derrymore near Moydow and covers a large area within the range of 80-90ha, the extent of the bog is outlined in red on the aerial photo Fig1. The bog is located approximately 3km to the south-east of Longford Town, 3.4km to the east of Stonepark settlement and 4.8km to the north-west of Ardagh village.

The subject site is accessed off the Local Road L51952 which connects to the junction with the L5195.

The applicants own a large section of land covering the area proposed for peat extraction and it is noted that 2 (two) number land parcels have been included within this Section 5 for peat extraction. The applicants will be requested to confirm the nature of the areas not identified to be worked and to confirm how these substantial areas of land will be protected and restricted from having these lands worked.

The subject site is not located within any Natural Heritage Area, SAC, SPA or Broadzone, nor are there any sites or monuments or protected structures in close proximity to the site. The closest Natura 2000 sites are as follows:

- Mount Jessop Bog SAC (002202) located 2.25km south-west of the subject site.
- Brown Bog SAC (002346) located 5.5km north-west of the subject site.
- Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101) located 7.2km north-west of the subject site.
- Lough Forbes Complex SAC (001818) located 7.2km north-west of the subject site.
- Lough Ree SPA (004064), SAC (000440) located approximately 14.5km west of the subject site.

The Royal Canal pNHA (002103) located 2.3km to the west and north-west of the subject site.

Planning History:

There is no recent planning history related to the subject site.

Planning Enforcement

UNA File 1278 - in respect of unauthorised Peat Extraction from the subject site on a site area in excess of 30ha. This planning enforcement case remains an open case.

Legislative Context

STATUTORY PROVISIONS

Planning & Development Act 2000-2014:

Section 2 – (1) In this Act, except where the context otherwise requires –

“unauthorised development” means, in relation to land, the carrying out of any unauthorised works (including the construction, erection or making of any unauthorised structure) or the making of any unauthorised use;

“unauthorised use” means, in relation to land, use commenced on or after 1 October 1964, being a use which is a material change in use of any structure or other land and being development other than—

(a) exempted development (within the meaning of section 4 of the Act of 1963 or *section 4* of this Act), or

(b) development which is the subject of a permission granted under Part IV of the Act of 1963 or under section 34 or 37G of this Act, being a permission which has not been revoked, and which is carried out in compliance with that permission or any condition to which that permission is subject;

“unauthorised works” means any works on, in, over or under land commenced on or after 1 October 1964, being development other than—

(a) exempted development (within the meaning of section 4 of the Act of 1963 or *section 4* of this Act), or

(b) development which is the subject of a permission granted under Part IV of the Act of 1963 or under section 34 or 37G of this Act, being a permission which has not been revoked, and which is carried out in compliance with that permission or any condition to which that permission is subject;

“works” includes any act or operation of construction, excavation, demolition, extension, alteration, repair or renewal and, in relation to a protected structure or proposed protected structure, includes any act or operation involving the application or removal of plaster, paint, wallpaper, tiles or other material to or from the surfaces of the interior or exterior of a structure.

Section 3 – (1) In this Act, “development” means, except where the context otherwise requires, the carrying out of any works on, in, over or under land or the making of any material change in the use of any structures or other land.

Planning and Development Regulations (2001) as amended - PART 3 Article 6 Exempted Development
— Rural

CLASS 17

- (a) Peat extraction in a new or extended area of less than 10 hectares, or
- (b) Peat extraction in a new or extended area of 10 hectares or more, where the drainage of the bogland commenced prior to the coming into force of these Regulations.

The subject site identified in the site layout plan has been identified in the submitted planning information to have a site area of 27.13 hectares and is larger than the 10 hectares outlined under Class 17 exempted development. It is identified that the red line boundary of the lands includes a much larger and extended area and no information has been provided to justify why the two areas have been identified and how the additional lands included within the red-line boundary shall be protected.

It is clear and evident that substantial areas of peat extraction have been completed and undertaken in the recent past and the applicant has not given a clear and explicit statement on the

Consideration & Recommendation:

The Planning Authority is of the opinion that as the site in question exceeds 10 hectares in size and it would appear that peat extraction has occurred after 2005 the drainage of peatlands, further information shall be sought from the applicant.

Further Information shall be sought in order to confirm the following:

- The area of the combined lands identified to be in the ownership of the applicants.
- Confirmed details of the historical areas of peat extraction within the immediate area undertaken by the landowner. Evidence exists to identify substantial areas of peat extraction works that have been undertaken in recent years dating back to 2011 and earlier. The Planning Authority require a clear statement and maps confirming the full extent of the works within the immediate area.
- To provide a justification for the identification and selection of the two areas proposed for peat extraction identified in this application and how the additional lands and areas will be screened and protected from potential working and peat extraction.
- The applicant shall prepare and submit a detailed Appropriate Assessment screening report and determination statement Stage 1 and Stage 2 (Natura Impact Statement Report) given the subjects sites location and proximity to nearby Natura 2000 sites including SAC and SPA.



Executive Planner

Date: 04/06/2024

Signed



Date 04/06/2024

Senior Planner

13th May 2024

Derrymore Peat Ltd,
c/o Tobin Consulting Engineers,
Block 10-4 Blanchardstown Corporate Park
Dublin
D15 X98N

Acknowledgement of application for a Section 5 Declaration.

Planning Reference No: DC24/9

Date Received: 13/05/2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

I hereby acknowledge receipt of your application on the date stated above and wish to inform you that it is under consideration at present.

A decision will be issued to you by Registered Post in due course.

Should we require any further particulars or information in relation to the application, we will be in contact with you further.

Yours faithfully,


Planning Department



Derrymore Peat Ltd,
c/o Tobin Consulting Engineers,
Block 10-4 Blanchardstown Corporate Park
Dublin
D15 X98N

Planning Section
Longford County Council
Great Water Street
Longford

13/05/2024 13:55:29

Acknowledgement of application for a Section 5 Receipt No : PLANNTNG/0/21785
***** REPRINT *****

Planning Reference No: DC24/9

Dear Sir/Madam,

I hereby acknowledge receipt of your application on the date of 13/05/2024 and inform you that it is under consideration at present.

A decision will be issued to you by Registered Post in due course.

Should we require any further particulars or information in relation to your application we will be in contact with you further.

Derrymore Peat Ltd
c/o Tobin
Block 10-4 Blanchardstown Corporate Park
Blanchardstown
Dublin 15

Class 13 Plan Fee Misc	80.00
GOODS	80.00
VAT Exempt/Non-vatable	

Total : 80.00 EUR

Yours faithfully,

Deirdre Skelly
Planning Department

Tendered
Cheque 80.00

Change 0.00

Issued By : Deirdre Skelly
From : Planning Section
Vat reg No 8D01483N

Planning Department, Great Water Street, Longford. N39 NH56
Tel: (043) 3344222 Email: planning@longfordcoco.ie

Section 5 Declaration – Exempted Development
Planning & Developments Acts 2001 as amended

1. Applicant Name: Derrymore_Peat Ltd
Address: Cloncaulfield, Moydow, Co. Longford
Phone No: 0872521138
E-mail: Derrymorepeat@gmail.com
2. Name of Agent (if any): John Dillon
Address: TOBIN, TOBIN, Block 10-4, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15
Phone No: 0868661739 E-Mail: john.dillon@tobin.ie
3. Address for correspondence (if different from above): NA
4. Location of Proposed Development: Derrymore and Cloncaulfield, Moydow, Co. Longford
5. Description of Development: Peat Extraction in a total area of 27.13 Ha at Derrymore, Moydow, Co. Longford.
6. Under what section of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended and Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended is exemption sought (Specific details required) _____

Section 4 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Article 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) relating to exempted development. More particularly, Class 17, Part 3, Schedule 2 (b) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) (as inserted by S.I. No. 454/2011 - Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2011): "Peat extraction in a new or extended area of 10 hectares or more, where the drainage of the bogland commenced prior to the coming into force of these Regulations".

7. Will the development take place within the curtilage of a dwelling house?

Please tick as appropriate: YES _____ NO x

8. Will / Does development take place in / on a Protected Structure or within the curtilage of a Protected Structure?

Please tick as appropriate: YES _____ NO x

8(a) If "YES", has a Declaration under Section 57 of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended, been requested or issued for the property by the Planning Authority?

Please tick as appropriate: YES _____ NO x

9. Please state applicants interest in this site Operator

If applicant is not the owner of site, please provide name & address of owner:

Ronan Quinn, Cloncaulfield, Moydow, Co. Longford

10. Are you aware of any enforcement proceedings connected to this site?

Please tick as appropriate: YES _____ NO x

10(a) If "YES" please supply details: No planning enforcement on the site

11. Are you aware of any previous planning application/s on this site?

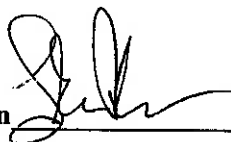
Please tick as appropriate: YES _____ NO x

11(a) If "YES" please supply details:

12. List of Items to accompany this application:-

- a) A fee of €80
- b) 1 x An appropriately scaled site location map (not less than 1:2,500 rural and 1:1000 urban), clearly indicating the site of the proposed development outlined in red.
- c) 1 x An appropriately scaled site layout plan (not less than 1:500) indicating the location of the proposed works and access to same from the public road.
- d) 1 x Plans and particulars of the proposed development, including sections and dimensions to differentiate between the existing works and proposed works.
- e) 1 x Approximate finished floor levels of the proposed development should be provided in relation to the existing ground level at the site of the proposed development.

SIGNED: John Dillon



DATE: 26/04/24 13.05.2024

PLEASE NOTE:

This application form must be fully completed and all items listed in Part 12 submitted, or your application will not be accepted and will be returned.



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Email: info@tobin.ie

The Hanson Building, Clever
Retail Park,
Doorly Park,
Sligo
F91 P7N2
Email: info@tobin.ie

Our Ref: 10738

10/05/24
13.05.2024

Planning Department,
Longford County Council,
Áras an Chontae
Great Water Street
Longford
N39 NH56

RE: Derrymore

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to inform you that Derrymore Peat Ltd wish to apply for exempt development in relation peat extraction on a 27.13 hectare site in Derrymore, Moydow, Co. Longford. The development will take place in an area of less than 30 hectares, however, for completeness, we are providing an EIA Screening and an hydrological report to demonstrate that an EIA and AA is not required for the development. Note also Section 4(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) relating to EIA and AA and exempted developments and Class 2(a), Part 2, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

A detailed description of the proposed development is set out in the enclosed description and set out in the application.

Please find enclosed

- A copy of the Landowner agreement;
- Section 5 application form;
- EIA Screening ;
- Hydrological Report; and
- Planning Drawings;

Yours sincerely,

John Dillon

For and on behalf of TOBIN Consulting Engineers

Directors: M. Shelly (Chairman) C. McGovern (Managing Director) E. Connaughton (Company Secretary)
B. Downes D. Grehan M. McDonnell J. McGrath
B. Carroll S. Tinnelly J. O'Flaherty

Technical Directors: B. Gallagher B. Heaney C. Kelly T. Mackey D. Meade O. Fitzpatrick P. Cloonan P. Cunningham

Associate Directors: M. Casey E. Fenton L. Kennedy P. O'Connor B. Rudden M. Geraghty S. Ryan R. Murtagh K. Gallagher

Ronan Quinn
Cloncaulfield,
Moydow,
Co. Longford

26th April 2024.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Proposed Exempt Development

As legal owner of the lands at Derrymore and Cloncaulfield, I hereby give consent to Derrymore Peat Ltd. to apply for exempt development to Longford County Council for the proposed development of said lands.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronan Quinn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Ronan Quinn
Owner.

**Report on
Hydrological Conditions
at
Derrymore Bog,
Co. Longford.**

**Dr. Raymond Flynn
Associate Professor (Reader)
in
Environmental Hydrology**

School of the Natural and Built Environment

Queen's University Belfast

28 February 2024



Introduction

The following report summarizes work undertaken by Dr. Raymond Flynn, Associate Professor (Reader) in Environmental Hydrology at the School of the Natural and Built Environment, Queen's University Belfast, on behalf of Derrymore Peat Limited (DPL) and Mr. Ronan Quinn to evaluate hydrological processes operating on an area of mechanically harvested peatland on Mr. Quinn's property, near Moydow, Co. Longford. Dr. Flynn has a first class honours degree in geology (Trinity College Dublin), a Masters degree in hydrogeology (University of Birmingham) and a PhD in Hydrogeology (University of Neuchatel, Switzerland). He has worked on the topic of Irish Bog hydrology and hydrogeology since 1990, while more recently he collaborated with RPS Engineers to develop the tools employed by the Irish Government in its National Peatlands Strategy.

Dr. Flynn's activities on behalf of DPL and Mr. Quinn, consisted of

1. A desk-based review of publicly available data concerning ground conditions on and surrounding Derrymore Bog, Co. Longford (Derrymore), which occurs in the townlands of Derrymore, Trillickacurry, Ferraghfad, Ballymakeegan and Lisduff, Co. Longford.
2. A two-day site survey of hydrological conditions on that part of the bog in which peat was mechanically extracted by milling or sod peat extraction (, collectively referred to as mechanical extraction), and focusing on the area operated by Derrymore Peat Limited (DPL).
3. A review of the results of a drone-based survey, reported by Brandon O'Brien Consulting Engineers (2023), to generate a sufficiently high resolution representation of the ground surface of Derrymore and its immediate surroundings to assist in determining hydrological connections.
4. Integration of data to develop a refined understanding of conditions across that part of Derrymore Bog that has experienced mechanized extraction, and its immediate surroundings.
5. Definition of the area of Derrymore used by DPL in their operations, including peat extraction areas, access routes and stockpiling areas, since June 2023.

Desk Study

1. *Physical Setting*

To better assess hydrological connectivity across Derrymore, Dr. Flynn undertook a desk-based survey of relevant web-based, publicly-available geological, hydrological and land use data. This permitted an evaluation of the regional hydrological setting of Ronan Quinn's property and the potential of peat harvesting activities on the site upon the environment of the surrounding area.

The Geological Survey of Ireland's GSI Mapviewer provided baseline information concerning Derrymore Bog's geological setting^a. Mapviewer data revealed the bog to be underlain by the Lucan Formation (dark limestone and shale) bedrock, which constitutes a locally important aquifer, while the Mapviewer showed no springs or significant groundwater abstraction points within 1km of the bog boundary.

Bedrock is overlain by a sequence of younger (unconsolidated) deposits. Those (inorganic) deposits surrounding the bog, and occurring principally on higher ground, consist mainly of glacial till derived from Carboniferous and Lower Palaeozoic sandstones and shales, while localised river deposits (alluvium) occur close (, within 1km,) to the south of the site; both the till and alluvium are shown as having moderate permeability. Cutover and Raised Bog Peat forms the subsoil immediately below Derrymore Bog, including below Ronan Quinn's property and the area immediately to the west,

where mechanical harvesting has also taken place. The peat is classified as a low permeability deposit, while the bog is shown as having low groundwater vulnerability.

Of the 605mm/year of effective rainfall presented for Derrymore, 24mm (or 4%) is considered as recharge, which percolates through the peat to the underlying bedrock. The remaining effective rainfall leaves the site through shallower pathways, notably via surface drainage to the surrounding rivers and streams.

Derrymore forms part of the Shannon River Basin, with water leaving the site via a number of drains, to flow westwards and enter the Shannon River approximately 0.5km south of the river's outlet from Lough Forbes. The principal rivers draining Derrymore are the northwesterly flowing Feraghfad River which drains the northern part of the Derrymore; the westerly flowing Cloonkeen River drains the southern side of the site.

2. Recent Land Use Activity on Derrymore Property

Consultation of the 1811 Bog Commissioners Maps of Co. Longford reveals Derrymore formed part of a larger irregularly-shaped bog, measuring approximately 3.6km x 1.6km^b. Subsequent maps and aerial imagery reveal the area of uncut (high) bog to have experienced sustained reduction through human activity since this time^c.

More recent activities leading to the loss of high bog cover have included marginal peat extraction for fuel on the northern side of the bog, and mechanised peat extraction for horticulture to the south. An online review of Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI) and Google Earth historical aerial imagery, has allowed the change in high bog cover on Derrymore to be tracked since 1995. These are contained in Appendix II.

Historical image analysis has revealed a significant reduction in high bog cover, notably on the southern and western sides of Derrymore, between 1995 and 2023. Further analysis of the imagery reveals the exposure of underlying substrate material in drain beds in the central part of Derrymore property from June 2014 onwards; this is reflected in the pale grey substrate colouration, which contrasts with the dark brown colour of the overlying peat (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Aerial image of Derrymore Bog, generated from drone-based survey, reported by Brandon O'Brien Consulting Engineers (Church Street, Roscommon F43 P661), April 2023. The grey colouration in the centre of the bog reflects the exposure of the peat substrate. Once the substrate is encountered in drain beds in an area, peat harvesting ceases.

Analysis of Google Earth © imagery revealed that by April 2022 areas of Ronan Quinn's property, adjacent to the Central Access Track cutting through its centre, had encountered the peat substrate (, a silty gravel, interpreted as glacial till) over a significant area, most notably land immediately to the east and west of the track. It is noteworthy that when mechanical peat extraction encounters substrate material, harvesting ceases due to the presence of excess inorganic material. Mr. Quinn reports this to be the case for operations on his property at Derrymore, rendering a significant proportion of the site no longer capable of supporting peat extraction.

3. Ecology

A report examining the ecology of Derrymore, completed by Wetland Surveys Ireland^d noted that although the bog was listed as an area of scientific interest by An Foras Forbatha in 1972^e, yet by 2002 it failed to qualify as for designation as a National Heritage Area^f. A subsequent reappraisal of the site by the Irish National Parks and Wildlife Service in 2013 for reconsideration failed to select the site for designation as it contains no flora or habitat interests that qualify it for conservation ^g.

Mount Jessop Raised Bog Special Area of Conservation (SAC, Site Code: 002202, Mount Jessop SAC) occurs approximately 3km downstream of where drainage waters from Derrymore Bog enter the

Cloonkeen River; the Cloonkeen River does not form part of Mount Jessop SAC. Consultation of CFRAM flood risk maps reveals that although low probability (intense) events on the Cloonkeen River can result in flooding of low lying areas, neither Derrymore or Mount Jessop SAC are affected by these events^h.

According to the EPA Hydrotoolⁱ, both the Cloonkeen River (Camelin_060) and the Feraghfad River (Camelin_050) form part of the Camelin River Water Body. The Hydrotool presents aquatic monitoring points upstream of the confluence of the Cloonkeen River and drains discharging from Derrymore. By contrast three EPA aquatic ecological monitoring points occur on the river downstream of Derrymore Bog on the Cloonkeen River.

Ecological monitoring, using the EPA's Q score system, aims to reflect the condition of aquatic ecosystem and how this varies over time using samples of the biota collected at fixed points at rivers streams and lakes. The most recent classification of the samples taken the Bridge Southeast of Cloonkeen site (RS26C110700) was "Good" (Score 4), while that further downstream at the Bridge W.N.W of Stonepark (RS26C110900) scored 4-5, and was also classified as "Good". By contrast, samples collected further downstream at Ballyminion Bridge (RS26C11000) scored 3 and were classified as "Poor".

The absence of monitoring data upstream of Derrymore implies that the impact of water draining the bog on aquatic ecology cannot be determined. However, the good status of the closest downstream monitoring point suggests that any impacts that may be experienced are limited, thus allowing the monitoring point to receive Good Status classification. Although no gauging data proved available for the Feraghfad River, it is classified as "Not at Risk".

Site Data Collection

January 2023 Field Hydrological Survey

Although the desk-based study of conditions at Derrymore provided a useful framework to understand its hydrology and its relationship with the surrounding area, insufficient data were available to allow the site-specific hydrological setting to be established. As noted, aerial imagery is available for Derrymore. However, it is not possible to fully characterize hydrological processes based on this alone. This proves particularly challenging where culverts convey water beneath the ground surface, as is often the case with mechanized peat extraction. Under these circumstances interpretation of aerial imagery needs to be supported by measurements and observations made on the ground.

Due to the absence of key data, Dr. Flynn carried out a two-day hydrological survey of Derrymore, focusing on the milled peat area and its immediate surroundings. The survey, undertaken following a period of wet weather, on the 7th January 2023 and 8th January 2023, aimed to supplement information collected during the desk-based review of the site. More specifically, the survey involved inspection of water flow direction in drains and culverts on, and immediately surrounding, Derrymore to determine direction of water flow between Ronan Quinn's property and adjacent areas. Surveying consisted of physical examination along the bog boundary and key areas in the central part of the bog complex to record location and direction of flow; the survey also noted drainage conditions and dimensions, along with the orientation and flow direction of water entering and existing the network culverts present across the area. Appendix III contains field notes, collected by Dr. Flynn, along with maps showing corresponding numbered measurement locations.

Figure 2 summarises field survey findings, with a different coloured points used for each outlet from the bog. From the data it is apparent that the bog acts as an area from which water flows into surrounding rivers and drains, i.e. no water flows into the site from outside. Overall, the flow patterns observed reflects the significant alteration of drainage patterns arising from mechanized peat extraction.

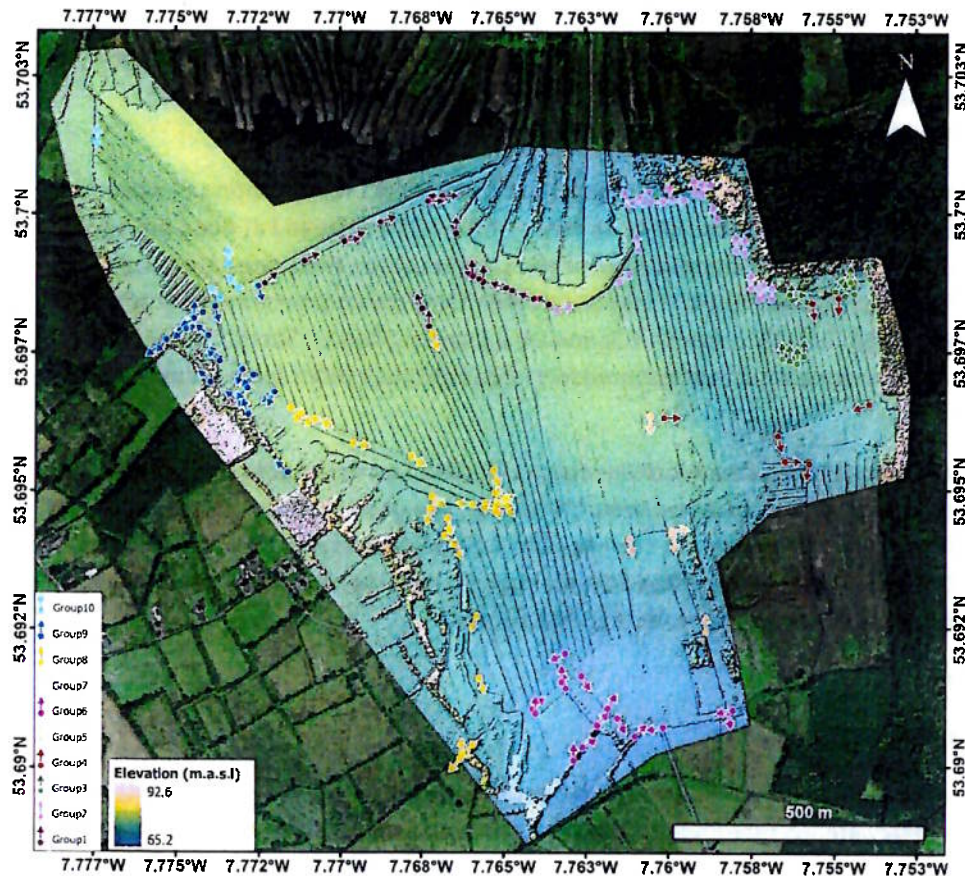


Figure 2: Digital terrain model of Derrymore Bog, CO. Longford, with key spot measurements of flow direction, collected on the 7th and 8th January 2023. Different coloured points represent different drainage outlets. Appendix III contains details of each measurement.

Drone Survey

Following a review of publically available topographic data for Derrymore, Dr. Flynn concluded that this information was insufficiently accurate to allow hydrological connections across Ronan Quinn's property, and its immediate surroundings, to be determined with confidence. (Critically, elevation data provided insufficiently accurate.) A site specific topographic survey of Derrymore Bog was undertaken, under the supervision of Brandon O'Brien Consulting Engineers, Church Street Roscommon, using an unmanned airborne vehicle (Drone) to permit a high resolution (0.04mx0.04mx0.05m) map of the bog and its immediate surroundings to be generated. The false colour digital surface model of the ground at Derrymore, presented in Figure 3 (, with vertical exaggeration), provides an indication of the improved quality of the data collected using this method, while further highlighting the change in topography across the bog, and arising from mechanised peat extraction.

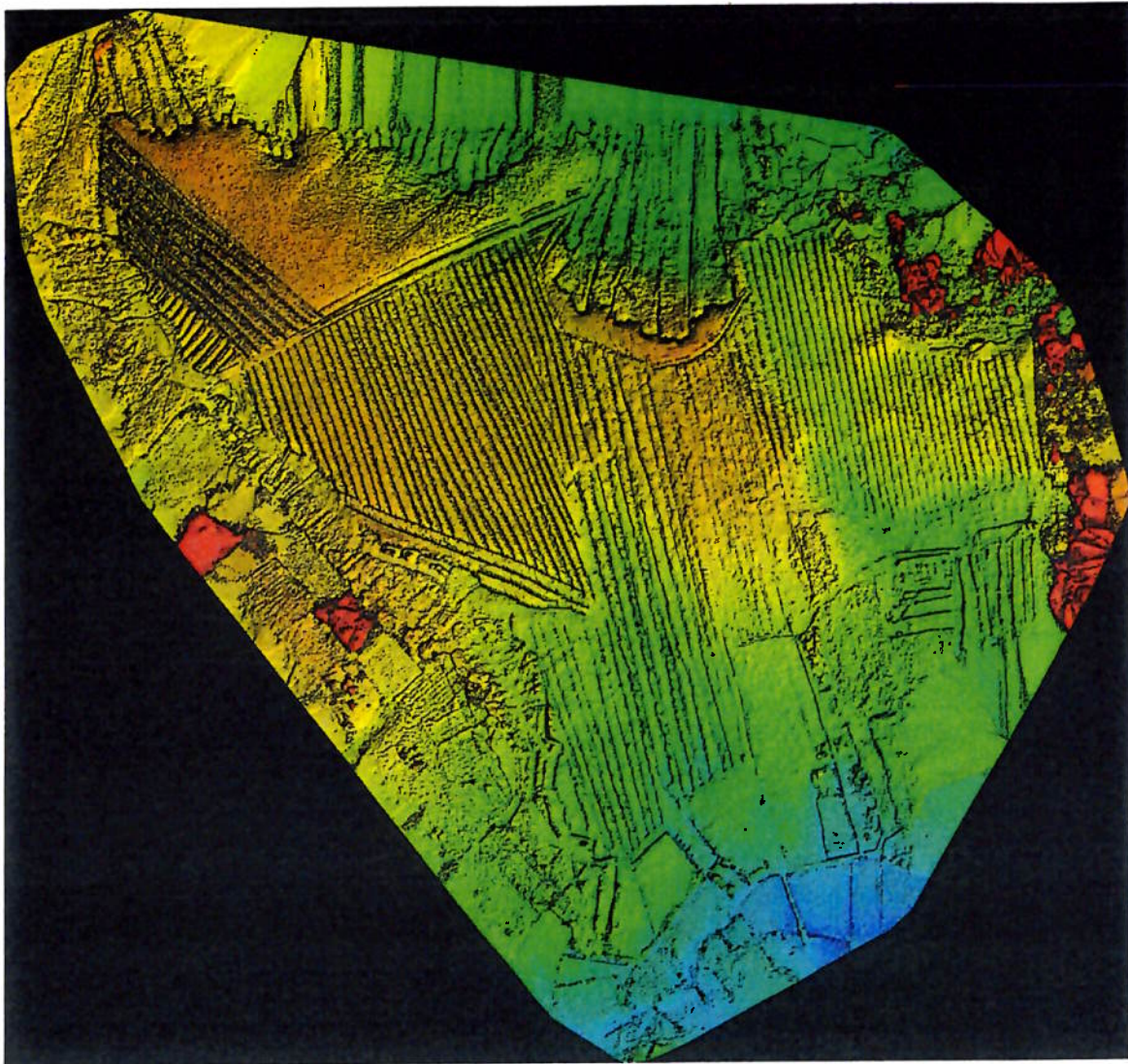


Figure 3: Digital surface model of Derrymore Bog, Co. Longford, generated using data collected during the February 2023 unmanned aerial vehicle (drone) survey of the site. Resolution is 0.04m x 0.04m x 0.05m; vertical exaggeration x 5.

Hydrological Connection

Combination of field survey measurements with the results of the drone survey have allowed the drainage regime across Derrymore Bog to be defined. Figure 4 presents the boundaries of areas (, called subcatchments,) that have a common outlet for water draining from them. Once again the results highlight the impact of artificial drainage on Derrymore's hydrology, with straight boundaries corresponding to artificial drains, while also taking account of buried drainage features, notably culverts, which convey water below access tracks encountered.

Critically, the network of artificial drainage associated with mechanized peat extraction has overprinted natural drainage patterns such that the system of drains and intervening peat banks act as hydrological barriers to flow in any direction other than along the course of a drain. Consequently, water flowing over the ground surface will enter the nearest drain before flowing toward the bog

margins. Each drain thus act as a hydraulic boundary, limiting areas contributing to flow to the intervening banks immediately surrounding them.



Figure 4: Aerial image of Derrymore Bog, Co. Longford showing subcatchment boundaries across the bog complex. Areas of each catchment are in square metres.

Comparison of the subcatchment outlines with the Ronan Quinn property boundary, as defined by the Brandon O'Brien site survey (Figure 5), reveals that the property boundary cuts across the subcatchments. Examination of flow patterns reveals that drainage on the south western side of the site flows into adjacent property before reentering Mr. Quinn's property. Drains cross this area collect water from an additional 1.65ha of peatland.



Figure 5: Ronan Quinn's property boundary, Derrymore Bog, Co. Longford. Image: Brandon O'Brien Consulting Engineers. The blue-grey strips within the property reflect those areas where the peat substrate (glacial till) has been encountered, after which milling has ceased.

Since June 2023, DPL have reconfigured operations to restrict peat milling activities to the area shown in Figure 6. Under the new operational regime, a non-operational area cuts through the centre of Ronan Quinn's property, subdividing remaining peat milling areas (Area A and Area B).

Combining the two areas of on-going peat milling with ancillary operational areas (access routes and stockpiles) results in an aggregate area of 27.13 ha.

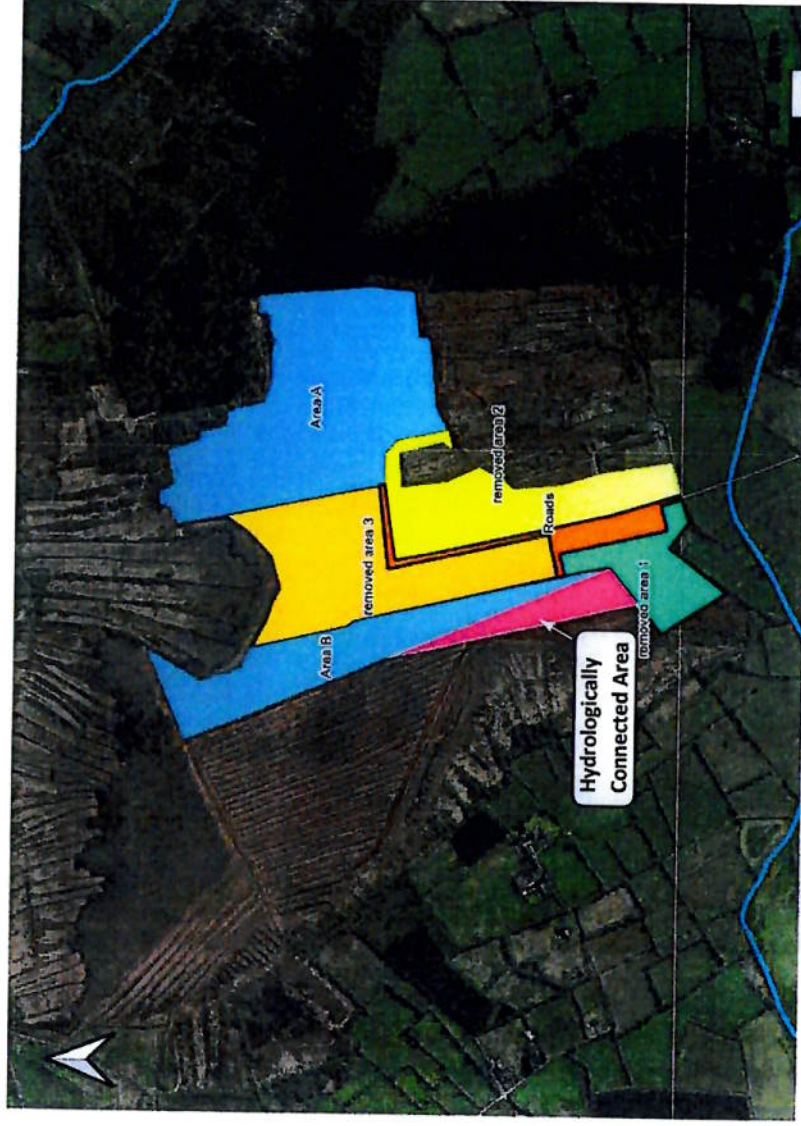


Figure 6: Map of the area operated by Derrymore Peat Limited. Active peat milling takes place in Area A and Area B, while no extraction takes place in the intervening area (removed areas 1-3). Roads and stockpiles (, shown in red,) when considered with milling fields, occupy and aggregate area 27.13ha. An additional 1.65ha lies outside Ronan O'Briens property, but is hydrologically connected to it (shown in pink). Combining this with operational areas within the property boundary gives total area of 28.78ha.

Conclusions:

The results of the desk based survey indicate that the workings at Derrymore cannot be identified as causing significant impacts to the surrounding environment. This includes those on Mount Jessop SAC, which although occurring downstream of Derrymore, is not impacted by flooding of the connecting Cloonkeen River.

At the site scale, the hydrology of Derrymore Bog has experienced considerable alteration as a result of human activity over the past 200 years. More recent mechanized peat extraction has resulted in artificial drainage dominating how water moves across the site. Characterisation of resulting flow patterns at Derrymore has proved challenging, due in part to the limitations of relevant publicly-available information. The site specific investigations described in this report have addressed this issue.

The drone-based survey of Derrymore, reported by Brandon O'Brien Consulting Engineers, has revealed the area to have gentle relief (, or small differences in ground elevation). Nonetheless, combining survey findings with field-based observations of flow direction in drains and culverts has permitted the presence (and absence) of hydrological connections to be defined.

Detailed surveying completed by Brandon O'Brien has shown that Ronan Quinn's property occupies an area of 49.01ha. Of this, 27.13 ha are used for peat extraction and ancillary operations (access routes and stockpiles). Combining these areas with a 1.65ha hydrologically connected area immediately to the west of the site, gives an aggregate area of 28.78ha. This area thus lies below the 30ha threshold, above which triggers requirements for environmental impact assessment (EIA).

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Derrymore Peat Ltd

Longford County Council

EIA Screening Report



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Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Development Works and Existing site.....	2
1.3 Peat Extraction.....	2
2.0 EIA SCREENING PROCESS	2
2.1 Overview	2
2.2 Legislative Context	3
2.2.1 EU Legislation.....	3
2.2.2 Irish Legislation.....	4
3.0 SCREENING ASSESSMENT	5
3.1 Characteristics of Proposed Development.....	6
3.1.1 Size and design of the whole Project	7
3.1.2 Cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects.....	7
3.1.3 Use of Natural Resources, in particular land, soil, water, and biodiversity.....	7
3.1.4 Production of Waste	7
3.1.5 Pollution and Nuisances.....	7
3.1.6 Risk of accidents having regard to substances or technologies used including those caused by climate change.....	8
3.1.7 The risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution.....	8
3.2 Location of Project.....	8
3.2.1 Existing and approved Land use.....	8
3.2.2 The relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground	8
3.2.3 The absorption capacity of the natural environment.....	8
3.2.4 Designated Sites.....	9
3.2.5 Population.....	9
3.2.6 Landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.....	9
3.2.7 Magnitude and Extent of Impact.....	10
3.2.8 The trans frontier nature of the impact	10
3.2.9 Magnitude and Complexity of the Impact.....	10
3.3 Probability of Impact.....	12
3.4 Onset, Duration, Frequency and reversibility of the impact.....	12
3.5 Cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects.....	12
3.6 Possibility of effectively reducing the impact	13

4.0 CONCLUSIONS.....	13
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Table of Figures

FIGURE 1 SITE LOCATION.....	1
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

TOBIN Consulting Engineers have been appointed by Derrymore Peat Ltd to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report for works associated with the proposed horticultural peat extraction in the townland of Derrymore and Cloncaulfield, Moydow, Co. Longford. The proposed site is located in Moydow, see Figure 1. The area is divided into Area A, Area B, and the access roads (the **Peat Harvesting Areas**). Areas between Area A and Area B are not actively harvested. Peat depths in the Peat Harvesting Areas are limited on site and will gradually come out of operation in the next 5 years.



Figure 1 Site Location

This report outlines the methodology used to screen the proposed development works for the requirement to undertake an EIA. It explains the proposed development works, the receiving environment, the assessment of potential environmental impacts and the outcome and conclusions of the screening process.

This EIA Screening Report has reviewed and considered the following documents available for the local area and this project.

1.2 Development Works and Existing site

The proposed development is located in the town of Moydow, Co. Longford (see Figure 1 above). The proposed development area is 27.13 hectares. This includes, access roadways, storage areas, settlement lagoons and drainage areas within the Peat Harvesting Area.

Derrymore Peat Ltd are proposing to harvest horticultural peat over the next 5 years. The proposed works are scheduled to commence in 2024.

The Proposed Development will include the following works in an area of 27.13 hectares :

- i. The maintenance of existing drainage.
- ii. Harvesting of peat for the purposes of supporting the Irish Horticultural industry.
- iii. Landscape works to rehabilitate the peatland after extraction.

1.3 Peat Extraction

The purpose of this development is for harvesting peat within the Peat Harvesting Areas. The necessary infrastructure for such activities already exists at the site.

The drainage infrastructure and water management infrastructure already exist within the site with minor improvements planned. Details of the existing and planned drainage infrastructure are provided in Section 3.2.3 herein. A brief summary of the proposed infrastructure is provided below.

In March 2023 Dr Raymond Flynn Senior Lecturer in Environmental Hydrology at the School of the Natural and Built Environment, Queen's University, Belfast completed a Report on Hydrological Conditions at Derrymore Bog, Co. Longford. The report confirmed that there are 2 surface water outfalls and existing drains from the development, the northern part of the site drains into the north westerly flowing Feraghfad river and the southern part of the site drains into the westerly flowing Cloonkeen river. Both rivers are tributaries of the River Camlin.

Along the edge of each peat harvesting field, surface water drains (toe drains) have been constructed to convey the surface water from the harvesting area to main drains and settlement lagoons. The settlement lagoons cater for the proposed development i.e. 27.13Ha. The main drains will also act as storage capacity for surface water during periods of heavy rainfall.

At the end of the drain, a pipe is laid from the field drains to a main drain leading finally to the settlement lagoons. This arrangement restricts the volume flow rate to that which can be effectively treated by the settlement lagoons. The settlement lagoons will be sized in accordance with the BATNEEC peat extraction guidelines of 50 m³/hectare of peat harvested. The location of the settlement ponds is detailed on the hydrological report completed by Dr Raymond Flynn.

2.0 EIA SCREENING PROCESS

2.1 Overview

This EIA Screening Report was prepared to document the EIA screening assessment process. The purpose of this screening assessment is to identify the legal need or otherwise for an EIAR to be completed for the proposed works at Moydow, County Longford. Significant impacts may

arise as a consequence of the type of works proposed, the scale or extent of works proposed or the location of proposed works to sensitive environments.

EIA is the process by which the anticipated impacts on the environment (positive and negative) of a proposed development or project are measured. If the anticipated impacts are unacceptable, design measures or other relevant mitigation measures can be identified to reduce or avoid those impacts. The purpose of the assessment is to ensure that decision makers consider the environmental effects when deciding whether or not to proceed with a project

Screening is the process of ascertaining whether or not a proposed project or development requires EIA. This is determined by considering mandatory and sub-threshold developments and whether or not the proposed works would or would not be likely to have significant impacts on the environment. Significant impacts may arise as a consequence of the type of works proposed, the scale or extent of works proposed or the location of proposed works to sensitive environments.

TOBIN Consulting Engineers has completed this EIA Screening and takes due notice of the following regulations and guidance documents:

- Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the **PADA**);
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (the **PADR**);
- EU Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (the **EIA Directive**);
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (August 2018) Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on Carrying out EIA (the 2018 Guidelines);
- Environmental Protection Agency (2022) Revised Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports; and
- European Commission (2017) Environmental Impact assessment of Projects, Guidance on Screening (the EC 2017 Guidance).

2.2 Legislative Context

2.2.1 *EU Legislation*

The initial Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive has been in place since 1985 (85/337/EEC). This Directive along with four amendments was amalgamated into Directive 2014/52/EU in May 2014. Directive 2014/52/EU aims to simplify the rules for assessing the potential environmental effects of projects on the environment while improving the level of environmental protection in line with current challenges. One of the key changes made by Directive 2014/52/EU is that it replaces the term Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

An EIAR is the principal document that the EIA process is based on and focuses on describing the existing environment, identifying the potential effects as a result of the proposed development, and describing any mitigation measures required to reduce or eliminate potential effects.

The EIA Directive requires that certain developments be assessed for the likely significant environmental impacts before planning approval can be granted. When submitting a planning application for such a development, the applicant must also submit an EIAR.

The EIA Directive is set out under Annexes I - III of the EU Directive 2014/52/EU (EIA Directive). Annex I list developments for which EIA is mandatory and Annex II lists projects which require

a determination of their likely significant effects. Criteria to determine whether a sub-threshold development should be subject to an EIA is set out in Annex III.

For the purpose of the proposed development, it is of note that Annex I of the EIA Directive notes peat extraction of greater than 150ha as a project for which an EIA is mandatory. Annex II allowed Member States to adopt their own additional development categories based on criteria laid down in Annex III. Peat extraction below the 150-hectare threshold stipulated in Annex I is a type of project listed in Annex II of the EIA Directive.

2.2.2 Irish Legislation

Section 4(1) (a) of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 1963 (the 1963 Act) included use for agriculture as exempted development. The definition of 'agriculture' included the use of land for turbary. Accordingly, the extraction of peat was previously classified exempted development due to its status as an agricultural activity under the 1963 Act.

Further, drainage of Derrymore bog boundaries is evident on the 1920s 25inch map especially to the north and south of the bog. The extraction of peat at this time would also have been benefited from exempted development status due to the fact that it occurred prior to the commencement of the 1963 Act on 1 October 1964.

In 2000, Irish planning legislation was updated and the 1963 Act was repealed and replaced by the PADA and the PADR. Under this modern legislation, the definition of agriculture was altered omitting use of land for turbary and therefore, peat extraction was no longer classified as an exempted development. The PADA further provides that development shall not be exempted development if an EIA or an Appropriate Assessment of the development is required (see section 4(4) of the PADA).

The PADA and the PADR have been amended and supplemented by European Union law to include the EIA Directive which has been broadly transposed into Irish law through this legislation.

An EIA is required under the PADA for certain projects (see section 172 of the PADA). Part 1 of Schedule 5 to the PADR lists projects included in Annex I of the EIA Directive which automatically require EIA, where specified thresholds are met or exceeded. Part 2 of the same Schedule of the PADR outlines thresholds for other projects which also require EIA, as per Annex II of the EIA Directive, where national thresholds are met or exceeded. Where the thresholds in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the PADR are not met or exceeded, an EIA will be required where it is concluded that the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment. This is known as a sub-threshold development. Schedule 7 of the PADR sets out the criteria for determining introduced the concept of subthreshold development, in relation to planning applications, based on criteria.

For the purpose of this proposed development, the following is of note:

- The PADR has confirmed that peat extraction:
 - in a new or extended area of less than 10 ha or
 - in a new or extended area of 10ha or more, where the drainage of the bogland commenced prior to the coming into force of the PADR,as being exempted development (listed at Class 17, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the PADR). This exemption was amended in 2005 by the Planning and Development Regulations 2005 making it conditional on not being likely to have significant effects on the environment.

- The PADR requires an EIA to be carried out for peat extraction which would involve a new or extended area of 30 ha or more (listed at Class 2(a) of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the PADR).
- Class 15 of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the PADR provides that an EIA should be carried out for *"any project listed in this Part which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant class of development, but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7"*.

Class 2(a) of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the PADA, in particular, is of relevance for consideration here. The size of the proposed site is approximately 27.13 hectares in aggregate and therefore is less than the applicable threshold of 30 hectares and, therefore, an EIA is not mandatory.

The proposed development will involve peat harvesting. Therefore, we recognise that a 'wide scope' should be applied when considering whether an EIA is required as the proposed development could be considered a sub-threshold development as it does not meet or exceed the thresholds set out in Class 2 (a), Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the PADR and, as such, it could be determined as likely to have significant effects on the environment. To determine whether the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment, an EIA Screening is required; an EIA Screening Assessment is provided in Section 3 of this report. The Habitats Directive was adopted on 21 May 1992 – 92/43/EEC and included in its Annex 1 list: (7000) Active raised bog, and (7120) Degraded raised bog capable of regeneration. The requirement for EIA was introduced into the planning system by the EIA Regs 1989. Exempted development status will not apply where an Appropriate Assessment is required.

3.0 SCREENING ASSESSMENT

Schedule 7 of the PADR sets out *"criteria for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment"* in accordance with Annex III of the EIA Directive. Schedule 7 effectively acts as guidance for consenting authorities in Ireland in assessing whether a 'sub-threshold development' should be subject to an EIA. The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government published guidance on the consent for sub threshold development (DEHLG, 2003).

The criteria for evaluation are grouped under three headings as follows:

1. Characteristics of Proposed Development

The characteristics of proposed development, in particular:

- the size and design of the proposed development;
- the cumulation with other existing and/or approved development;
- the nature of any associated works;
- the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water, and biodiversity;
- pollution and nuisances;

- the risk of major accidents having regard in particular to substances or technologies used and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge; and
- The risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution).

2. Location of Proposed Development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by proposed development, having regard in particular to:

- the existing and approved land use;
- the relative abundance, availability, quality, and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water, and biodiversity) in the area and its underground; and
- the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas: (a) wetlands, riparian area, river mouths (b) coastal zones and the marine environment, (c) mountain and forest areas, (d) nature reserves and parks, (e) areas classified or protected under legislation, including special protection areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC, (f) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation have already been exceeded and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure, (g) densely populated areas, (h) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

3. Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The potential significant effects of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 above and having particular regard to:

- the magnitude and special extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- the nature of the impact;
- the trans frontier nature of the impact;
- the magnitude intensity and complexity of the impact;
- the probability of the impact;
- the expected onset, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the impact;
- the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects; and
- the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

These criteria will be considered in the context of the proposed development works in Derrymore, Moydow, County Longford.

In addition, the European Commission publication, Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening (2017) provides a number of checklists to aid the screening process which were considered for this assessment.

3.1 Characteristics of Proposed Development

There is no likelihood of significant environmental effects arising from the proposed development works having regard to the characteristics of the project, as set out below.

3.1.1 Size and design of the whole Project

The project is not significant in terms of design or size. The design of the project is as described in Section 2 of this report and shown on planning Drawings 10738-2501 to 10738-2505. The proposed development area is 27.13 hectares. The primary focus of the proposed works will be the harvesting in the cutover peat bog.

3.1.2 Cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects

A review of planning applications within 500 metres of the site indicates that there are no significant development proposals within the vicinity of the site that could act in cumulation with the project. In addition, the small-scale nature and operation of the proposed development is unlikely give rise to any significant cumulative environmental effects.

3.1.3 Use of Natural Resources, in particular land, soil, water, and biodiversity

Other than harvesting there are no other elements of the proposed development that will make use of natural resources.

Limited materials are required based on the scale and nature of the work, they are no significant effect on the environment.

3.1.4 Production of Waste

Any waste materials produced during the proposed works will be managed following the Waste Management Act 1996 as amended. Less than 20 m³/year is produced during the harvesting process.

3.1.5 Pollution and Nuisances

It is not anticipated that the scale of operations involved will generate significant visual intrusion, or increased traffic.

The proposed development will not result in significant pollution or nuisance. The proposed development will generate noise associated with traffic and from general works. The permissible hours of operation are Monday to Friday 08.00 – 18.00, and Saturday 08.00 – 14.00, with no noisy work permissible on Sundays or bank holidays. Any activity will be subject to applicable standards including BS 5228:2009 and A1:2014 “Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites”.

During the summer months there will be temporary disturbance to traffic passing along the adjacent road network. As the development is located away from sensitive receptors, these roads will not experience disturbance at the same time. There may also be nuisances from increased noise and vibration and dust levels during the works although these will be subject to normal controls and will be temporary and seasonal, similar to agricultural activity. The proposed development will not result in significant pollution or nuisance.

3.1.6 Risk of accidents having regard to substances or technologies used including those caused by climate change

The proposed development will not result in a risk of major accidents and/or disasters including those caused by climate change or flooding.

Regarding climate change, the proposed development has been designed to be resilient against flooding.

3.1.7 The risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)

There are no operations on site that could result the generation of significant air pollution due to the limited scale and separation distances to dwellings.

The proposed development is not a COMAH site (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) nor is the site location near a nuclear installation.

3.2 Location of Project

In consideration of the location of the project, there are no anticipated significant environmental effects arising. There are no SACs within 3 km of the site.

3.2.1 Existing and approved Land use

The proposed works will primarily be undertaken on an area of cutover peat.

3.2.2 The relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground

The proposed development will not have a significant impact on the relative abundance, availability, quality, or regenerative capacity of natural resources. There are no significant habitats on site. There are no other mineral resources on the site apart from the remaining peat.

3.2.3 The absorption capacity of the natural environment

No wetlands, coastal zones, mountain or forest areas or nature reserves will be impacted by the proposed works.

The Cloonkeen River is located south of proposed development works. There will be no works within the Cloonkeen River as part of the proposed development works.

The proposed development works area does not fall within or adjacent to any European site. The Mount Jessop SAC (Site Code: 002202) is located approximately 3km west of the proposed development site. Mount Jessop SAC is not hydraulically linked to the harvesting site. Lower Ree SAC (Site Code: 002137) is located approximately 21km downstream of the proposed development site. Sampling previously undertaken at the site indicates that the settlement ponds provided the required storage and suspended solid concentrations are below the standard required for peat harvesting sites i.e. 35 mg/l Total suspended solids.

A review of Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study maps (CFRAMS) confirms that the proposed development area is not located within an area that has flooded.

Ecological monitoring, using the EPA's Q score system, showed that the nearest downstream samples to Derrymore, taken the Bridge Southeast of Cloonkeen site (RS26C110700), was "Good" (Score 4). The sampling point further downstream at the Bridge W.N.W of Stonepark (RS26C110900) scored 4-5, suggesting an improvement in ecological condition, and was classified as "High".

Moreover, the available data for Derrymore and its surroundings provide no evidence that activities at the site have impacted designated sites downstream of Mount Jessop, notably Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (Site Code 004101), the Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code 001818) and the Lough Ree SAC/SPA (Site Code 000440/004064).

3.2.4 Designated Sites

The proposed development works area does not fall within or adjacent to any designated site. Derrymore Moydow is not currently designated however it was listed as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA). The site is currently not classified as a NHA.

Please see Appendix 1 in relation to a 2012 letter from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The nearest designated site Mount Jessop Special Area of Conservation (SAC)), which is located over 3km west of the proposed works area. The Lower Lough Forbes (SAC) is approximately 12km downstream of the Cloonkeen River.

3.2.5 Population

Having regard to low densely populated areas, the project will involve short-term work in a rural area. The project therefore is not considered to have a negative impact on local population. Ardagh west has a population density of <25 per km² with a population recorded as having a population of 435 people. The proposed works area provides employment in the local area. There are no dwellings within 350m of the harvesting area.

3.2.6 Landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance

The site is located in a small rural area. There are no designated protected views, prospects or scenic routes listed within the proposed development area. There are no cultural heritage features of interest present in the proposed works area. A previous archaeology walkover of the drains (2019) did not encounter any archaeological features.

The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) which is maintained by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht was examined as part of the baseline study. This review indicated that there are no monuments included in the SMR within the application area. There is one monument included in the study area, a holy well (SMR LF014-138----) in Feraghfad townland. This well is situated c.370m north-east of the application area and is considered too far distant to be directly or indirectly impacted by the development.

The seventeenth century Down Survey as well as Ordnance Survey 1st and 3rd edition six-inch maps and the 1st edition twenty-five-inch of the study area were examined. This analysis did not indicate any previously unrecorded archaeological sites or monuments in the study area.

Examination of the finds registers of the National Museum of Ireland indicated that no finds from the bog have been reported to the Museum.

Drains on the harvesting area were walked as part of the archaeology survey undertaken by Dr Charles Mount. No archaeological or cultural material was identified in the drain or the contiguous bog surface.

Characteristics of Potential Impacts

There are no anticipated likely significant environmental effects arising from the proposed development.

3.2.7 Magnitude and Extent of Impact

The proposed development area is 27.13 hectares. The magnitude and spatial extent of impacts associated with the proposed development are not considered significant.

3.2.8 The trans frontier nature of the impact

The proposed development works will be confined to a small area in Derrymore, Moydow, County Longford. There will be no transboundary impacts.

3.2.9 Magnitude and Complexity of the Impact

The main impacts will be during the extraction phase. All works will be undertaken by Derrymore Peat Ltd. Any impacts arising will be temporary and managed through best practice guidelines. Waste generated will be controlled in accordance with the Waste Management Act 1996 as amended. There are no anticipated long-term impacts.

Human Beings

There will be some temporary negative impacts on residents and businesses immediately adjacent to the development due to increased traffic, noise, dust, nuisance etc. however these issues will be localised and temporary in nature. Derrymore Peat Limited aim to maintain the existing good relations with all neighbours. There are no proposed road works. The proposed works will have minimal impact on tourism and amenities in the area. Impacts to human beings are not likely to be significant and will be temporary in nature.

Biodiversity

The proposed works area does not fall within or adjacent to any designated site. Derrymore pNHA is not currently designated (it was a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) – see Appendix I. Mount Jessop (SAC) is approximately 3km west and the proposed works area or the river does not form part of the SAC.

The proposed works and concludes that the proposed works, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, will not have a likely significant effect on any European site.

No flora or habitats of importance exist within the site. No significant impact is determined with regards to aquatic ecology as the river. No botanical species of interest have been recorded in this area.

Soils and Geology

It is not anticipated that significant impacts on soils and geology will occur.

Water

Standard pollution prevention control measures will be present to ensure there is no impact on the river. As a result, it is not anticipated that significant adverse impacts on water will occur as a result of the proposed works.

As outlined in the Hydrology report, both the Cloonkeen River (Camelin_060) and the Feraghfad River (Camelin_050) form part of the Camlin River Water Body. The Hydrotol, provided by the EPA for public use, shows no aquatic monitoring points upstream of the confluence of the Cloonkeen River with drains discharging from Derrymore. Ecological monitoring, using the EPA's Q score system, showed that the nearest downstream samples to Derrymore, taken the Bridge Southeast of Cloonkeen site (RS26C110700), was "Good" (Score 4).

The available data for Derrymore and its surroundings provide no evidence that activities at the site have impacted designated sites downstream of Mount Jessop, notably Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (Site Code 004101), the Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code 001818) and the Lough Ree SAC/SPA (Site Code 000440/004064).

Air and Climate

The proposed development works have the potential to lead to localised increase traffic and dust within the works area and immediate area. This will be localised and temporary in nature. It is anticipated that this impact which is not significant.

Noise and Vibration

The proposed development works will occur in a rural environment. The proposed works have the potential to lead to increased noise and vibration within the works area and immediate area. This will be localised and temporary in nature. Noise levels monitoring in 2019 demonstrated that noise levels will be within the standards set out in the EPA 2016 "Guidance Note for Noise: Licence Applications, Surveys and Assessments in Relation to Scheduled Activities (NG4)". NG4 identifies typical limit values for noise as: Daytime (07:00 to 19:00) – 55dB LAr, T; Evening (19:00 to 23:00) – 50dB LAr, T; and, Night-time (23:00 to 07:00) – 45dB LAeq, T.

Archaeology, Architecture and Cultural Heritage

The cultural and archaeological heritage component of an environmental impact assessment report of the development at Derrymore Bog, Co. Longford consisting of a paper and fieldwork study was carried out in July – September 2019. There are no items of cultural heritage, monuments or buildings of heritage interest known from the application area. There are no direct or indirect impacts on any known items of cultural heritage, archaeology, or buildings of heritage interest in the application area or the vicinity.

The study involved detailed investigation of the cultural heritage including the archaeological, architectural, and historical background of the application area and the surrounding area up to 1km from the application area. This area was examined using information from the:

- Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) of Co. Longford;
- Sites and Monuments Record
- Longford County Development Plan including the Records of Protected Structures;
- Aerial photographs;
- Excavation reports;
- Cartographic; and
- Documentary sources.

A field assessment was carried out in August 2019 to identify and assess any known archaeological sites and structures and previously unrecorded features, finds and structures within the application area. The fieldwork involved the inspection of 12,560 linear metres of drain and the contiguous bog surface.

The assessment has been undertaken to assess the significant effects, if any, on the cultural heritage, archaeology and architecture which can reasonably be expected to occur because of harvesting carried out in the application area, while a mitigation strategy has been designed to remedy any significant adverse effects on cultural heritage.

The assessment was prepared by Dr. Charles Mount who has more than twenty-five years of cultural heritage assessment experience. He holds B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in archaeology as well as a professional diploma in EIA and SEA Management and is a member of the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland.

Interactions

There may be interactions between several of the environmental aspects such as traffic, noise and dust but the impact is not likely to be significant as a result of interactions.

Summary

All environmental aspects have been considered. It is anticipated that no significant adverse impacts on the receiving environment as a result of the proposed works providing control measures are implemented where required.

3.3 Probability of Impact

It is anticipated that there is a probability of localised noise and vibration and potential for air pollution (increased dust). These are not anticipated to be significant and will be short-term and temporary in nature. However, these impacts are not considered to be significant considering landscape sensitivity. There is a small probability that the proposed works could impact fauna and water although the proposed works will be designed and undertaken following appropriate guidance and procedures to ensure significant impacts do not occur.

3.4 Onset, Duration, Frequency and reversibility of the impact

These will be temporary in nature of short duration annually and will not reoccur once extraction is complete. The peat harvesting will revegetate following cessation of activity on the site.

3.5 Cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects

As detailed in Section 4.1.2, the planning database was searched and indicates that there are no significant development proposals within the vicinity of the site that could act in cumulation with the project.

There are no anticipated cumulative impacts arising from the proposed development.

3.6 Possibility of effectively reducing the impact

With respect to the possibility of effectively reducing the impact the design of the project has been optimised to ensure that environmental impacts are minimised as much as possible. These impacts are not considered significant and do not result in a requirement for EIA.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

The proposed development works are not a type of development prescribed in Annex I or Annex II of the EIA Directive (or Schedule 5 of PADR) and therefore does not trigger a mandatory requirement for EIA.

The proposed development works will be undertaken in a relatively small area (approximately 27.13 hectares) with no anticipated environmental impacts occurring during the operational phase. Potential environmental impacts have been considered and with the implementation of appropriate control measures, no significant effects are anticipated.

Having regard for the proposed development works planned by Derrymore Peat Ltd; the findings of a site specific archaeological assessment and; environmental studies undertaken in the area it is concluded that the proposed development works are not likely to have any significant environmental effects on the receiving environment and therefore do not require an EIAR under Schedule 7 of the PADR. The proposed works are not likely to have a significant environmental impact and therefore an EIA (and EIAR) is not required.

Appendix 1

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DAGH Letter

APPENDIX NO 1



An Roinn
Ealaíon, Oldhreachta agus Gaeltachta
Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

TO: Ronan Quinn
Clonsillafield
Moydow
County Longford.

Date: 16th May 2012

REFERENCE: Derrymore Bog 447

Dear Ronan

In response to your telephone call of the 15th May 2012, I am writing to confirm that the direction I received from NPWS head office on the 31st March 2003 was I quote "This site was assessed during the 2002 Raised Bog survey and a decision was made not to designate this site as a raised bog NHA because of the recent amount of drainage the site had undergone. Under these circumstances I (Jim Ryan) consider it unlikely that any part of this area will now be designated as an NHA or SAC unless something of major importance was to be found on the cut-over or scrub areas which I consider improbable".

I recall sending you a letter to inform you of the opinion of NPWS HQ in relation to this site sometime in April of the same year 2003. I hope this clarifies the position of NPWS and the conservation status of this site. It remains a proposed Natural Heritage Area, but is not going to make the full NHA designation in the revised designations.

If you require any further clarification, please contact me at the Moyne District Office, Moyne County Longford.

Yours sincerely

Sue Moles
Conservation Ranger for County Longford.

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