# Proposed Footpath Development at Jamestown, Co. Leitrim

# Supporting Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

**Produced by**

**AQUAFACT International Services Ltd**

**On behalf of**

**Leitrim County Council**

**February 2022**

**AQUAFACT International Services Ltd.,**
**12 Kilkerrin Park,**
**Galway.**
**www.aquafact.ie**
**info@aquafact.ie**
**Tel: +353 (0) 91 756812**

# Document Control/ Approval Sheet

| | |
|---|---|
| **Client** | Leitrim County Council |
| **Report Title** | Proposed Footpath Development at Jamestown, Co. Leitrim - Supporting Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment |
| **Job Number** | JN1602 |
| **Report Status** | Final |
| Issue Date | 14/03/2022 |

| **Rev** | **Status** | **Issue Date** | **File Name** | **Author(s)** | **Approved By** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Draft | 21/02/2022 | JN1702 Jamestown SISAA | Otto Storan | James Forde |
| 2 | Final | 14.03.2022 | JN1702 Jamestown SISAA | C. Tweedy | B.O'Connor |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

AQUAFACT

# Table of Contents

**1. INTRODUCTION ..... 2**
1.1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT ..... 2
1.2. OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ..... 2
1.3. REQUIREMENT FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT ..... 3
1.4. STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT ..... 5
1.5. GUIDANCE ..... 5
**2. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT ..... 8**
2.1. MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN SITE(S) ..... 8
2.2. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ..... 8
*2.2.1. Construction ..... 9*
*2.2.2. Operation ..... 9*
*2.2.3. Decommissioning ..... 9*
2.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF EUROPEAN SITE(S) ..... 11
*2.3.1. Source-Pathway-Receptor and Impact Assessment ..... 11*
*2.3.2. Plans or Projects That Might Act In-Combination ..... 24*
2.4. SCREENING OUTCOME ..... 27
**3. CONCLUSION ..... 30**
**4. REFERENCES ..... 31**

# List of Figures

**Figure 2-1: Project layout ..... 10**
**Figure 2-2 SACs within 15km of the Project ..... 15**
**Figure 2-3 Closest SPAs to the Project ..... 16**

# List of Tables

**Table 2.1: Special Areas of Conservation and Qualifying Interests ..... 17**
**Table 2.2: Special Protection Areas and Special Conservation Interests and Qualifying Interests ..... 19**
**Table 2.3: Impact Mechanism 1 – Construction noise ..... 22**
**Table 2.4: Impact Mechanism 2 – Discharges ..... 22**
**Table 2.5: Assessment of potential in combination effects. ..... 26**
**Table 2.6: Screening matrix of the proposed Project ..... 27**

# 1. Introduction

This report has been prepared to provide the relevant information for the Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) for the Proposed Footpath Development at Jamestown, Co. Leitrim (the 'Project'). This report has been prepared by AQUAFACT International Services Ltd. (AQUAFACT). The objective of the Project is to increase the accessibility of a local area of Jamestown, Co. Leitrim, by constructing a 460m footpath and pedestrian crossing (**Figure 1.1**).

## *1.1. Purpose of this report*

This report has been prepared specifically to address Article 6(3) obligations under the European Community (EC) Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna (commonly known the Habitats Directive), which is transposed into Irish legislation under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

## *1.2. Overview of the Proposed Development*

The Project comprises the building of a footpath and a pedestrian crossing near Jamestown, Co. Leitrim. A detailed description of the Project is provided in **Section 2.2** below.

There is currently no pedestrian footpath along the stretch of local access road (L3656) due west of Jamestown Bridge. Leitrim County Council, as the Project promoter, proposes to undertake the works. The purpose of these works is to improve access for locals and visitors to the area. The aims of the Project can be summarised as follows:

- Improve safety for pedestrians accessing and egressing to and from the local area and
- The proposed works will offer benefits to locals and tourists visiting the area.

The benefits resulting from the completion of the Project would include:

- Dedicated pedestrian footways and
- Crossings to serve the public and visitors

### *1.3. Requirement for Appropriate Assessment*

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (commonly known as the Habitats Directive) is European Community legislation regarding nature conservation established to ensure biodiversity is conserved through the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora in Europe.

The Habitats Directive was originally transposed into Irish law by the *European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997* (S.I. No. 94 of 1997). The 1997 Regulations were subsequently revoked and replaced by the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*, as amended (herein referred to as the 2011 Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations).

Under Regulation 42 of the 2011 Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations all competent authorities are required to conduct a screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) and, if necessary, an AA on any plan or project on the foreshore for which it receives an application for consent, or which the authority itself wishes to undertake or adopt. This obligation derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.

The AA provision of the Habitats Directive is transposed in Ireland by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in respect of land use plans and proposed developments requiring development consent. The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) is the basis for the Irish planning code, setting out the detail of regional planning guidelines, development plans and local area plans as well as the basic framework of the development management and consent system.

A network of sites of conservation importance hosting habitats and species as needing to be either maintained at or restored to favourable conservation status have been identified by each Member State. These sites are known as European sites within the Natura 2000 network.

European sites in Ireland that form part of the Natura 2000 network of protected sites comprise Special Area Conservation (SAC) sites designated due to their significant ecological importance for habitats and species protected under Annex I and Annex II respectively of the Habitats Directive, and Special Protection Areas (SPA) sites designated for the protection of populations and habitats of bird species protected under the EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/409/EEC). The sites are formally designated by the relevant minister under a statutory instrument. Candidate SAC and candidate SPA sites (*i.e.* cSAC or cSPA) have the same level of protection as fully designated sites under Irish Law[1].

[1] Candidate sites are those that have been submitted to the European Commission, but not yet formally adopted under Ministerial Statutory Instrument (S.I.). Legal protection, and therefore, the requirement for AA, arises from the date that the Minister gives notice of his/her intention to designate the site.

The specific named habitats and/or (non-bird) species for which an SAC or SPA are selected are called the 'Qualifying Interests' (QIs), of the site. The specific named bird species for which an SPA is selected is called the 'Special Conservation Interests' (SCIs) (OPR 2021).

Following the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, under Regulation 42 of the 2011 Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations, if a plan or project is not connected with, or necessary for the management of a European site and is likely to have a significant effect on the QIs or SCIs for which a site is designated either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, an AA is required to assess whether a plan or project will have any adverse effect on the integrity of a European site(s) in view of the Conservation Objectives set for the designated QIs or SCIs.

The **first stage of the AA process is Screening**; where the risk of a significant effect to a conservation feature (*i.e.* QI or SCI) from an impact mechanism can be **excluded** on the basis of objective evidence, the designated feature, and impact mechanism combination is **screened out** of further assessment. The assessments undertaken as part of the first stage of AA process are documented in a Screening Statement for AA.

Where the Screening for AA identifies that a significant effect to a conservation feature from an impact mechanism is likely to occur, the conservation feature and the impact mechanism combination is brought forward for a detailed consideration of the potential for adverse effects. This detailed assessment of the potential for adverse effects is the second stage of the AA process. The assessments undertaken as part of the **second stage of the AA process are documented in a Natura Impact Statement** (NIS).

This report has been prepared to provide the relevant information to inform the assessments to be undertaken for the Screening Statement for AA for the Proposed Footpath Development at Jamestown, Co. Leitrim and has been prepared to assist address Article 6(3) obligations under the Habitats Directive and to inform the AA determination of the competent authorities.

Specifically, this report focuses on the potential effects of the proposed development to European sites.

### *1.4. Structure of this Report*

The content of this report is as follows:

- **Section 2**: Screening for Appropriate Assessment
    - **Section 2.1** Management of the European site(s)
    - **Section 2.2** Description of the Proposed Development
    - **Section 2.3** Characteristics of the European site(s)
    - **Section 2.4** Screening Outcome
- **Section 3**: Conclusion

### *1.5. Guidance*

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance:

- EC (2018) Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC Commission Notice (2018);
- OPR (2021). Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management;
- DEHLG (2009) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities (Revised 2010);
- EC (2001) Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht – National Parks and Wildlife Service DAHG - NPWS (2012) Marine Natura Impact Statements in Ireland Special Areas of Conservation, A Working Document.

This assessment includes a desk-based review of available records of protected QIs and SCIs including the following sources:

- Conservation Status Assessment Reports, Backing Documents and Maps prepared to inform national reporting[2] required under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive;
- Site Synopsis, Conservation Objective Reports and Natura 2000 Forms available from NPWS;
- Published and unpublished NPWS reports on protected habitats and species including Irish Wildlife Manual reports, Species Action Plans, and Conservation Management Plans; and

[2] The most recent Article 17 report (2019) is available at https://www.npws.ie/publications/article-17-reports/article-17-reports-2019

- Existing relevant mapping and databases *e.g.* waterbody status, species and habitat distribution *etc*. (sourced from the Environmental Protection Agency - http://gis.epa.ie/, the National Biodiversity Data Centre - http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie and the NPWS - http://www.npws.ie/mapsanddata/.

### *1.6. Statement of Authority*

This report has been prepared by Dr Brendan O'Connor (B.Sc., Ph.D. and MCIEEM) and Dr James Forde (B.Sc., M.Sc. and Ph.D. and MCIEEM).

Brendan O'Connor is the ecology lead for the Jamestown Town and Village Scheme Footpath development. He is expert in ecological matters and the full spectrum of environmental assessment techniques, methodologies and statutes. Professionally, he is a member of relevant Institutes requiring the highest standards of professional competence and integrity. He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

Brendan has 40 years of experience in the field of marine science and has published *c.* 95 scientific papers and numerous reports specialising in the biology and ecology of sea-floor communities. Brendan is an internationally recognised polychaete taxonomist and has led numerous international workshops in polychaete taxonomy including workshops as part of the UK BEQUALM/NMBAQC. He has 33 publications on marine invertebrate taxa including descriptions of new species, revisions of families and additions to the European and Irish fauna.

As Managing Director of AQUAFACT Brendan has been responsible for all aspects of management including the design, execution and reporting of numerous desk studies, surveys, assessments and environmental outputs including NIS, AA screening and EIARs.

James has a Ph.D. in Marine Ecology and is a full member of the CIEEM. James has over fifteen years' experience in marine research and environmental consultancy. James specialises in marine ecology and has a full appreciation of the objectives and mechanisms of national and international environmental legislation and policy.

James' academic research has focused on benthic habitats and communities, and techniques used to assess ecological impacts under European environmental legislation including the Habitats Directive and the Water Framework Directive.

As part of James' consultancy work he has delivered assessment reports to meet the provisions of the Habitats Directive and EIA Directive to accompany planning applications for a wide range of developments including pier enhancement projects, coastal defence projects, and aquaculture.

James formed part of the technical advisory team for the national implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). James was responsible for specialist input on biodiversity.

James was a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) expert working group for marine red-list habitats for the North Atlantic and has collaborated with international experts on the designation of sensitive marine habitats including *Ostrea edulis* beds, *Mytilus edulis* beds, seagrass meadows and, offshore biogenic and geogenic reef habitats.

James has collaborated with national experts on the assessment of deep-water reef habitats in Irish waters to support Ireland's national assessment of reef as required under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive. Recently James has also worked with national experts on the classification of lagoon habitats, a Habitats Directive Annex I priority habitat.

# 2. Screening for Appropriate Assessment

## *2.1. Management of European Site(s)*

The obligation to undertake AA under the 2011 Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. Regulation 42 (1) of the 2011 Regulations requires that:

> *A screening for Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project for which an application for consent is received, or which a public authority wishes to undertake or adopt, and which* ***is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site****, shall be carried out by the public authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the site, if that plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on the European site*.

The proposed Project is not associated with the 'management' of European sites within the Natura 2000 Network having regard to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, and as such it is appropriate that the proposed Project is subject to a screening for AA. This screening assessment investigates, in view of best scientific knowledge, whether the proposed Project, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on European sites.

As outlined in **Section 1.2**, this *Screening Statement for AA*, which has been prepared to address Article 6(3) obligations of the Habitats Directive and associated national regulations, focuses on the potential effect to European sites associated with the proposed Project. **Section 2.2** below describes the proposed Project while **Section 2.3** considers the likelihood of significant effects of the Project on European sites both in isolation and in combination with other projects.

## *2.2. Description of Project*

The objective of the Project is to provide access by foot to increase the accessibility of a local area of Jamestown, Co. Leitrim, by constructing a 460m footpath and pedestrian crossing (**Figure 2-1**).

The Project comprises of the development of a footpath from the junction of L3656 and L3657 near Jamestown Village, westbound for 460m with associated public lighting and ramped uncontrolled crossing and all necessary ancillary works.

Construction equipment to be used will include a small truck, roller, mini excavator, compact surface dressing combination unit. Fuels, oils, greases and hydraulic fluids will be stored at a site compound in bunded containers or bunded trailers/ bowsers. Bunds for the storage of chemicals, where applicable, will be lined or constructed of materials resistant to damage by the materials stored therein.

Additionally, the capacity of such bunds will be a minimum of 110% of the volume of the largest container stored therein. Bunds will be designed in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency guidance in relation to the storage of potentially polluting liquids ("IPC Guidance Note on Storage and Transfer of Materials for Scheduled Activities", 2004).

All equipment will be re-fuelled at a site compound area or prior to arrival at site. Drip trays will be used where hydrocarbons are being used for vehicle maintenance/ refuelling. Potential impacts caused by spillages etc. during the construction phase will be reduced by keeping spill kits and other appropriate equipment on-site. All construction works will be confined to daylight hours and there will be no artificial lighting used within the construction area. Good construction site hygiene will be employed to prevent the introduction and spread of Third Schedule Invasive species (e.g. Rhododendron, Japanese Knotweed, Giant Rhubarb *etc.*) by thoroughly washing vehicles prior to entering and leaving any site. All construction infill material will be screened for invasive species.

### 2.2.1. Construction

The works proposed includes:

- Removal of some trees in the line of the proposed footpath
- Rebuilding of a short section of a dry stone field boundary wall
- Piping of open drains along the public road
- Installation of unbound stone for the proposed footpath base and kerb line
- Installation of Macadam surface to footpath
- Construction of a controlled pedestrian crossing
- Installation of public lighting along the footpath

### 2.2.2. Operation

Activities associated with the operational phase of the Project are limited to the occasional inspection and minor maintenance of footpath and crossing surface, and possibly the immediately adjacent access point (*e.g*. pathways and roadways). Other minor activities include the periodic maintenance of landscaped areas.

### 2.2.3. Decommissioning

Decommissioning is not expected to happen.

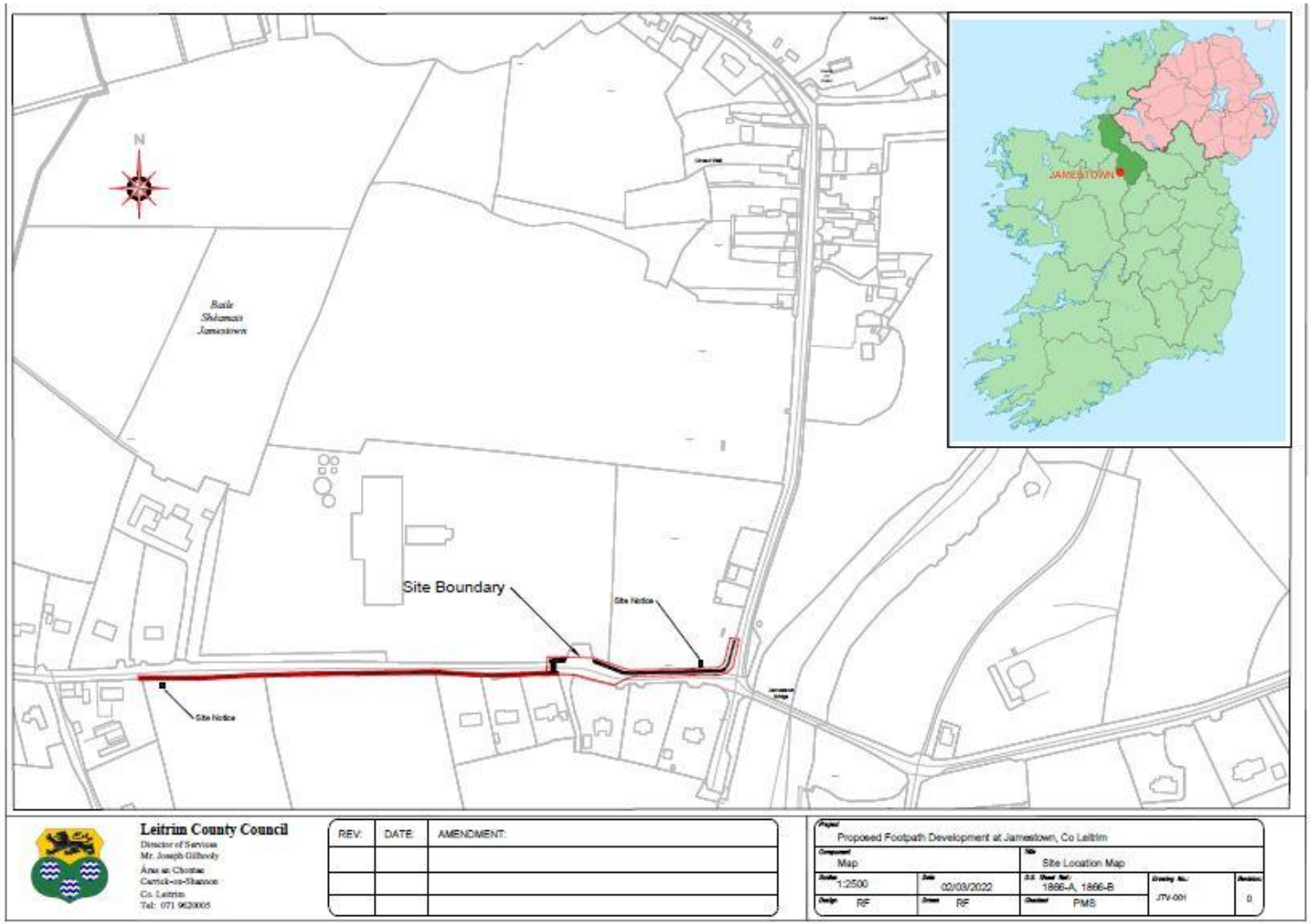


**Figure 2-1: Project layout**

## *2.3. Characteristics of European Site(s)*

### 2.3.1. Source-Pathway-Receptor and Impact Assessment

#### *2.3.1.1. Overview*

A key factor in the consideration as to whether or not a QI or a SCI (collectively referred to herein as conservation features) is likely to be affected by a proposed project is the existence of connectivity (or interaction/ or impact pathway) between the feature and the impact mechanisms associated with the Project. National guidance (DEHLG, 2009) outlines that screening for AA should be carried out for any European Site within the likely zone of impact (ZoI) of a plan or project.

For projects, the guidance outlines that the ZoI must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the Project, the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in-combination effects. **Section 2.3.1.3** and **Section 2.3.1.4** considers the potential effects due to the proposed Project, while **Section 2.3.2** considers potential in-combination effects with other plans and projects.

#### *2.3.1.2. Methodology*

As outlined in **Section 1.3** above, this report has been prepared to assist authorities in addressing Article 6(3) obligations under the Habitats Directive and focuses on the potential effects of the projects to European sites.

In order to establish the ZoI of the proposed Project, the assessment of connectivity between project impact mechanisms (or source) and a conservation feature (*i.e.* QIs and SCIs) considers the location of the Project relative to:

- habitats and non-mobile species;
- species foraging distances and migration routes;
- the proximity of the Project to foraging and breeding areas;
- potential changes in species behaviour and
- effects on prey species resulting in alteration in interactions and associated impacts.

To inform the assessment, nationally available data on protected habitats and species was mapped using a Geographic Information System (GIS) and interrogated to identify for source-pathway-receptor connectivity. The source (potential project impact mechanisms), pathways (hydrological, physical or ecological connectivity) and receptors (conservation features) were identified using GIS software, and through the examination of aerial photography and a review of ecological surveys undertaken in the

area. Any conservation feature identified to have a viable source-pathway-receptor link to the proposed Project were then examined further to determine the potential for significant effects.

The assessment of project impact sources (or mechanisms) considers all relevant aspects of the proposed Project that have the potential to directly or indirectly effect conservation features.

As a starting point, the European sites within 15km radius of the proposed Project (as measured using the shortest linear distance) were considered in this screening for AA. There are two SACs sites within 15km of the Project and one SAC outside of the 15km radius (see **Figure 2-2**) the sites are:

- Annaghmore Lough (Roscommon) SAC (Site code: 001626) (14.6km southwest of Project area)
- Clooneen Bog SAC (Site Code: 002348) (14.9km southeast of Project area)
- Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code: 17.46km south east of the Project)

The closet SPA sites to the Project (see **Figure 2-3**):

- Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (Site code: 004101) (17.2km southeast of Project area)
- Ballanagare Bog SPA (Site code: 004105) (25.3 km southwest of the Project area)
- Lough Arrow SPA (Site code: 00450) (21km northwest of the Project area)
- Lough Gara SPA (Site code: 004048) (24.4km west of the Project area)

A detailed description of the Project is provided in **Section 2.2** above; given the nature of the proposed activities associated with the Project, the potential impact mechanisms (or sources of impact) are:

1. Construction noise disturbance associated with construction activities. There is a risk of birds colliding with machinery working on-site. This may cause a local disturbance to birds if they fly through the site.
2. Discharges released during construction periods; release of dust, sediment, chemicals and/ or waste material. Equipment also have fuel tanks and hydraulic systems which could release fuel and lubricating oils, cleaning fluids and chemicals. Spillages may also include run-off of sediment laden surface water from the site to the River Shannon.

The conservation features (*i.e.* QIs and SCIs) of the above SACs and SPAs are listed in **Table 2.1**

Along with the conservation objectives set for the conservation features. In **Table 2.1** and

the QIs and SCIs are assigned to broad ecological groups. Brief description of the SACs and SPAs are provided below.

The assessment of potential effect of the Project on conservation features of SACs and SPAs are presented in **Section 2.3.1.3** and **Section 2.3.1.4** while the assessment of in-combination effects is outlined in **Section 2.3.2.**

**Annaghmore Lough (Roscommon) SAC (Site Code: 001626)**

Annaghmore Lough is located 5km north-west of Strokestown, Co. Roscommon. It lies at the centre of a network of small lakes in a rolling, drift-covered landscape. The shoreline slopes gently to the lake and these low-lying margins are extensively flooded in winter. As water levels recede in summer, substantial areas of the shallow lake dry out exposing flat expanses of marl. A smaller lake also occurs to the south of the site. The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats/species listed on Annex I/II of the E.U. Habitats Directive: [7230] Alkaline Fens, and [1013] Geyer's Whorl Snail (*Vertigo geyeri*]. Conservation objectives for Qualifying Interests of Annaghmore Lough (Roscommon) SAC are set out in **Table 2.1**.

**Clooneen Bog SAC (Site code: 002348)**

Clooneen Bog is located approximately 3km south-east of Roosky, Co. Longford, on the east bank of the River Shannon. The site comprises of areas of bog including bog woodland and cutover bog and is bounded by mineral ridges to the east and agricultural fields to the north. Though originally adjoining the River Shannon and Lough Forbes to the west and south respectively; it is now separated from these by a road and agricultural fields. The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats/species listed in Annex I/II of the E.U. Habitats Directive: [7110] Active Raised Bog*, [7120] Degraded Raised Bog, [7150] Rhynchosporion Vegetation, and [91D0] Bog Woodland*. Conservation objectives for Qualifying Interests of Clooneen Bog SAC are set out in **Table 2.1**.

**Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code: 001818)**

This site consists of a number of different habitats, and is centred around Lough Forbes, a lake formed by a broadening of the River Shannon. As well as the lake itself, there is also a series of raised bogs, callow grasslands and a variety of other aquatic and terrestrial habitats to the west of Newtown Forbes on the Longford/Roscommon boundary.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats/species: Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition* - type vegetation [3150], Active raised bogs [7110], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* [7150], and Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae*) [91E0].

Conservation objectives for Qualifying Interests of Lough Forbes Complex SAC are set out in **Table 2.1**.

**Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (Site code: 004101)**

Located on the border between counties Longford and Roscommon; the Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA is centered around Lough Forbes, a naturally eutrophic lake on the River Shannon system which is

fed by the River Rinn. The raised bogs are separated by the Camlin River. The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: [A395] Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser flavirostris*). The Conservation Objectives for this site's SCIs can be found in **Table 2.2**.

**Ballanagare Bog SPA (Site code: 00415)**

Ballanagare Bog is a large bog located 6km northeast of Castlerea, Co. Roscommon. The bog itself is underlain by muddy Carboniferous limestone with low permeability. The sub-soil is predominantly clayey limestone till. A number of streams, including the Frances River, rise on the site. The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: [A395] Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser flavirostris*). The Conservation Objectives for this site's SCIs can be found in **Table 2.2**.

**Lough Arrow SPA (Site code: 004050)**

Lough Arrow is a large limestone lake located almost entirely in Sligo with a small section in Co. Roscommon. It is largely spring-fed and has a relatively small catchment area. It has a well-developed submerged aquatic flora, most notably the community of charophytes. The lakeshore is mostly stony though bay area support Common Club-rush and Common Reed which can be found in abundance. The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, being of special conservation interest for the following species and species-supporting habitats: [A004] Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*), [A061] Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*), and [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds. The Conservation Objectives for this site's SCIs can be found in **Table 2.2**.

**Lough Gara SPA (Site code: 004048)**

Located on the Sligo-Roscommon border, Lough Gara is a medium-sized lake which is fed by the River Lung, flowing out into the River Boyle. The lake overlies Carboniferous limestone and shales as well as Devonian sandstone. Various drainage schemes operating since the mid-19$^{th}$ century has altered the shoreline, which has receded substantially. The site also now supports several low-lying islands. The lake margins support extensive reed swamps dominated by Common Reed and Bottle Sedge. Bulrush also occurs occasionally. In the southern area of the lake, common Club-rush is particularly abundant. The site is a Special Protection Area under the E.U. Birds Directive, being of special conservation interest for the following species: [A038] Whooper Swan (*Cygnus Cygnus*) and [A395] Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser flavirostris*). The Conservation Objectives for this site's SCIs can be found in **Table 2.2**.

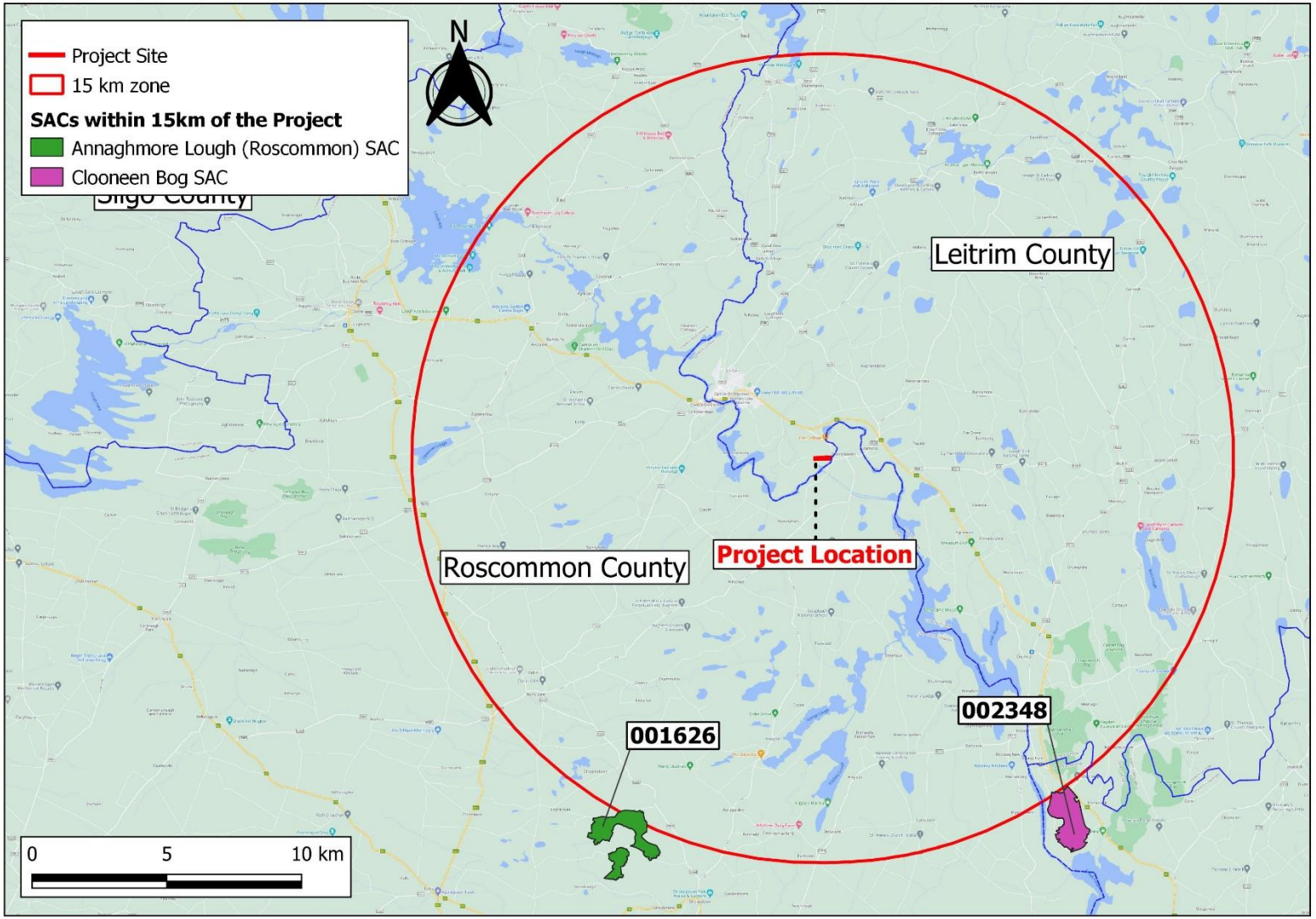


**Figure 2-2 SACs within 15km of the Project.**

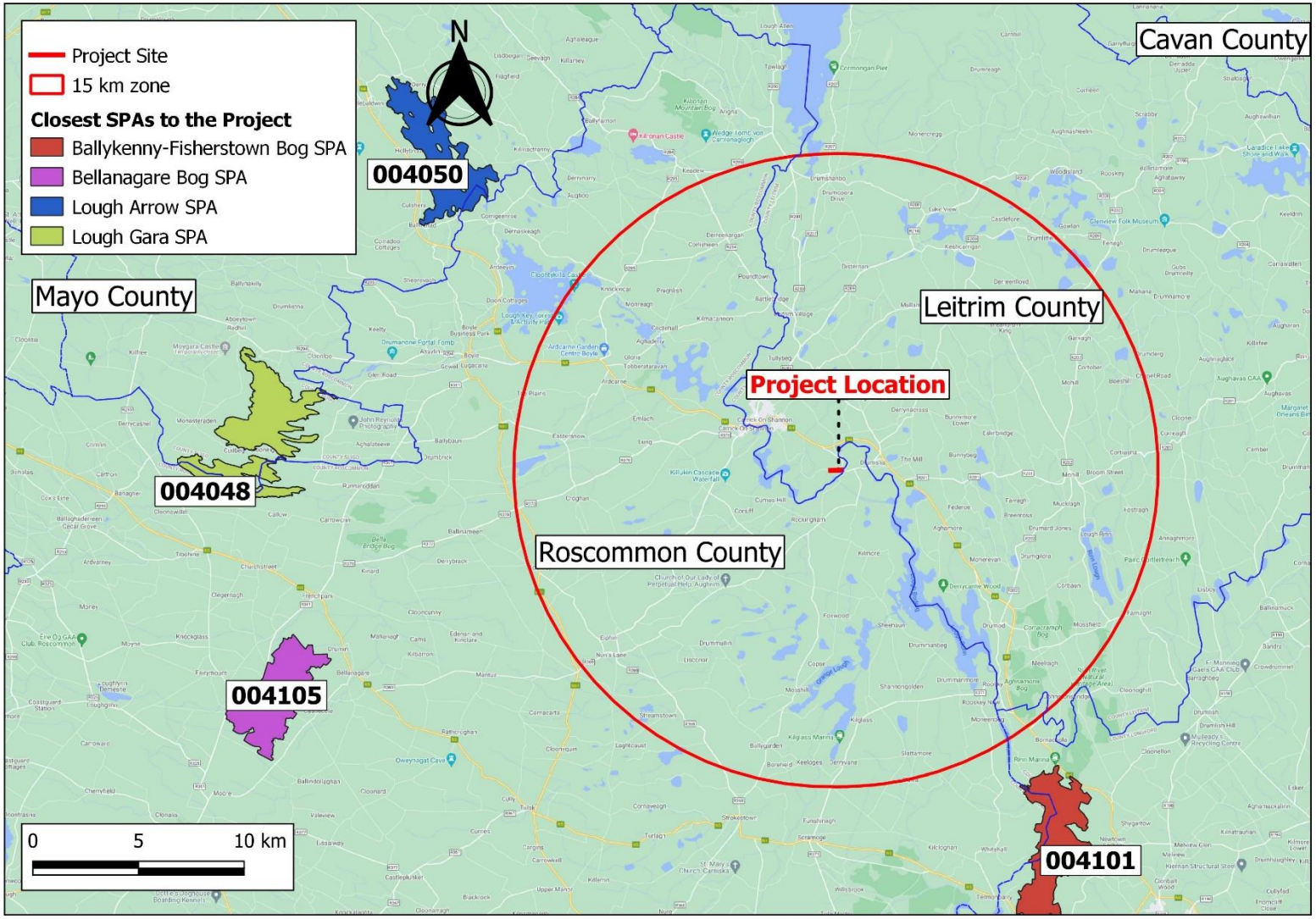


**Figure 2-3 Closest SPAs to the Project.**

**Table 2.1: Special Areas of Conservation and Qualifying Interests.**

| **Annaghmore Lough SAC** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Qualifying Interest (*=Priority Habitat)** | **Ecological Group** | **Conservation Objective** |
| Alkaline fens [7230] | Annex I freshwater/ terrestrial aquatic habitat | To maintain favourable conservation condition |
| Geyer's Whorl Snail (*Vertigo geyeri*) [1013] | Annex II terrestrial species | To restore favourable conservation condition |
| **Clooneen Bog SAC** | | |
| **Qualifying Interest (*=Priority Habitat)** | **Ecological Group** | **Conservation Objective** |
| Active raised bog* [7110] ** | Annex I freshwater/ terrestrial habitat | To restore or maintain favourable conservation condition |
| Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] | Annex I freshwater/ terrestrial habitat | To restore favourable conservation condition |
| Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* [7150] ** | Annex I freshwater/ terrestrial habitat | To restore or maintain favourable conservation condition |
| Bog woodland [91D0] | Annex I freshwater/ terrestrial habitat | To maintain the favourable conservation condition |
| **Lough Forbes Complex SAC** | | |
| **Qualifying Interest (*=Priority Habitat)** | **Ecological Group** | **Conservation Objective** |
| Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition* - type vegetation [3150] | Annex I freshwater habitat | To restore favourable conservation condition |
| Active raised bogs [7110] | Annex I freshwater/ terrestrial habitat | To restore favourable conservation condition |
| Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] | Annex I freshwater/ terrestrial habitat | To restore favourable conservation condition |
| Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* [7150] | Annex I freshwater/ terrestrial habitat | To restore favourable conservation condition |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae*) [91E0] | Annex I terrestrial habitat | To restore favourable conservation condition |
| ** Generic Conservation Objectives | | |

**Table 2.2: Special Protection Areas and Special Conservation Interests and Qualifying Interests.**

| **Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA **** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Qualifying Interest** | **Ecological Group** | **Conservation Objective** | **Foraging Behaviour** |
| Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser flavirostris*) [A395] | Annex I bird species | To maintain or restore favourable conservation condition | Associated with peatlands and low-intensity agricultural lands with feeding occurring on bogland habitats and managed grasslands. |
| **Ballanagare Bog SPA **** | | | |
| **Qualifying Interest** | **Ecological Group** | **Conservation Objective** | **Foraging Behaviour** |
| Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser flavirostris*) [A395] | Annex I bird species | To maintain or restore favourable conservation condition | Associated with peatlands and low-intensity agricultural lands with feeding occurring on bogland habitats and managed grasslands. |
| **Lough Arrow SPA** | | | |
| **Qualifying Interest** | **Ecological Group** | **Conservation Objective** | **Foraging Behaviour** |
| Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) [A004] | Annex I bird species | To maintain or restore favourable conservation condition | A small waterbird; this species often breeds in vegetated areas of large lakes where it preys on invertebrates and fish. |
| Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) [A061] | Annex I bird species | To maintain or restore favourable conservation condition | A small waterbird with a preference for larger bodies of freshwater such as lakes where they dive for invertebrates and molluscs. |
| Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] | Annex I habitat | To maintain or restore favourable conservation condition | - |

| **Lough Gara SPA **** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Qualifying Interest** | **Ecological Group** | **Conservation Objective** | **Foraging Behaviour** |
| Whooper Swan (*Cygnus Cygnus*) [A038] | Annex I bird species | To maintain or restore favourable conservation condition | A winter visitor from Iceland; this large waterbird feeds, where available, on grasslands and stubble crops between October and April. |
| Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser flavirostris*) [A395] | Annex I bird species | To maintain or restore favourable conservation condition | Associated with peatlands and low-intensity agricultural lands with feeding occurring on bogland habitats and managed grasslands. |
| ** Generic Conservation Objectives | | | |

#### *2.3.1.3. Assessment of Potential Significant Effects to QIs of SACs*

**Table 2.3** and **Table 2.4** summarises the screening assessments of the potential effects (direct or indirect) of project impact mechanism 1 and 2 (identified in **Section 2.3.1.2** above) to the Annex I QI habitats and Annex II QIs species for which the following SACs are designated:

- Annaghmore Lough (Roscommon) SAC (Site code: 001626)
- Clooneen Bog SAC (Site code: 002348)
- Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code: 001818)

The summaries of the assessment are presented in **Table 2.3** and **Table 2.4** according to the ecological group identified in **Table 2.1** in **Section 2.3.1.2.**

In summary, given the nature, duration and spatial extent of the proposed works associated with the Project, and the location of the QIs of SACs, it was concluded that there **no viable pathway for significant effects**. Given that there is no potential pathway for significant effects, the QI and impact mechanism combinations are **screened out** of further assessment

#### *2.3.1.4. Assessment of Potential Significant Effects to SCIs of SPAs*

Given the foraging behaviour of the SCI species, it can be concluded that individuals will not occur in high number, and if at all, at the Project area. Consequently, it can be concluded that there is **no viable pathway for significant effects**. The SCI and impact mechanism combinations are **screened out** for further assessment.

The 4 SPAs that are within 15 km of the Project are designated for the QI habitat Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]. Given the distant location of the QI to the Project, and given the nature, duration, and spatial extent of the proposed works it can be concluded that there is no potential pathway for significant effects. The QI and impact mechanism combinations are **screened out** for further assessment.

**Table 2.3: Impact Mechanism 1 – Construction noise**

| Site | Qualifying Interest | | Source-Pathway-Receptor Assessment |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Annaghmore Lough (Roscommon) SAC (Site code: 001626)** | **Annex I Habitats** | Alkaline fens [7230] | Due to the distance between the planned construction of the Project and the location of any relevant QIs of SACs within 15km, there is no potential pathway for interaction between the impact mechanism and the QIs.<br>The QIs and impact mechanism combinations are screened out. |
| **Clooneen Bog SAC (Site code: 002348)** | **Annex I Habitats** | Active raised bogs [7110]<br>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]<br>Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* [7150]<br>Bog woodland [91D0] | |
| | **Annex II Species** | *Vertigo geyeri* (Geyer's Whorl Snail) [1013] | Due to the large distance separating the relevant SAC designated for this species and the planned Project (14.6km), therefore there is no potential pathway for interaction between the impact mechanism and the QI. |
| **Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code: 001818)** | **Annex I Habitats** | Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition* - type vegetation [3150]<br>Active raised bogs [7110]<br>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]<br>Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* [7150]<br>Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae*) [91E0] | Due to the distance between the planned construction of the Project and the location of any relevant QIs of this SAC (17.74km), there is no potential pathway for interaction between the impact mechanism and the QIs.<br>The QIs and impact mechanism combinations are screened out. |

**Table 2.4: Impact Mechanism 2 – Discharges**

| Site | Qualifying Interest | | Source-Pathway-Receptor Assessment |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Annaghmore Lough (Roscommon) SAC (Site code: 001626)** | **Annex I Habitats** | Alkaline fens [7230] | While construction activities may result in the release of dust, sediment, chemicals and/ or waste material, the volumes discharged will be small and spatially limited to the immediate Project area; consequently, it can be concluded that there will be no significant effects from the impact mechanism to the QIs. There is no potential pathway for interaction |
| **Clooneen Bog SAC (Site code: 002348)** | **Annex I Habitats** | Active raised bogs [7110]<br>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]<br>Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* [7150]<br>Bog woodland [91D0] | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Annex II Species** | *Vertigo geyeri* (Geyer's Whorl Snail) [1013] | between the impact mechanism and the QIs.<br>The QIs are located outside of the ZoI of the project impact mechanisms; consequently it is possible to exclude the potential for significant effects at the Screening for AA stage.<br>The QIs and impact mechanism combinations are screened out. |
| **Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code: 001818)** | **Annex I Habitats** | Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition* - type vegetation [3150]<br>Active raised bogs [7110]<br>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]<br>Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* [7150]<br>Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae*) [91E0] | Due to the distance between the planned construction of the Project and the location of any relevant QIs of this SAC (17.74km), there is no potential pathway for interaction between the impact mechanism and the QIs.<br>The QIs and impact mechanism combinations are screened out. |

### 2.3.2. Plans or Projects That Might Act In-Combination.

As outlined in **Section 2.1**, the obligation to undertake AA under the 2011 Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. Regulation 42 (1) of the 2011 Regulations requires that:

> *A screening for Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project for which an application for consent is received, or which a public authority wishes to undertake or adopt, and which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site, shall be carried out by the public authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the site, if that plan or project, individually or* ***in combination with other plans or projects*** *is likely to have a significant effect on the European site*.

It is therefore required that the potential impacts of the proposed Project be considered in combination with other relevant plans or projects.

As described above in **Section 2.3.1.2**, given the nature of the proposed activities associated with the Project, the potential project impact mechanisms (or sources of impact) are:

1. construction noise disturbance
2. discharges released during construction

**Section 2.3.1.3** concluded that there no viable pathway between the project impact mechanisms and the QIs and SCIs of SACs and SPAs.

The assessment of potential in combination effects considers other plans and projects that may result in cumulative significant effects QIs and SCIs of SACs and SPAs.

To inform the assessment of potential in combination effects a review of consent applications for projects in the vicinity of the proposed Project included on the following web-sites was completed in February 2022:

- DHPLG - EIA Portal
  - https://www.housing.gov.ie/planning/environmental-assessment/environmental-impact-assessment-eia/eia-portal
- Leitrim County Council - Planning System
  - http://www.eplanning.ie/LeitrimCC/searchtypes
  - https://leitrimcoco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8645fc340c8d457b99ce71ce20bd79f1
- Roscommon County Council – Planning System

- https://www.eplanning.ie/RoscommonCC/searchtypes
- https://roscoco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=84b0356c3b45483c9da36ecccbd3aa93

The assessment of potential in combination effects also considered *negative impacting threats and pressures* and *positive impacting activities/ management* affecting the sites as identified in Natura 2000 forms published for the SPA and SAC sites available through the NPWS website (https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites).

Screening assessments of potential cumulative or in-combination effects from current and proposed projects listed on above websites are summarised in **Table 2.5**.

In summary, the assessments presented **Table 2.5** conclude that there is no potential likelihood for significant effects caused by cumulative or in-combination effects.

It was concluded that there is **no potential likelihood for significant effects from the proposed Project in combination with other plans or projects**.

**Table 2.5: Assessment of potential in combination effects.**

| Website | Project Details | File Reference | Date Application Received | Assessment of Potential Cumulative or In-combination Effects | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **DHPLG - EIA Portal** | A search of the DHPLG EIA Portal was undertaken to examine projects with potential for in combination effects. | - | - | There are no projects in the vicinity of the proposed work at Jamestown that would result in in combination effects. | No potential significant cumulative or in-combination effects |
| **Leitrim County Council - Planning System**<br>**Roscommon County Council - Planning System** | A search of the Leitrim and Roscommon planning databases was undertaken to examine projects with potential for in combination effects. | - | - | Applications made typically to County Councils and published on the planning database consisted of extensions and renovations to existing houses, and retention of existing developments. These are small-scale terrestrial developments which do not have the potential to result in cumulative effects in-combination with the proposed Project. | No potential significant cumulative or in-combination effects |

## *2.4. Screening Outcome*

The current assessment investigates the potential for the proposed Project to have significant effects on European Sites within the Natura 2000 network.

The assessment has determined, in light of best available scientific data, that there is no potential for significant effects on the SACs and any SPAs from the proposed Project *i.e.* the likelihood of significant effects on all European sites has been ruled out.

The assessment also determined that there is no potential likelihood for significant effects from the proposed Project in combination with other plans or projects. The findings of the assessment are summarised in **Table 2.6**.

**Table 2.6: Screening matrix of the proposed Project.**

| **Screening Matrix** | |
|---|---|
| Brief description of the Project or plan | The objective of the Proposed Development at Jamestown, Co. Leitrim (the 'Project') is to build a footpath approximately 460m in length along a local road (L3656) in Jamestown, Co. Leitrim (**Figure 1.1** and **Figure 2-1**). The Project comprises the building of a footpath and pedestrian crossing running 460m westwards of the junction west of Jamestown bridge along L3656. |
| **European Site(s)** | |
| Brief description of the European site(s) | Adopting a precautionary principle, the following European sites were considered in this screening for AA; The sites are:<br>• Annaghmore Lough (Roscommon) SAC<br>• Clooneen Bog SAC<br>• Lough Forbes Complex SAC<br>• Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA<br>• Ballanagare Bog SPA<br>• Lough Arrow SPA<br>• Lough Gara SPA<br>The QIs of the above SACs are listed in **Table 2.1** alongside conservation objectives set for the conservation features. |
| **Assessment Criteria** | |
| Describe the individual elements of the Project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European site. | Given the nature of the proposed activities associated with the Project as detailed in **Section 2.2**, the potential project impact mechanisms (or sources of impact) are:<br>**1.** construction noise disturbance<br>**2.** discharges released during construction |

| | |
|---|---|
| Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the Project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of<br><br>Size and scale, Land-take. | It is concluded that there no viable pathway between the project impact mechanisms and the QIs and SCIs of SACs and SPAs. The assessments are presented in full in **Section 2.3.1.3** and **Section 2.3.1.4** respectively.<br><br>The assessment of potential in combination effects considers other plans and projects, which may result in cumulative significant effects QIs and SCIs of SACs and SPAs. In summary, the assessments presented **Table 2.5** conclude that there is no potential likelihood for significant effects caused by cumulative or in-combination effects. |
| Distance from the Natura 2000 site or key interests of the site; | The proposed works lie outside of SACs and SPAs. The closest SAC and SPA to the proposed Project is approximately 14.6km and 17.2km, respectively. Distances of SACs and SPAs within 15km of the Project are detailed in **Section 2.3.1.4** above. |
| Resource requirements (water abstraction *etc.*); | During the proposed Project, construction equipment and plant (excavators *etc.*) will be in operation. The fuel used by the construction equipment, dumper trucks and plant and vessels will be petrol/ diesel.<br><br>Works at the site will involve the uses of rock/ gravel fill or backfill material, asphaltic concrete, unbound stone, and macadam surfacing for the footpath. The rebuilding of a short section of a dry stone boundary wall and removal of some trees in the line of the proposed footpath will also occur as part of the works involved.<br><br>Public lighting will be installed along the footpath. |
| Emissions (disposal to land, water or air); | Atmospheric and noise emissions from construction equipment and vehicles. |
| Excavation requirements;<br><br>Transportation requirements; | ***Excavation requirements***<br><br>The removal of some trees, as well as the piping of open drains, along the road will occur as part of the Project.<br><br>***Transportation requirements***<br><br>Excavated material not reused will be taken from site using dumper trucks for disposal at licenced facilities. Rock/ gravel fill or backfill material and asphaltic concrete and required at the site will be delivered using trucks. |
| Duration of construction, operation,<br><br>Decommissioning, Other; | The proposed Project activity comprises limited earthworks and the installation of path surfaces and the installation of electricity lighting. The earthworks and installation of surfaces involves the use of excavators and dumper trucks. On completion of the work at the site all equipment will leave the Project area.<br><br>Subject to securing the necessary consents, it is anticipated that installation operations will commence in July 2022. It is expected that the development will become fully complete and available for use by the general public by September 2022. The dates and timeframes for the Project may change dependent on the outcome of the consenting process. |
| Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of: | It is concluded that there is no potential likelihood for significant effects caused by the Project in isolation or in in-combination with other plans and projects, the following aspects of SACs and SPAs: |

| | |
|---|---|
| Reduction in habitat area;<br>Disturbance to key species;<br>Habitat or species fragmentation;<br>Reduction in species density;<br>Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality *etc*.);<br>Climate change | • Reduction in habitat area<br>• Disturbance to key species<br>• Habitat or species fragmentation<br>• Reduction in species density<br>• Water quality<br>With regard effect to climate change, the main source of atmospheric emissions from the proposed Project will result from engine exhaust gases from engines associated with the construction equipment, dumper trucks and plant. Given the short duration of the Project (approximately 6 - 8 weeks), significant effect on climate from atmospheric emissions can be discounted. |
| Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of:<br>Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site;<br>Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site. | It is concluded that there is no potential likelihood for significant effects caused by the Project in isolation or in in-combination with other plans and projects. |
| Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:<br>Loss; Fragmentation; Disruption; Disturbance; Change to key elements of the site. | Indicators of significance are loss of SCI and QI species and habitats.<br>Indicators of significance are behavioural changes in SCI and QI species.<br>It is concluded that there is no potential likelihood for significant effects caused by the Project in isolation or in in-combination with other plans and projects. |
| Describe from the above those elements of the Project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known. | It is concluded that there is no potential likelihood for significant effects caused by the Project in isolation or in in-combination with other plans and projects. |

# 3. Conclusion

Following a comprehensive evaluation of the potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on the SCIs in light of their Conservation Objectives, it has been concluded that the proposed development will not have a significant effect on any European site.

It has been objectively concluded by AQUAFACT, following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information, including in particular the nature of the proposed Project, that the proposed Project does not pose a risk of significantly affecting (either directly or indirectly) any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and there is no reasonable scientific doubt in relation to this conclusion.

# 4. References

DAHG NPWS. (2012). Marine Natura Impact Statements in Ireland Special Areas of Conservation, A Working Document. https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/Marine%20Assessment%20Working%20Document.pdf

DEHLG. (2009). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities (Revised 2010). https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf

EC. (2018). Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC Commission Notice (2018). https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/EN_art_6_guide_jun_2019.pdf

EC. (2001). Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision_of_art6_en.pdf

NPWS. (2019). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 1: Summary Overview. Unpublished NPWS report. https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/NPWS_2019_Vol1_Summary_Article17.pdf

NPWS. (2019). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 2: Habitat Assessments. Unpublished NPWS report. Edited by: Deirdre Lynn and Fionnuala O'Neill. https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/NPWS_2019_Vol2_Habitats_Article17.pdf

NPWS. (2019). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 3: Species Assessments. Unpublished NPWS report. Edited by: Deirdre Lynn and Fionnuala O'Neill. https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/NPWS_2019_Vol3_Species_Article17.pdf

OPR (2021). Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. https://www.opr.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/9729-Office-of-the-Planning-Regulator-Appropriate-Assessment-Screening-booklet-15.pdf