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PROVISION OF INFORMATION FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING FOR A PROPOSED PART 8 DEVELOPMENT IN DRUMMAGH, CARRICK-ON-SHANNON, CO LEITRIM

IN LINE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ARTICLE 6(3) OF THE
EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE



SCR Committee / Leitrim County Council
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1 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 impacts on Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The aim of this screening process is to establish whether or not a full Appropriate Assessment of the proposed plan or project is necessary.

A comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts of a proposed development at Drummagh, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim on designated European sites was carried out in September 2020 by Noreen McLoughlin, MSc, MCIEEM of Whitehill Environmental. This assessment allowed areas of potential ecological value and potential ecological constraints associated with the proposed development to be identified and it also enabled potential ecological impacts associated with the proposed development to be assessed and mitigated for.

The location of the proposed development is within 15km of sites designated under European Law. As such and in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitat's Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) regarding Appropriate Assessment, this screening exercise for Appropriate Assessment was carried out in order to identify whether any significant impacts on designated sites are likely. This exercise will also determine the appropriateness of the proposed project, in the context of the conservation status of the designated sites.

This report contains information required by the competent authority (in this instance the Roscommon County Council) to undertake a screening for Appropriate Assessment. It is the responsibility of the competent authority to make a decision as to whether or not the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on European Sites, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. In accordance with the Legislation and National Guidance, the competent authority should issue an AA Screening Determination, which should set out their decision regarding AA, including the main reasons and considerations on which the determination is based.

1.2 REGULATORY CONTEXT

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

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). This is explained in greater detail in the following section (Section 1.2.2 and Section 1.2.3).

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC), which came into force in December 2000, establishes a framework for community action in the field of water policy. The WFD was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 722 of 2003). The WFD rationalises and updates existing legislation and provides for water management on the basis of River Basin Districts (RBDs). RBDs are essentially administrative areas for coordinated water management and are comprised of multiple river basins (or catchments), with cross-border basins (i.e. those covering the territory of more than one Member State) assigned to an international RBD. The aim of the WFD is to ensure that waters achieve at least good status by 2021 and that status does not deteriorate in any waters.

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 METHODOLOGY

2.1 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

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

- European Commission (2000). Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2002). Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- 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.

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

2.2 STATEMENT OF COMPETENCY

This AA Screening report was carried out by Noreen McLoughlin, BA, MSc, MCIEEM. Noreen has an honours degree in Zoology and an MSc in Freshwater Ecology from Trinity College, Dublin and she has been a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management for over thirteen years. Noreen has over 15 years' experience as a professional ecologist in Ireland.

2.3 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 - Aerial photographs and maps of designated sites, information on habitats and species within these sites and information on protected plant or animal species, conservation objectives, site synopses and standard data forms for relevant designated sites.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)- Information pertaining to water quality, geology and licensed facilities within the area;
- Myplan.ie – Mapped based information;
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) – Information pertaining to protected plant and animal species within the study area;
- Bing maps & Google Street View – High quality aerials and street images;
- Collins Boyd Architects – Plans and Information Pertaining to the Development;
- Leitrim County Council – Information on planning history in the area for the assessment of cumulative impacts.

2.4 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

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

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

SPAs “to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA”.

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’s should be considered in detail.

2.1 FIELD STUDIES

A visit to the site of the proposed application at Roscommon was conducted on September 17th2020, when field notes, species lists and photographs were taken. Habitats within the application site were classified in accordance to Level 3 of *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland* (Fossit, 2000). Particular attention was paid to invasive plant species within the application site.

3 SCREENING

3.1 DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

Leitrim County Council in conjunction with the SRC Committee, are seeking planning permission for a proposed development in Drummagh, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim. Permission will be sought under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. The proposed development will consist of the development of a mixed-use sporting facility. The proposed facility will include double height playing halls, dressing rooms, meeting rooms, gym, physio rooms, reception, canteen & activities room all located in a two-storey structure. Playing fields are proposed. These include an athletic track (400m). The proposed use of this is mixed use track and field activities. There will be a grass pitch located in the centre of the track. A full-sized AstroTurf pitch is also proposed. This pitch is to be mixed use between GAA, Rugby & Soccer. Also located on the site will be a stand, storage areas for equipment, playground, hurling walls & carparking.

An extract from the planning drawings submitted is shown in Figure 1.

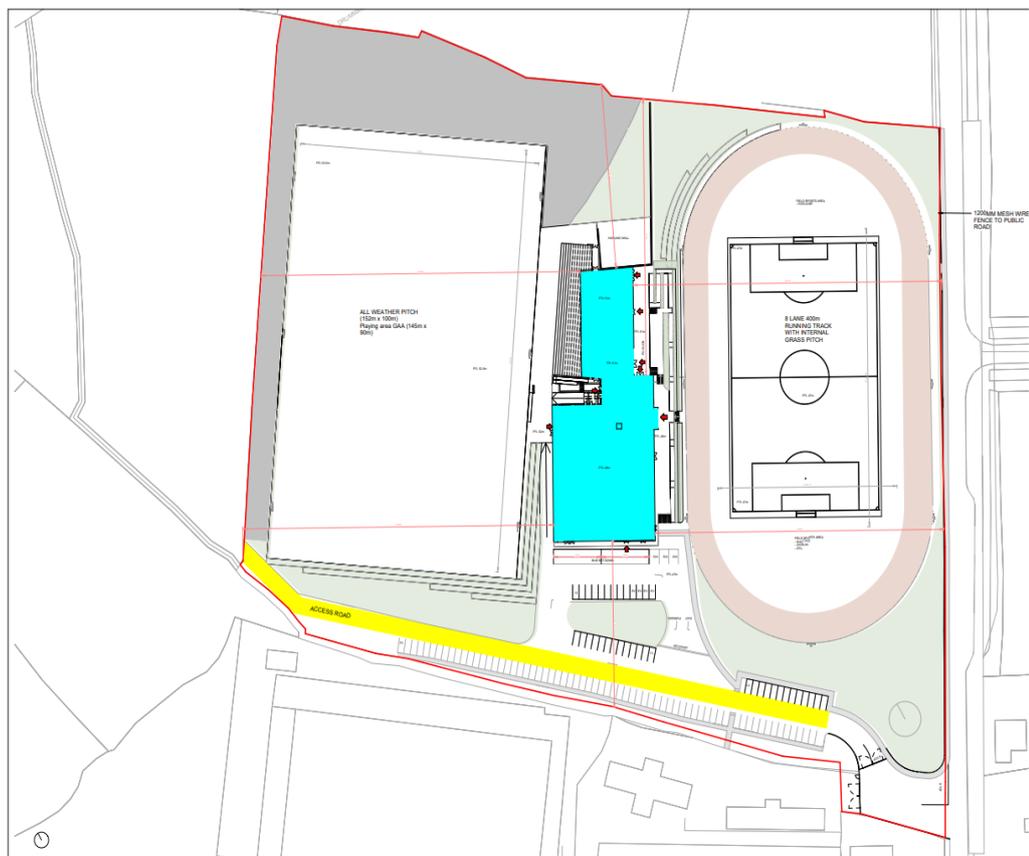


Figure 1 – Extract from Planning Drawings (As Prepared by Collins Boyd Architects)

Wastewater Treatment

Waste water from the development will be directed to the Carrick-on-Shannon Waste Water Treatment works, which is fully licensed by the EPA (Reg No. Do154-01).

Surface Water Treatment

The surface water runoff generated will be standard greenfield run off. It is proposed to treat this on-site using SuDS (Sustainable urban drainage systems). An infiltration system will be used where possible to dispose of surface water. This would include permeable paving/asphalt on hard surface areas along with infiltration trenches/basins. Rainwater harvesting is proposed on all roof areas. Filtration & detention systems are also proposed along the boundaries. These will include swales, bioretention systems, filter strips and detention basins. It is the intent to treat all the surface water generated by the proposed development within the site. Should detailed design show this is not possible, surface water lines are present on the road to the front of the site and a connection to the public sewers can be made. All foul water will be disposed of via the public lines. It is proposed that a petrol/oil inceptor be installed to cater for any surface water be generated from carparks or any other areas likely to have contaminants present. Water in these areas will pass through the inceptor prior to being discharged back to the ground or to public lines.

3.2 SITE LOCATION AND SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

The application site is currently a greenfield site of 6.3 hectares and it is located on the north-eastern outskirts of Carrick-on-Shannon town, approximately 1.5m north-west of the town centre. Access to the site will be via the creation of an entrance that will be just off a local, third-class road, the L3408. The site is bounded by agricultural land to the north-east and north-west, by a GAA pitch to the south-west and by the L3408 to the south-east.

The predominant land-use to the south of the site consists of the urban fabric of Carrick-on-Shannon town (residential, industrial, commercial and amenity areas) whilst agriculture is the dominant land-use on lands to the north and east of the site, as well as in the areas beyond the town. The main habitats surrounding the site include buildings and artificial surfaces, improved and wet grasslands, amenity grasslands and gardens.

Site location maps are shown in Figures 2 and 3, whilst an aerial photograph of the site and its surrounding habitats is shown in Figure 4.

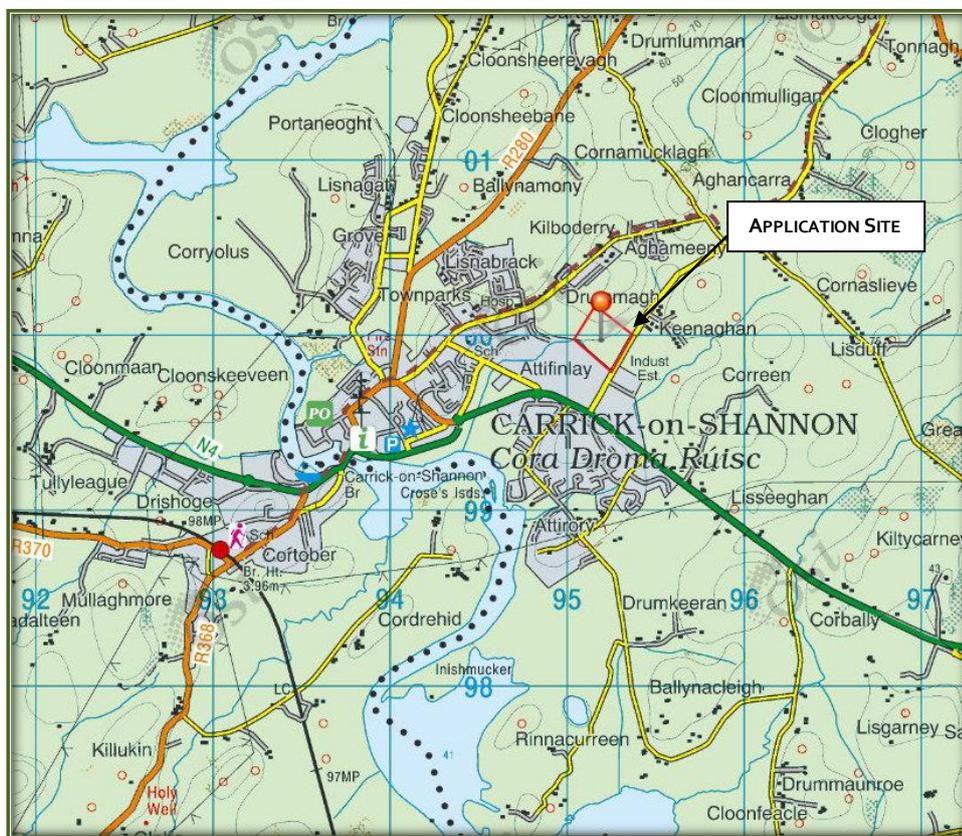


Figure 2 – Site Location Map (Pinned)



Figure 3 – Site Location Map (Site Outlined in Red)

HABITATS AND SPECIES

The application site consists of two separate fields, which are separated by a treeline. The dominant habitat within the site is improved agricultural grassland, which is currently being grazed by livestock. Some areas of the site are poorly drained, especially in the lower section near the road and along the south-western boundary. These areas have a larger proportion of rushes *Juncus* sp and meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*. The north-eastern, north-western and south-western boundaries consist of treelines or hedgerows and the main species within them include hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, alder *Alnus glutinosa*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, gorse *Ulex europaeus*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus*.

An examination of the website of the National Biodiversity Data Centre, revealed that there are no records for the presence of any protected mammal species from within the relevant 1km square (G9500, M9599) of this proposed development.

The site was walked and examined for the presence of invasive species (Third Schedule). No invasive species were recorded on the site.

WATER FEATURES AND QUALITY

The application site is located within the Upper Shannon Hydrometric Area, Catchment Sub-Catchment and Sub-Basin. There is a surface water course flowing along the south-eastern and south-western site boundary. The EPA refer to this as the Attifinlay Stream. This stream rises in lands to the north of the application site, and it flows in a north-easterly direction until its confluence with the River Shannon north of the N4 and the Rosebank Retail – approximately 1.1km downstream of the application site.

The EPA have defined the ecological status of the Attifinlay Stream and the River Shannon at points upstream and downstream of Carrick on Shannon as poor. Under the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, this is unsatisfactory and this status must be improved to good status.



Figure 4 – Aerial Photograph of the Site (Outlined in Red) and its Surrounding Habitats. The Attifinlay Stream is Marked in Blue.

3.3 NATURA 2000 SITES IDENTIFIED

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 proposed development have been identified and described according to their site synopses, qualifying interests and conservation objectives. In addition, any other sites further than this, but potentially within its zone of interest were also considered. The zone of impact 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.

There are no Natura 2000 designated sites within 15km of the application site. There are two sites hydrologically connected to the application site via the Attifinlay Stream and the River Shannon. These designated areas and their closest points to the proposed development site are summarised in Table 1 and a map showing their locations relative to the application site is shown in Figure 5. A full description of these sites can be read on the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (npws.ie).

Site Name & Code	Distance	Special Conservation Interests	Potential Impacts?
Lough Forbes SAC 001818	34km downstream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i>-type vegetation Active raised bogs Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> 	Given the hydrological distance, the potential for significant effects to arise is unlikely.
Ballykenny – Ballykenny Bog SPA 004101	34km downstream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) 	Given the hydrological distance, the potential for significant effects to arise is unlikely.

Table 1 – Natura 2000 Sites Within 15km or Hydrologically Connected. SACs – Red Hatching and SPAs – Pink Hatching

3.4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The potential effects of the proposed development on the Natura 2000 sites identified above are described below.

Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on nearby Natura 2000 site:

The construction and operation of the proposed development will have no impacts upon the integrity or the site structure of the designated sites identified. There are no individual elements of the proposed project that are likely to give rise to negative impacts on these aforementioned sites. There will be no direct, indirect or cumulative impacts upon any designated site arising from the construction or operation of the proposed development. There is a sufficient hydrological distance between the development site and all designated areas to ensure that no impacts will arise.

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: Given the small size and scale of the development in relation to the overall size of the designated sites identified, the likelihood of any direct, indirect or cumulative impacts on these designated sites arising from the construction and operation of the proposed development is low.

Land-take: There will be no land-take from any designated site. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any designated site.

Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site: There are no sites within 15km of the application site. Lough Forbes SAC and the Ballykenny-Fishersotwn Bog SPA are approximately 34km downstream of the site. In this instance, this distance is sufficient to ensure that no impacts will arise.

Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.): No resources will be taken from any Natura 2000 site and there are no resource requirements that will impact upon any designated site.

Emissions: Neither the construction nor the operation of the proposed development will result in any direct emissions to any SAC or SPA. There will be no run-off from the site directly to any SAC or SPA. There is a stream adjacent to the application site, but the downstream distance (34km) to Lough Forbes SAC and Ballykenny Fisherstown SPA is sufficient to ensure that no impacts will arise on these areas by virtue of emissions. Best practice measures will be undertaken during the development of the site to prevent run-off from the site from entering any local watercourse.

Excavation requirements: Excavated material from the construction will be used on site. Any remaining will be disposed of in a responsible manner in a licensed facility away from any designated sites.

Transportation requirements: There will be no additional transportation requirements resulting

from the proposed development and associated works that will have any impact upon the Natura 2000 sites identified.

In-Combination / Cumulative Impacts: The proposed application was considered in combination with other developments or proposed developments in the Carrick-on-Shannon area. A number of other developments (domestic / commercial) have been granted planning permission in the preceding five years. Any future individual application that has the potential to impact upon a Natura 2000 site will be subject to Appropriate Assessment as required under Articles 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. All planning applications in Co. Leitrim that are within 15km of any designated site must be screened by the applicant for Appropriate Assessment. The proposed development will have no impacts upon any designated site when it is considered in-combination with other developments that have been properly screened for AA or where mitigation has been carried out as part of an NIS.

Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc: Once construction begins, it should be complete within one to two years. Operation of the site will be ongoing.

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

Reduction of habitat area: The proposed development lies outside the boundaries of the Natura 2000 sites identified in Section 3.3. There will be no reduction of designated habitat area within any SAC or SPA. There will be no impacts upon the habitat qualifying interests of the designated sites. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any designated site. There will be no loss of any undesignated habitat of biodiversity value within the site.

Disturbance to key species: There will be no direct disturbance to any species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive or Annex II of the Habitats Directive.

Habitat or species fragmentation: There will be no habitat or species fragmentation within any SAC or SPA. No ecological corridors between the proposed site and the Natura 2000 sites identified will be damaged or destroyed.

Reduction in species density: There will be no reduction in species density within the SAC and SPA.

Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.): There will be no negative impacts upon surface or ground water quality within the SAC or SPA. There will be no negative impacts upon the water quality in any designated site or any watercourse leading to 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 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

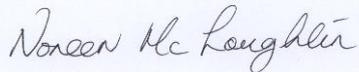
3.5 FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

Finding of No Significant Effects Report Matrix	
Name of project	A Proposed Mixed-Use Sport Development (Part 8) at Drummagh, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim
Name and location of Natura 2000 site	There are no sites within 15km of the application site. The Lough Ree SAC and Ballykenny-Fishertown SPA are approximately 34km downstream of the application site.
Description of project	An Amenity Development
Is the project directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?	No
Are there other projects or plans that together with project being assessed could affect the site?	No
The Assessment of Significance of Effects	
Describe how the project is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site	Having regard to the location, nature and scale of the proposed development, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects either from the proposed development on its own or in combination with other plans and projects.
Explain why these effects are not considered significant	Not applicable as there is no potential for negative impacts
Describe how the project is likely to affect species designated under Annex II of the Habitats Directive.	No impacts likely
Data Collected to Carry out the Assessment	
Who carried out the assessment	Noreen McLoughlin, MSC, MCIEEM. Consultant Ecologist
Sources of data	NPWS, EPA, National Biodiversity Data Centre, Leitrim County Council
Level of assessment completed	Stage1 Appropriate Assessment Screening
Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed	Full results included

4 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 project in relation to the relevant Natura 2000 sites.

In view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information, it can be concluded that this proposed development, whether individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will have no impacts upon any designated site. The integrity of these sites will be maintained and the habitats and species associated with these sites will not be adversely affected. It is of the opinion of this author that this development does not need to proceed to Stage II of the Appropriate Assessment process.



Noreen McLoughlin, MSc, MCIEEM.
Ecologist.

(PI Insurance details available on request)

Appendix I: FURTHER ECOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Whilst the proposed development will have no impacts upon the integrity of any area that has been designated as a Natura 2000 site, it is usually best practice to undertake certain mitigation measures during the construction and operation of any development. These measures will help to protect the local biodiversity of the surrounding area and ensure the protection of local wildlife and water quality. Therefore, it is recommended that the following measures are implemented: *(It should be noted that these recommended measures are **not** designed for the protection of any Natura 2000 site. Their presence does not indicate that a Stage II Appropriate Assessment is needed and they are fully outside of the Appropriate Assessment process).*

- Landscaping should only involve the use of native species that are indigenous to the area.
- There are a number of mature trees around the site and these trees have bat potential as well as being nesting sites for local populations of birds. If possible, the mature treelines around the site should be maintained. If this is not possible, then all vegetation should be removed in an appropriate season. If this is not possible, then prior to felling the trees should be inspected by an ecologist for the presence of bats and nesting birds. The provisions of the Irish Wildlife Acts with regards to the protection of birds, bats and their habitats must be considered and the applicant has responsibility for the protection of protected species within the site.
- Only low level lighting at night should be used. This will minimise disturbances to bats and other nocturnal mammals.