



**Comhairle Chontae Liatroma  
Leitrim County Council**

# **STATEMENT OF SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT**

**PREPARED BY**

**LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL for (Draft) NOISE ACTION PLAN 2024-2028**

**In line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive**

**Prepared by:**  
Leitrim County Council

**Date of Issue:**  
22/10/2024

[www.leitrim.ie](http://www.leitrim.ie)



**Project Title:** Statement of Screening for Appropriate Assessment

**Client:** Leitrim County Council

**Office Reference:**

**Status:** Final Report

**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024

<b>Report Title:</b>	Statement of Screening for Appropriate Assessment
<b>Doc Reference:</b>	

Issue	Date	Details	Prepared by	Checked By	Approved by
00	22/10/2024	<i>Draft Report</i>	Ernesto Picardi (EP)	Marie Mulligan (MM)	Marie Mulligan (MM)

*This report refers, within the limitations stated, to the condition of the site at the time of the report. No warranty is given as to the possibility of future changes in the condition of the site. The report as presented is based on the information sources as detailed in this report, and hence maybe subject to review in the future if more information is obtained or scientific understanding changes.*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	Background	4
1.2	Need for Noise Action Plan	4
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Regulatory Context</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	Relevant Legislation – Nature Conservation	5
2.2	Relevant Legislation – Noise	7
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1	Appropriate Assessment	8
3.2	Statement of Competency	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.3	Desk Studies & Consultation	9
3.4	Assessment Methodology	9
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Stage 1: Screening</b>	<b>11</b>
4.1	Description of the Plan	11
4.2	Identification of Relevant Natura 2000 Sites	13
4.3	AA Screening Matrix	25
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Appropriate Assessment Conclusion</b>	<b>28</b>

### TABLES

4-1	Natura 2000 Sites Within 15km / Zone of Influence of the Plan	23
4-2	'AA Screening Matrix'	27

### FIGURES

4-1	SACs Within / Within 15km of County Leitrim Boundary	24
4-2	SPAs Within / Within 15km of County Leitrim Boundary	24

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Article 6 of the EU Habitat's Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) requires that all plans and projects be screened for potential significant effects upon Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The aim of this screening process is to establish whether or not significant effects upon those designated sites are likely to arise from the proposed plan or project.

Leitrim County Council undertook this Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for the Leitrim County Council (Draft)

Noise Action Plan 2024-2028<sup>1</sup>. This screening exercise for Appropriate Assessment was carried out in order to identify

whether any significant impacts on designated sites arising from the implementation of the Noise Action Plan are likely.

The Noise Action Plan 2024-2028 has been prepared by Leitrim County Council for major roads carrying more than three million vehicles per annum. This is the fourth Noise Action Plan devised for Co. Leitrim and it supersedes the 2019-2023 Noise Action Plan.

This Noise Action Plan has been prepared for Leitrim County Council, to meet the requirements of the statutory Noise Regulations currently in force, namely the:

- European Commission (2018). Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2021). Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Communities Environmental Noise Regulations, S.I. No. 549/2018.
- European Communities Environmental Noise (Amendment) Regulations, S.I. No. 663/2021.

### 1.2 Need for Noise Action Plan

Environmental noise is an unwanted or harmful outdoor sound created by human activities, including noise emitted by means of transport (road traffic, rail traffic, air traffic and noise in agglomerations over a specified size). Types of noise not included in the Regulations are noise from domestic activities, noise created by neighbours, noise at workplaces, etc.

Environmental noise remains a major problem in Europe, with at least 20% of the population reported by the European Environment Agency to be living in areas where noise levels are considered harmful to human health. Environmental noise is the second biggest environmental cause of health problems in the EU, after air pollution. The long-term exposure to environmental noise significantly affects the physical and mental health of the population (e.g. annoyance, stress reactions, sleep disturbance, poor mental health and well-being). The major source of noise pollution in both urban and non-urban areas is transportation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Leitrim County Council (2024) Draft Noise Action Plan 2024-2028.

## 2.0 Regulatory Context

### 2.1 Relevant Legislation – Nature Conservation

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC) recognises that certain species of birds should be subject to special conservation measures concerning their habitats. The Directive requires that Member States take measures to classify the most suitable areas as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for the conservation of bird species listed in Annex 1 of the Directive. SPAs are selected for bird species (listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive), that are regularly occurring populations of migratory bird species and the SPA areas are of international importance for these migratory birds.

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

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of this Directive also call for the undertaking of an Appropriate Assessment for plans and projects not directly connected with or necessary to the management of, but which are likely to have a significant effect on any European designated sites (i.e. SACs and SPAs).

#### Appropriate Assessment and the Habitats Directive

Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora – the 'Habitats Directive' - provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of habitats and species of European Community interest, at a favourable conservation status. Articles 3 - 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 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).

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

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

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

Article 6(4) states:

*"If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted."*

*Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest."*

### **The Appropriate Assessment Process**

The aim of Appropriate Assessment is to assess the implications of a proposal in respect of a designated site's conservation objectives.

The 'Appropriate Assessment' itself is an assessment which must be carried out by the competent authority which confirms whether the plan or project in combination with other plans and projects will have an adverse impact on the integrity of a European site.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment shall be carried out by the competent authority as set out in Section 177U(1) and (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) as follows:

'(1) A screening for appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or application for consent for proposed development shall be carried out by the competent authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.

(2) A competent authority shall carry out a screening for appropriate assessment under subsection (1) before—

(a) a Land use plan is made including, where appropriate, before a decision on appeal in relation to a draft strategic development zone is made, or

(b) consent for a proposed development is given.'

The competent authority shall determine that an Appropriate Assessment is not required if it can be excluded, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or project will have a significant effect on a European site.

Where the competent authority cannot exclude the potential for a significant effect on a European site, an Appropriate Assessment shall be deemed required.

Where an Appropriate Assessment is required, the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment Report (Natura Impact Statement (NIS)) should enable the competent authority to ascertain whether the plan or proposed development would adversely affect the integrity of the European site. If adverse impacts on the integrity of a European site cannot be avoided, then mitigation measures should be applied during the appropriate assessment process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site remain. Under the terms of the Habitats Directive consent can only be granted for a project if, as a result of the appropriate assessment either (a) it is concluded that the integrity of any European sites will not be adversely affected, or (b) after mitigation, where adverse impacts cannot be excluded, there is shown to be an absence of alternative solutions, and there exists imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project should go ahead.

Section 177(V) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) outlines that the competent authority shall carry out the Appropriate Assessment, taking into account the Natura Impact Statement (amongst any other additional or supplemental information). A determination shall then be made by the competent authority in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive as to whether the plan or proposed development would adversely affect the integrity of a European site, prior to consent being given.

---

## 2.2 Relevant Legislation – Noise

The requirement of County Council's to prepare a Noise Action Plan (hereafter referred to as NAP) is set out for Member States under the Environmental Noise Directive (END) (2002/49/EC), a legal instrument for addressing adverse effects of environmental noise which have been transposed into Irish law<sup>2</sup> and require preparation of strategic noise mapping and implementation of NAPs. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the national competent authority responsible for implementing the END and will ultimately report noise mapping and action planning to the European Commission.

The END aims to provide for the implementation of a common EC approach to avoid, prevent, or reduce the harmful effects of exposure to environmental noise on a prioritised basis.

The Environmental Noise Directive ("END") (2002/49/EC) is the main European instrument which has been put in place to manage environmental noise and engage with the public. The END was transposed into Irish Law by the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2006, being revised in 2018 and amended in 2018.

*2 The END was transposed into Irish Law by the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006<sup>1</sup> (S.I. 140/2006) (the "Regulations"). The Regulations were revised by the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018<sup>2</sup> (S.I. 549/2018) and amended through the European Communities (Environmental Noise) (Amendment) Regulations 2021<sup>3</sup> (S.I. 663/2021).*

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 Appropriate Assessment

This Statement of Screening for Appropriate Assessment (Stage 1) has been prepared with reference to the following:

- European Commission (2018). Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2021). Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites:  
Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2006). Nature and Biodiversity Cases: Ruling of the European Court of Justice.
- European Commission (2007). Clarification of the Concepts of: Alternative Solution, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence, Opinion of the Commission.
- Department of Environment, Heritage, and Local Government (2009). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities.
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- Draft Guidance Note for Noise Action Planning for the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018. Draft Version 2, January 2024;
- The AA has also been undertaken in consideration of the European Union (CJEU) judgment on Case C323/17 (People over Wind, Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta), which concluded that *"it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects [mitigation] of the plan or project on that site."*. Other caselaw relevant to Screening are Waddenzee (C127/02), Holohan and Others v An Bord Pleanála (C461/17) and Court of Appeal case C1/2009/0041/QBACF Citation No [2009] EWCA Civ. 1061.

The EC Guidance sets out a number of principles as to how to approach decision making during the process. The primary one is 'the precautionary principle' which requires that the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 should prevail where there is uncertainty.

When considering the precautionary principle, the emphasis for assessment should be on objectively demonstrating with supporting evidence that:

- There will be no significant effects on a Natura 2000 site;
- There will be no adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site;
- There is an absence of alternatives to the project or plan that is likely to have an adverse effect to the integrity of a Natura 2000 site; and
- There are compensation measures that maintain or enhance the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

This translates into a four-stage process to assess the impacts, on a designated site or species, of a policy or proposal.

The EC Guidance states that "each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required." Consequently, the Council may not need to proceed through all four stages in undertaking the Appropriate Assessment.



The four-stage process is:

**Stage 1: Screening** – The process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether or not these impacts are likely to be significant;

**Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment** – The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts;

**Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions** – The process which examines alternative ways of achieving objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;

**Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain** – An assessment of the compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

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

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

### 3.3 Desk Studies & Consultation

Information on the site and the area of the proposed development was studied prior to the completion of this statement. The following data sources were accessed in order to complete a thorough examination of potential impacts:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Leitrim County Council – The (Draft) Noise Action Plan 2024-2028

### 3.4 Assessment Methodology

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

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

As defined in the Habitat's Directive, the favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range and area it covers within that range is stable or increasing;
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future;
- The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:
  - The population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
  - The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future;
  - There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Where site-specific conservation objectives (SSCOs) have been prepared for a European site, these include a series of specific attributes and targets against which effects on conservation condition, or integrity, can be measured.

Where potential significant effects are identified, then these SSCO should be considered in detail.

## 4.0 Stage 1: Screening

### 4.1 Description of the Plan

#### 4.1.1 Leitrim Noise Policy

Leitrim County Council will seek to address environmental noise from major roads, as defined in the Environmental Noise Regulations, in the county. Leitrim Co. Council will adopt a strategic approach to managing environmental noise, within its administrative area, and will aim to:

- Prevention – manage the risk of additional members of the community being exposed to undesirable noise levels where it is likely to have significant adverse impact on health and quality of life.
- Protection - protect areas which are desirably quiet, or which offer a sense of tranquillity through a process of identification and validation followed by formal designation of 'Quiet Areas'.
- Mitigation – identify and prioritise appropriate mitigation measures to reduce noise levels where they are potentially harmful.

#### 4.1.2 Extent of the Noise Action Plan Area

In County Leitrim, the primary noise source to be considered by the Action Planning Authority relates to major roads carrying >3 million vehicles per year, as defined in the Regulations. There are three national primary roads within the county; the N4, the N15 and the N16. The N4 has been included in the strategic noise map undertaken by the National Roads Authority.

The strategic noise maps prepared in 2022/2023 are based on road traffic movements for Q3 and Q4 2021. The Strategic Noise Maps present noise contours for the following two noise indicators in line with the requirements of the Regulations;

- **L<sub>den</sub>** - The day - evening - night level is a noise indicator for overall annoyance based upon annual average A-weighted long-term sound over 24 hours with a 5dB(A) penalty for evening noise (19:00 – 23:00) and a 10 dB(A) penalty for night time noise (23:00 – 07:00). L<sub>den</sub> noise levels above the threshold of 55dB are required to be reported to the European Commission.
- **L<sub>night</sub>** – The night level is a noise indicator for sleep disturbance based upon annual average A-weighted long-term sound over the night period (23:00 – 07:00). L<sub>night</sub> noise levels above the threshold of 50dB are required to be reported to the European Commission.

#### 4.1.3 Location of Noise Sensitive Groups

For the purposes of this Noise Action Plan, the following locations are considered noise sensitive areas. The grounds around; places of worship, hospitals, including nursing and convalescence homes, educational institutions, and childcare\crèche facilities.

#### 4.1.4 Description of the Main Infrastructure/Services

Three national primary routes pass through the county, The N4, the N15 and the N16. The N16 is the longest route in Leitrim, crossing the county west to east for 29.6 km from the Sligo border at Glencar Lough through Cavan border at Esky River. This route links Sligo to Enniskillen in Northern Ireland via the A4, passing through the town of Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim.

The N4 is the second longest route in Leitrim and the most trafficked, crossing the south-west section of the county for 21.8km from the Longford border to the south to the Roscommon border to the north-west.

The N15 is the third longest route in Leitrim, crossing the county at the north for 4.8 km from the Sligo border at Duff River to Donegal border at Drowes River. This route links Sligo to Donegal.

The Sligo – Dublin rail line extends for approximately 12km along the south-west edge of the county, between Longford and Roscommon borders. There are no airports in Leitrim relevant to this Noise Action Plan.

#### 4.1.5 Identification of Areas to be Subject to Noise Management Activities

The Regulations require that Leitrim County Council as the Action Planning Authority address “priorities” and “the most important area or areas” with a view to identifying “measures” that will help “avoid, prevent or reduce” the “harmful effects, including annoyance, due to exposure to environmental noise.”

The EPA Guidance provides further guidance on these concepts, and sets out a recommended approach to identifying priorities:

1. **Important Areas (IAs)** – these are locations exposed to environmental noise which exceed “any relevant noise limit” as established by the EPA in their guidance.
2. **Most Important Areas (MIAs)** – these locations are a sub-set of Important Areas where the health effects are highest, typically through a product of noise exposure levels and the number of people highly annoyed.
3. **Priority Important Areas (PIAs)** – between 5 and 10 Most Important Areas or group of similarly affected Most Important Areas, identified, through a prioritisation process, as those which will be evaluated and addressed during the implementation of the Noise Action Plan.

The process of identifying Important Areas, Most Important Areas and the indicative list of Priority Important Areas is Stage 1 of a two-stage process for the identification of areas to be subject to noise management activities.

Stage 1 includes using the results of the strategic noise maps to identify the number of people and noise sensitive properties exposed to levels above the limits set by the EPA Guidance which are in line with the 2018 WHO Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region (WHO ENG 2018). These limits for Road traffic noise: 53 dB Lden and 45 dB Lnight.

The findings of the Important Area process are then used to inform an automated process within Geographic Information System (GIS) software to generate raster heatmaps of the relative number of people highly annoyed due to noise in a given area, referred to as Most Important Areas. The APA, in consultation with the Noise Mapping Bodies (NMBs), are to prioritise the Most Important Areas to identify which are to be addressed during the implementation of the NAP, referred to as Priority Important Areas.

Stage 2 of the process takes place during the implementation of the NAP, focussing on undertaking an assessment of noise mitigation measures for each of the identified Priority Important Areas.

#### 4.1.6 Mitigation and Protection Measures

Priority Important Areas have been identified within County Leitrim as those where noise management activities are to be considered during the implementation of the Noise Action Plan. The Priority Important Areas have been identified with respect to noise from roads only.

Considering the multitude and diversity of noise management options, choosing a noise mitigation measure necessitates evaluating its potential effectiveness in reducing noise exposure and adverse effects, while also considering its associated costs. The general steps in this process, which will be considered by Leitrim County Council in consultation and collaboration with the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) during the implementation of the Noise Action Plan, are:

1. Noise measurements at Priority Important Areas.
2. Review of the assumptions used to identify the Priority Important Areas.
3. Re-evaluation and confirmation of Priority Important Areas.
4. Identification of practical noise mitigation measures.
5. Appraisal of noise mitigation measures monetised benefits to health.
6. Financial assessment of noise mitigation measures.
7. Cost-benefit analysis.
8. Recommendation of noise mitigation measure(s).

Each of these steps is further elaborated upon in the subsequent sections. The appraisal of the noise mitigation measures shall be undertaken during the implementation of the plan.

#### **4.1.7 Evaluation, Review and Corrective Action Programmes**

A review of the progress of this Noise Action Plan will be carried out annually by Leitrim County Council to assess progress against any programme of works. An interim summary report will be prepared when deemed necessary. This report will highlight progress in implementation of action plan measures and will also identify areas where corrective action is required or where the proposed measures must be modified for reasons unforeseen at present.

There are a number of risk factors associated with the delivery of this Noise Action Plan, particularly financial risks. Some critical elements of the Action Plan are outside the control of Leitrim County Council and will require the approval of other statutory bodies. Also, the financial resources required to deliver the programme has yet to be determined and the delivery of the noise action plan will be contingent on adequate funding being available. In view of these uncertainties, it is important that the programme is subject to an ongoing review so as to alert all relevant parties to any change in circumstances. Leitrim County Council will review the programme on an annual basis and advise all relevant bodies on how the key outcomes are being progressed.

In 2028 the Council will carry out a review of the program of works implemented under this action plan. Progress and results will be evaluated using information gathered through local assessment of environmental noise exposure. This will include “before and after” evaluations of any noise mitigation measures. A review of new noise maps will also be carried out, giving an indication of the change in environmental noise levels and the numbers of people exposed.

#### **4.2 Identification of Relevant Natura 2000 Sites**

In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, a list of Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the plan have been identified and described according to their site synopsis, qualifying interests, and conservation objectives. In addition, any other sites further than this, but potentially within its Zone of Interest were also considered. The Zone of Interest may be determined by an assessment of the

---

connectivity between the application site and the designated areas by virtue of hydrological connectivity, atmospheric emissions, flight paths, ecological corridors etc.

For significant effects to arise, there must be a potential impact facilitated by having a source, i.e., the proposed development and activities arising out of its construction or operation, a receptor, i.e., the European site and its qualifying interests and a subsequent pathway or connectivity between the source and receptor, e.g., a water course. The likelihood for significant effects on the European site will largely depend on the characteristics of the source (e.g., nature and scale of the construction works), the characteristics of the existing pathway and the characteristics of the receptor, e.g., the sensitivities of the Qualifying Interests (habitats or species) to changes in water quality.

There are 34 Natura 2000 designated sites either within County Leitrim or within 15km of the plan area, i.e., the Leitrim County Boundary. These designated areas and their closest points to the Leitrim County boundary are summarised in Table 4-1 and maps showing their locations relative to the application site are shown in Figures 4-1 and 4-2. A full description of these sites can be read on the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (npws.ie).

The Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCO's) of each site were also consulted to inform the assessment. Since the conservation objectives for the European Sites focus on maintaining the favourable conservation condition of the QIs of each site, the screening process concentrated on assessing the potential effects of the plan against the QIs of each site.



Site Name & Code	County	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Conservation Objectives
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)				
Cuilcagh-Anierin Uplands SAC 000584  (Also designated as an SAC on UK side)	Leitrim	Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slender Green Feather-moss <i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i> [1393]</li> <li>Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110]</li> <li>Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]</li> <li>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</li> <li>European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</li> <li>Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)* [6230]</li> <li>Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> <li>Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]</li> <li>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>)* [7220]</li> <li>Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) [8110]</li> <li>Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]</li> <li><i>Hamatocaulis vernicosus</i> (Slender Green Feather-moss) [6216]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
Bunduff Lough and Machair/ Trawalua/ Mullaghmore SAC 000625	Leitrim	Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]</li> <li>Reefs [1170]</li> <li>Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]</li> <li>Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</li> <li>Humid dune slacks [2190]</li> <li>Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</li> <li>• Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>• Alkaline fens [7230]</li> <li>• Euphydryas aurinia (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]</li> <li>• Phocoena phocoena (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</li> <li>• Petalophyllum ralfsii (Petalwort) [1395]</li> </ul>	
Boleybrack Mountain SAC 002032	Leitrim	Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]</li> <li>• Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010]</li> <li>• European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>• Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410]</li> <li>• Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
Ben Bulbin, Gleniff and Glenade Complex SAC 000623	Leitrim	Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260]</li> <li>• Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010]</li> <li>• European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>• Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</li> <li>• Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</li> <li>• Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>• Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO000623.pdf (npws.ie)</a>





			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430]</li> <li>Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> <li>Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]</li> <li>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220]</li> <li>Alkaline fens [7230]</li> <li>Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani) [8110]</li> <li>Calcareous and calcshist scree of the montane to alpine levels (Thlaspietea rotundifolii) [8120]</li> <li>Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210]</li> <li>Vertigo geyeri (Geyer's Whorl Snail) [1013]</li> <li>Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]</li> </ul>	
Arroo Mountain SAC 001403	Leitrim	Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010]</li> <li>European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</li> <li>Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> <li>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220]</li> <li>Calcareous and calcshist scree of the montane to alpine levels (Thlaspietea rotundifolii) [8120]</li> <li>Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
Glenade Lough SAC 001919	Leitrim	Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150]</li> <li>Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]</li> <li>Najas flexilis (Slender Naiad) [1833]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO001919.pdf (npws.ie)</a>



Lough Gill SAC 001976	Leitrim	Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150]</li> <li>• Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>• Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]</li> <li>• Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]</li> <li>• Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]</li> <li>• Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</li> <li>• Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096]</li> <li>• Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099]</li> <li>• Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]</li> <li>• Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO001976.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
Lough Melvin SAC 000428	Leitrim	Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea [3130]</li> <li>• Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410]</li> <li>• Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]</li> <li>• Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO000428.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
Corratirim SAC 000979	Cavan	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limestone pavements [8240]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
Streedagh Point Dunes SAC 001680	Sligo	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>• Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</li> <li>• Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330]</li> <li>• Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]</li> <li>• Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</li> <li>• <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]</li> </ul>	
Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC 000627	Sligo	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estuaries [1130]</li> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>• Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]</li> <li>• Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]</li> <li>• Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</li> <li>• <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</li> <li>• Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>• Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]</li> <li>• <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]</li> <li>• <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</li> <li>• <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1099]</li> <li>• <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO000627.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
Ballysadare Bay SAC 000622	Sligo	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estuaries [1130]</li> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>• Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]</li> <li>• Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</li> <li>• Humid dune slacks [2190]</li> <li>• <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]</li> <li>• <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]</li> </ul>	
Unshin River SAC 001898	Sligo	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitans</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]</li> <li>• Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>• <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410]</li> <li>• Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]</li> <li>• <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]</li> <li>• <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO001898.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
Lough Arrow SAC 001673	Sligo	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO001673.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
Bricklieve Mountains and Keishcorran SAC 001656	Sligo	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turloughs [3180]</li> <li>• Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>• Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510]</li> <li>• Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>) [8120]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO001656.pdf (npws.ie)</a>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Euphydryas aurinia (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]</li> <li>Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]</li> </ul>	
Annaghmore Lough (Roscommon) SAC 001626	Roscommon	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alkaline fens [7230]</li> <li>Vertigo geyeri (Geyer's Whorl Snail) [1013]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
Lough Forbes Complex SAC 001818	Longford / Roscommon	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150]</li> <li>Active raised bogs [7110]</li> <li>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]</li> <li>Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]</li> <li>Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC 000007	Cavan	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150]</li> <li>Bog woodland [91D0]</li> <li>Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO000007.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
Mount Jessop Bog SAC 002202	Longford	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]</li> <li>Bog woodland [91D0]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO002202.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
Dunmuckrum Turloughs SAC 002303	Donegal	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turloughs [3180]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
Lough Golagh and Breesy Hill SAC 002164	Donegal	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
Tamur Bog SAC 001992	Donegal	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010]</li> <li>Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> <li>Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>



Brown Bog SAC 002346	Longford	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active raised bogs [7110]</li> <li>• Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]</li> <li>• Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
Templehouse and Cloonacleigha Loughs SAC 000636	Sligo	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140]</li> <li>• Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [3260]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO000636.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)				
Lough Oughter Complex SPA [004049]	Cavan	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Crested Grebe (Podiceps cristatus) [A005]</li> <li>• Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038]</li> <li>• Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO004049.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA [004101]	Longford / Roscommon	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenland White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons flavirostris) [A395]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO004101.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
Lough Arrow SPA [004050]	Roscommon / Sligo	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little Grebe (Tachybaptus ruficollis) [A004]</li> <li>• Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula) [A061]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO004050.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
Ballysadare Bay SPA [004129]	Sligo	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046]</li> <li>• Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141]</li> <li>• Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149]</li> <li>• Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157]</li> <li>• Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>



Cummeen Strand SPA [004035]	Sligo	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046]</li> <li>• Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130]</li> <li>• Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
Drumcliff Bay SPA [004013]	Sligo	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144]</li> <li>• Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
Ballintemple and Ballygilgan SPA [004234]	Sligo	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnacle Goose (Branta leucopsis) [A045]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO004234.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
Sligo/Leitrim Uplands SPA [004187]	Leitrim / Sligo	Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peregrine (Falco peregrinus) [A103]</li> <li>• Chough (Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax) [A346]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO004187.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
Donegal Bay SPA [00415]	Donegal	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Northern Diver (Gavia immer) [A003]</li> <li>• Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046]</li> <li>• Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra) [A065]</li> <li>• Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Site specific cons obj (npws.ie)</a>
Inishmurray SPA [004068]	Sligo	<15km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shag (Phalacrocorax aristotelis) [A018]</li> <li>• Barnacle Goose (Branta leucopsis) [A045]</li> <li>• Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) [A184]</li> <li>• Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea) [A194]</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CO004068.pdf (npws.ie)</a>

Table 4-1 – Natura 2000 Sites Within 15km / Zone of Influence of the Plan



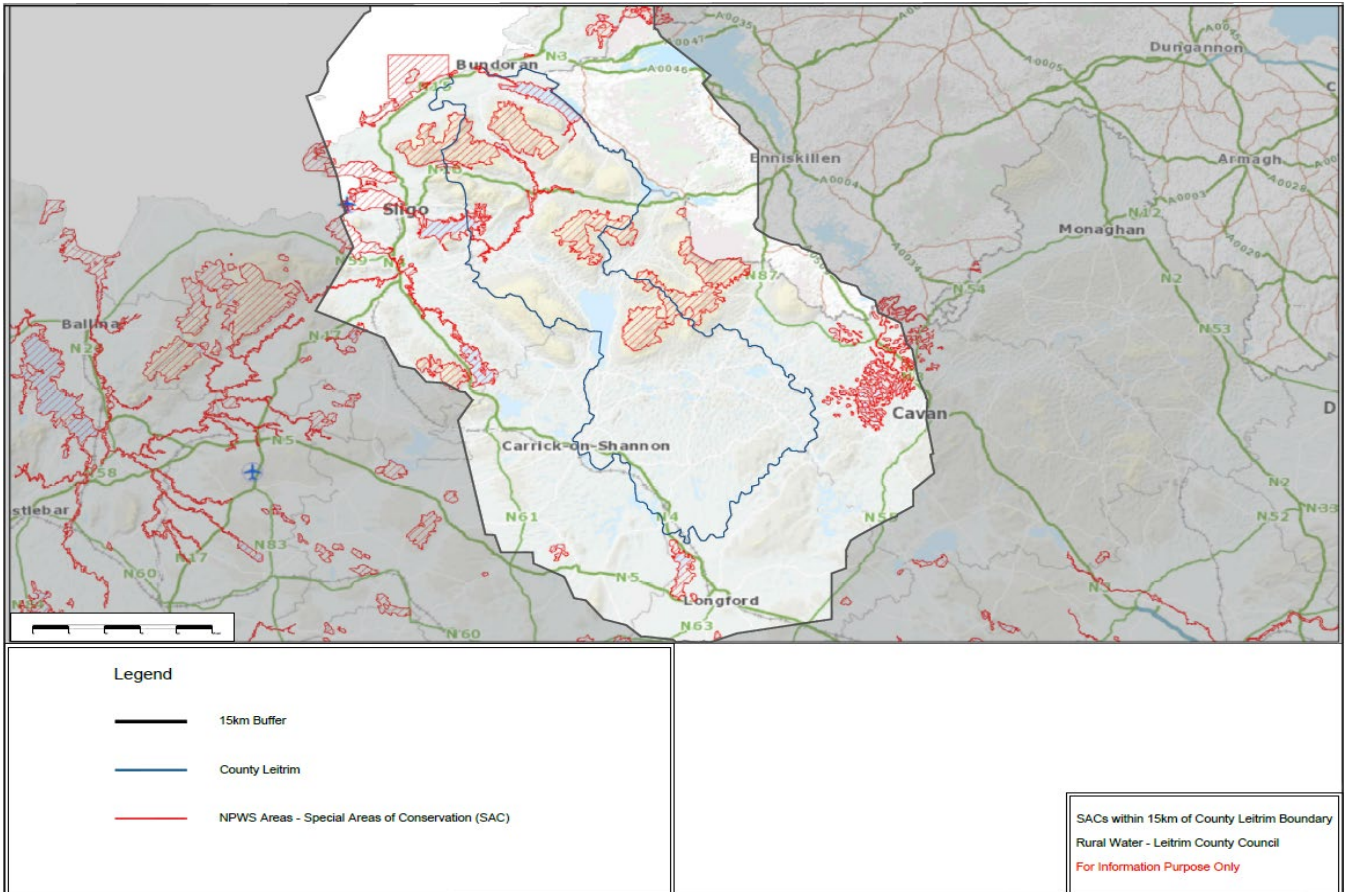


Figure 4-1 – SACs Within / Within 15km of County Leitrim Boundary

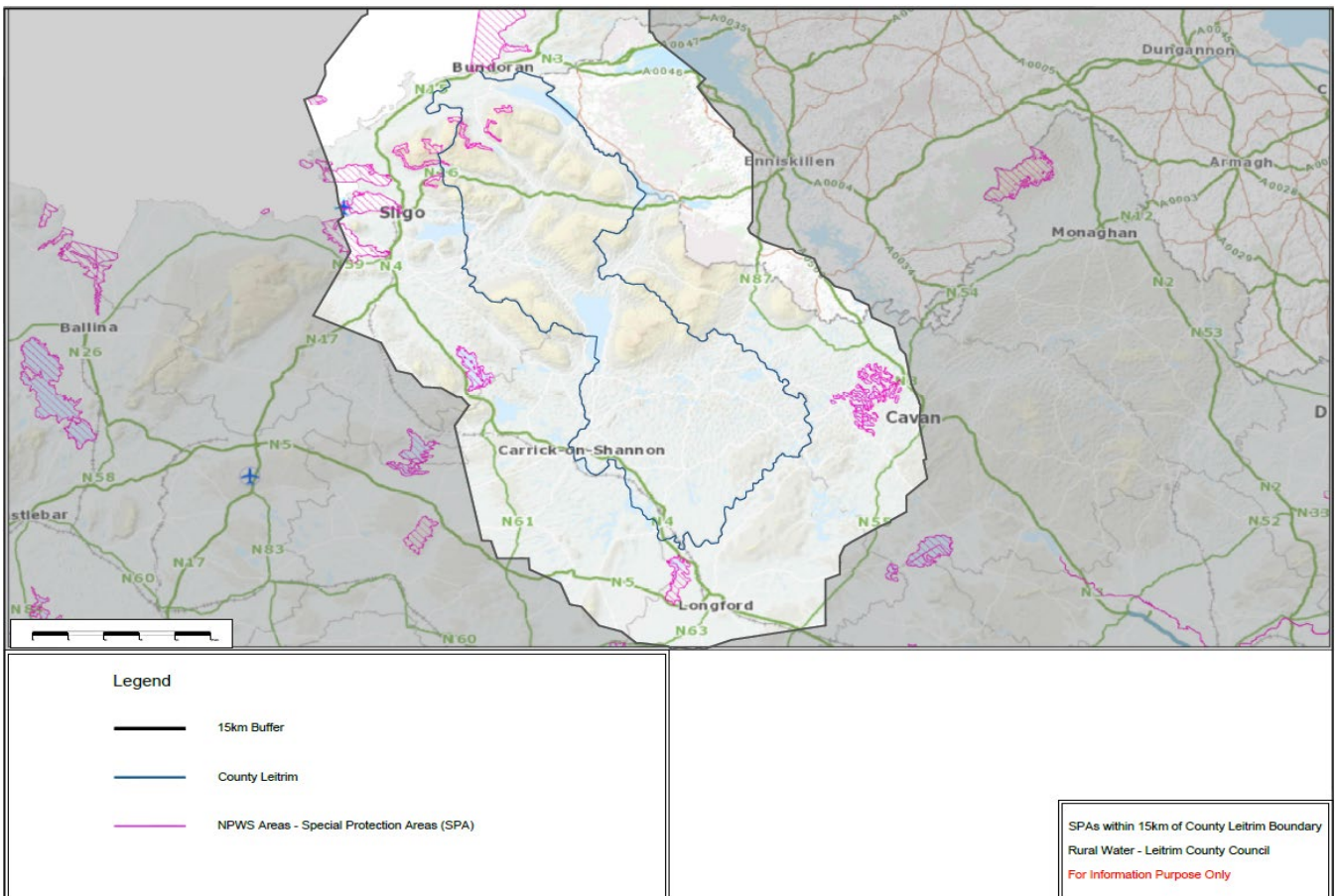


Figure 4-2 – SPAs Within / Within 15km of County Leitrim Boundary.



### 4.3 AA Screening Matrix

The AA Screening Matrix (based on the Guidance in "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") is presented below in Table 4-2.

<p><b>Brief Description of the Plan</b></p>
<p>Leitrim County Council (Draft) Noise Action Plan (2024-2028) has been prepared for major roads carrying more than three million vehicles per annum, which in County Leitrim comprises four small sections of the N4 (Dublin-Sligo) national road.</p> <p>The N4 has been included in the strategic noise map undertaken by the National Roads Authority. This is the third Noise Action Plan devised for Co. Leitrim and it supersedes the 2018-2023 Noise Action Plan. The method of assessment of noise for this plan (Round 4 Noise Mapping) uses the common EU noise calculation methodology, CNOSSOS-EU 2015, which is different from the UK CRTN 1988 method used for the previous Noise Action Plan.</p> <p>The plan was prepared in accordance with the (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018, S.I. No. 549 of 2018 and the (Environmental Noise) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (S.I. No. 663/2021). These Regulations give effect to the EU Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise (END Directive). The aim of the Directive and the Regulations is to provide for the implementation of an EC common approach to avoid, prevent or reduce on a prioritized basis the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to exposure to environmental noise. Adverse health effects of noise from road traffic can cause High Annoyance (HA), High Sleep Disturbance (HSD) and Ischaemic Heart Disease (IHD).</p>
<p><b>Identification of Natura 2000 Sites</b></p>
<p>Natura 2000 sites within County Leitrim and within 15km / Zone of Influence of the County were considered in Table 4-1 and Section 4.2. There are 34 Natura 2000 sites within the plan area.</p>
<p><b>Is the plan directly connected with, or necessary to the management of the Natura 2000 site(s)?</b></p>
<p>The Plan is not directly connected with, or necessary to, the conservation management objectives of the above listed Natura 2000 sites in Section 4.2. There will be no changes in land-use arising from the implementation of this Noise Action Plan.</p>
<p><b>Is the plan likely to have a significant effect on the Natura 2000 site(s)?</b></p>
<p>The Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on the Natura 2000 sites in Section 4.2. There will be no changes in land-use arising from the implementation of this Noise Action Plan.</p>



**Describe the individual elements of the NAP (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European Sites.**

Noise can be a principal source of disturbance for species listed as QIs of SACs and SPAs. The purpose of the NAP is to provide a strategic long-term management of environmental noise from traffic on major routes within the County, particularly where the noise exposure levels have the potential to induce harmful effects on human health. This will require reduction of existing environmental traffic noise where practical and also protection of the future noise climate in areas not currently impacted by traffic noise. The NAP will not result in the construction of any infrastructure or changes in existing land use within Leitrim County. The NAP does not propose any measures which could increase or negatively affect existing noise levels in the county and subsequently within Natura 2000 sites.

As a consequence of the measures included in the NAP, any reduction in noise in areas near to, or within Natura 2000 sites will ultimately contribute to a beneficial effect in these sites and their QI features. The potential noise impacts that arise from future development works will be assessed in their own right through Planning and Licensing processes, including through Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Environmental Assessments, Appropriate Assessments and application of relevant Guidance relating to noise.

**Describe any likely direct, indirect, or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the nearby Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:**

**Size and scale:** The NAP will have no significant effects upon Natura 2000 sites by virtue of its size and scale. No Significant Effects Likely.

**Land-take:** There will be no land-take from any Natura 2000 site. No Significant Effects Likely.

**Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site:** There are 34 Natura 2000 sites within the Zone of Influence / 15km of the plan boundary. No Significant Effects Likely.

**Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.):** There will be no resource requirements from any Natura 2000 site. No Significant Effects Likely.

**Excavation requirements:** There will be no excavation requirements from any Natura 2000 site. No Significant Effects Likely.

**Transportation requirements:** There will be no excavation requirements from any Natura 2000 site. No Significant Effects Likely.

**Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc:** The Plan pertains to the period covering 2024-2028. No Significant Effects Likely.

**Describe any likely changes to the nearby Natura 2000 sites arising as a result of:**

**Reduction of habitat area:** There will be no reduction of habitat area in any Natura 2000 site.

**Disturbance to key species:** There will be no disturbance to key species in any Natura 2000 site.

**Habitat or species fragmentation:** There will be no habitat or species fragmentation in any Natura 2000 site.

**Reduction in species density:** There will be no reduction in species density in any Natura 2000 site.

**Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.):** There will be no changes in key indicators of conservation value in any Natura 2000 site. There will be no reductions in water quality in any designated site.



**Describe any likely impacts on the nearby Natura 2000 sites as a whole in terms of:**

**Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of the site:** It is not considered likely that there will be any significant impacts on the key relationships that define the structure or function of the Natura 2000 sites identified.

**Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:**

**Loss - Estimated percentage of lost area of habitat:** None

**Fragmentation:** None

**Disruption & disturbance:** None

**Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.):** None

**Are there other projects or plans that together with the project of plan being assessed could affect the site? (In-Combination Impacts/Effects)**

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires an assessment of a plan or project to consider other plans or programmes that might, in combinations with the plan or project, have the potential to adversely impact upon European Sites. The following plans have been considered:

- Ireland 2040 - Our Plan, the National Planning Framework
- Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (Replacing Regional Planning Guidelines; will commence in 2019 and will be adopted over lifetime of the Plan)
- Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region 2010 - 2022
- Leitrim County Development Plan 2022-2028

The County Leitrim NAP when considered on its own will have no significant effects upon the Natura 2000 sites within the Zone of Influence of the plan boundary and therefore, the potential for in-combination effects to arise when the NAP plan is considered with the implementation of the plans cited above, or other plans / projects is low.

**Table 4-2: AA Screening Matrix**

## 5.0 Appropriate Assessment Conclusion

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, the relevant case law, established best practice and the precautionary principle, this AA Screening Report has examined the details of the County Leitrim Noise Action Plan 2024-2028 in relation to the relevant Natura 2000 sites within 15km / Zone of Influence of the County.

At this stage of the AA process, it is for the competent authority, i.e., Leitrim County Council, to carry out the screening for AA and to reach one of the following determinations:

- a) AA of the plan is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European sites;
- b) AA of the plan is *not* required if it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European sites.

It is of the opinion of the authors that an AA of the plan is not required as it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information provided in this report, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European sites.

**Ernesto Picardi** BSc, MSc,

**Marie Mulligan** BE, CENG,