Carrick on Shannon Destination Town Project

Screening Statement for Appropriate Assessment

Produced by

AQUAFACT International Services Ltd

On behalf of

Leitrim County Council

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1. Introduction

This *Screening Statement for Appropriate Assessment* (*Screening Statement for AA*) has been prepared by AQUAFACT International Services Ltd. (AQUAFACT). The objective of the Carrick on Shannon Destination Town Project (the 'Project') is to to enhance visitor public areas, improve bus collection areas, add set down areas for coaches, improve external lighting of the following protected structures: Costello Memorial Chapel, St. George's Church and St Mary's Catholic Church and to add information stands around the town as part of the Carrick on Shannon Destination Towns Scheme (see **Figure 1.1**).

1.1. Overview of the Proposed Development

The Project set out to enhance Carrick on Shannon will involve the following works:

1. **To undertake a Public Realm Improvements Scheme** within the Town, to enhance the existing streetscape between Cryan's Hotel and the Carrick Plaza Suites along Local road L3401-1. The nature of the public realm works includes, inter alia, the widening of footpaths, the provision of enhanced uncontrolled pedestrian crossings, the provision of new public lighting in addition to the existing lighting, to replace the existing road surface, to relocate the existing street furniture and signage, the provision of soft and hard landscaping measures and to alter the existing on street car-parking provision.
2. **The Replacement of the existing Bus stop shelter with a covered structure** along the N4 on the Southern carriage-way that will shelter people waiting on or arriving by bus while equally providing shelter to enjoy overlooking the public space along the river edge. External seating and improved landscaping of the area to the rear of this covered structure and the river walk.
3. **The Installation of a new covered bus shelter** along Local Road L3401-1 to the front of the Primary Care Building as a bus departure area.
4. **The Relocation of the existing ESB Networks Sub-station** currently located in front of the Carrick Plaza Suites.
5. **Improvements to external lighting of the following protected structures**: Costello Memorial Chapel, St. George's Church and St Mary's Catholic Church.
6. **The provision of 16 No. Way Finding Signs** to include additional hard/soft landscaping works in the vicinity of Sign No. 5 and 6 as indicated on the submitted documentation

A full description of the project is provided in **Section 2.2** below.

The project is located within 21.35 km away from Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code: 001818) and 21.36 km away from the Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (Site code: 004101) (see **Figure 1.2** and **Figure 1.3**).

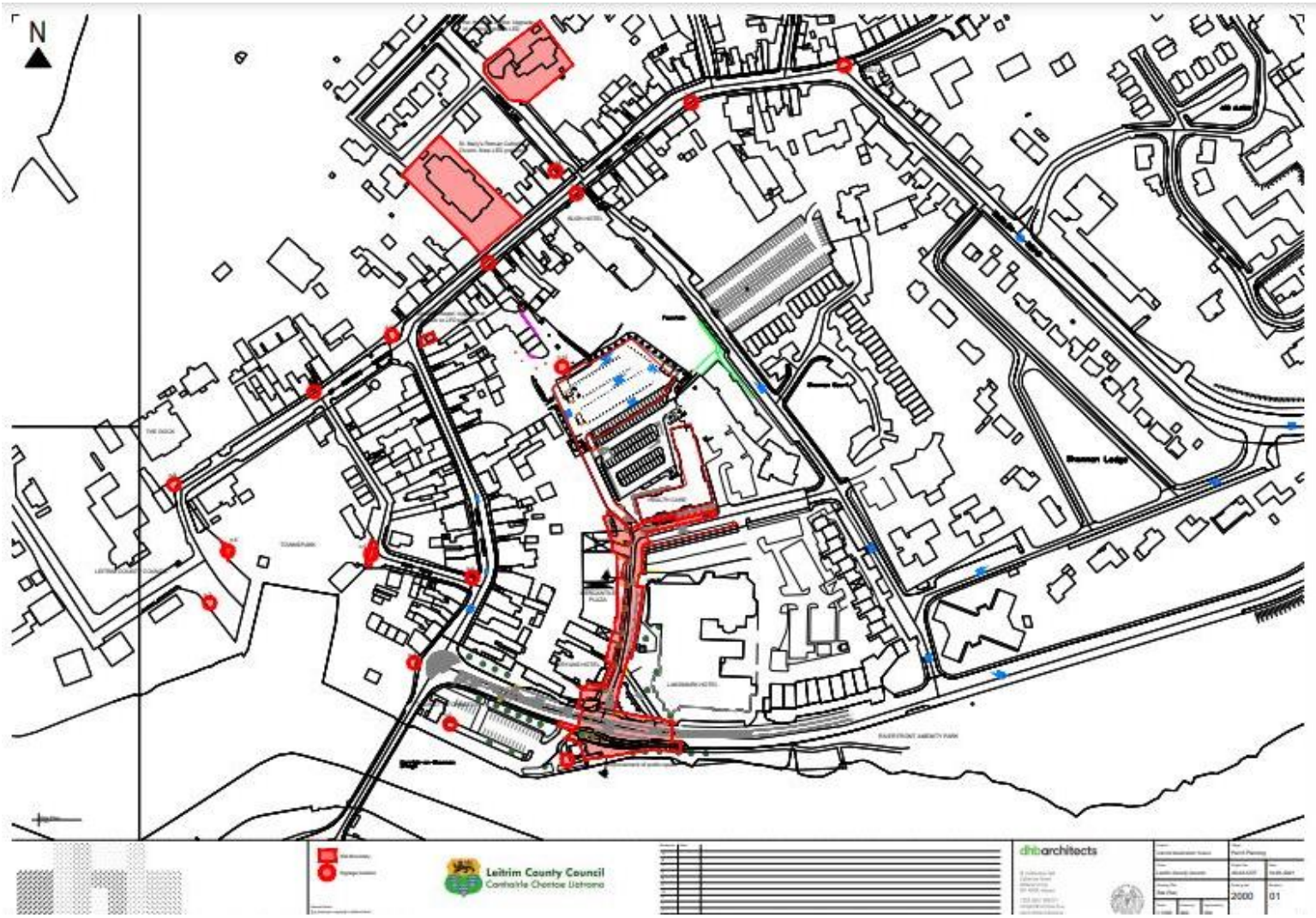

Figure 1.1: Location of the Carrick on Shannon Destination Town Project.

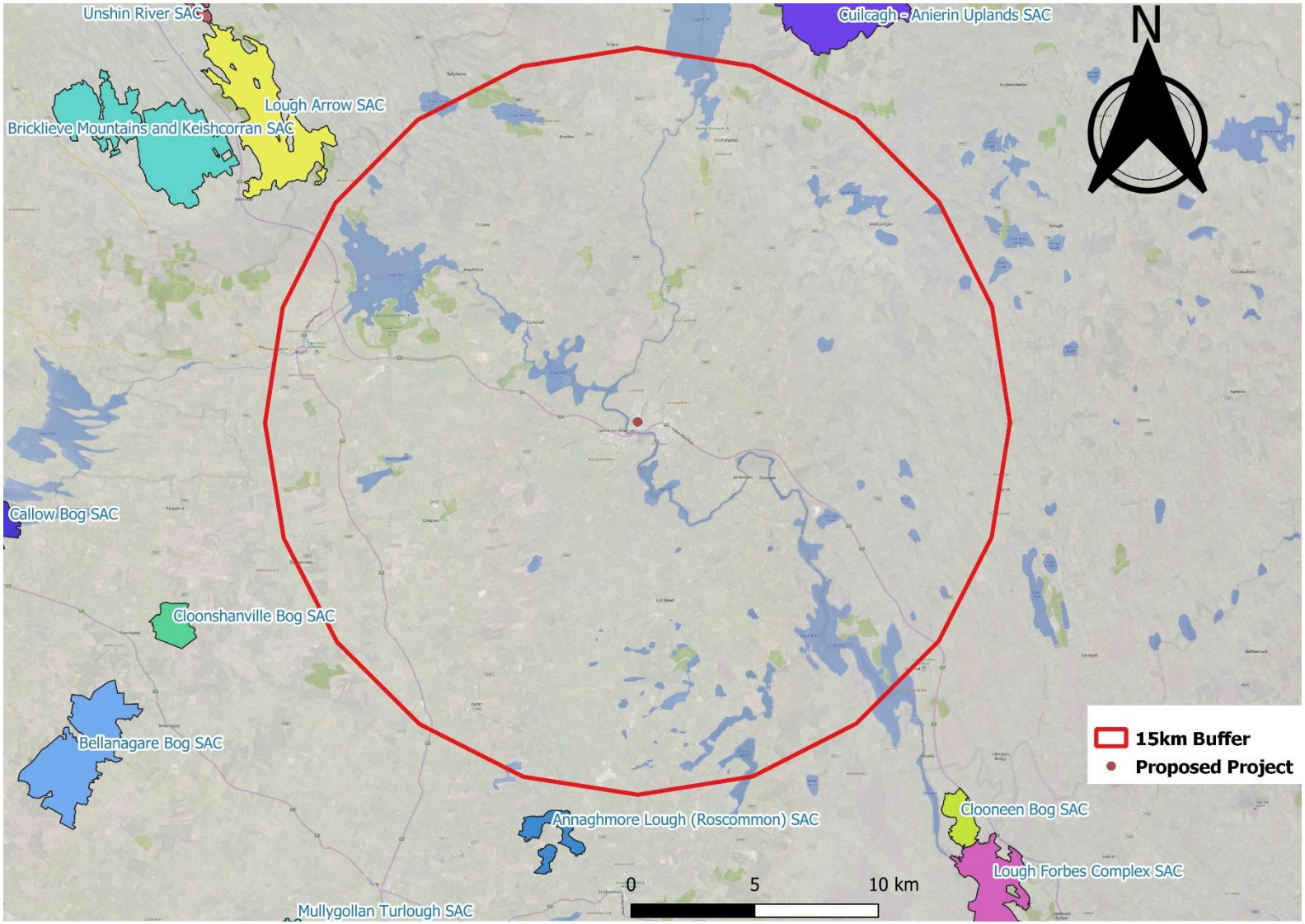

Figure 1.2: Project area at Carrick on Shannon relative to the closest SACs.

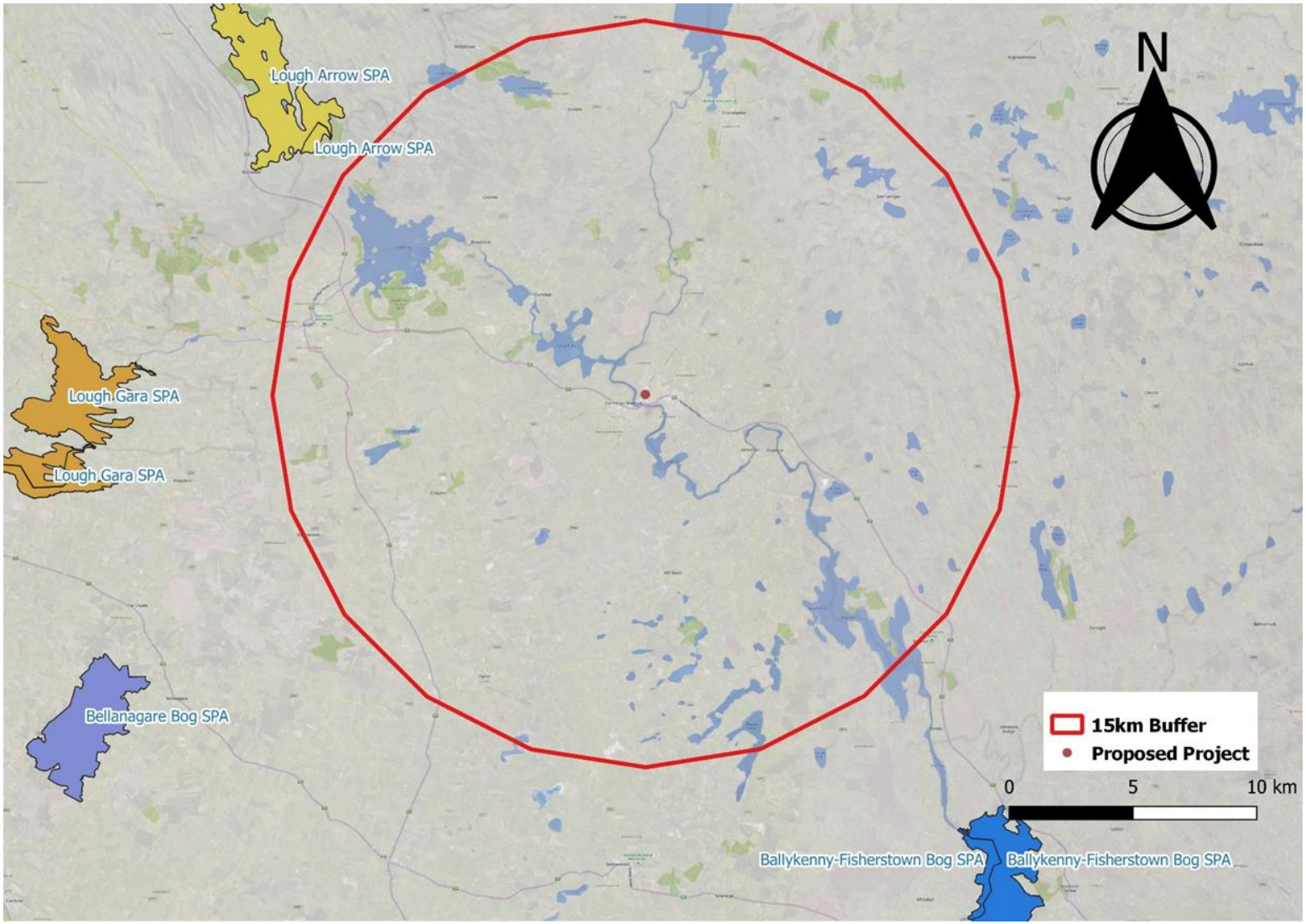

Figure 1.3: Project area at Carrick on Shannon relative to the closest SPAs.

1.2. 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 also transposed in Ireland by Part XAB of 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. Specifically, Section 181B of the act provides the statutory basis for protecting our natural and architectural heritage and the carrying out of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and AA.

A network of sites of conservation importance hosting habitats and species as needing to be either maintained at or returned 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 SACs designated due to their significant ecological importance for habitats and species protected under Annex I and Annex II respectively of the Habitats Directive, and SPAs designated for the protection of populations and habitats of bird species protected under the EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/409/EEC). Features for which SACs and SPAs are designated are called Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) respectively.

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 feature for which the 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 features.

This *Screening Statement for AA and NIS* has been prepared to address Article 6(3) obligations under the Habitats Directive and to inform the AA determination of the competent authorities. Specifically, this *Screening Statement for AA and NIS* focuses on the potential effects of the proposed development to European sites.

1.3. 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

1.4. 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);
- 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 species and habitats including the following sources:

- Conservation Status Assessment Reports, Backing Documents and Maps prepared to inform national reporting[1] required under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive;
- Site Synopsis, Conservation Objective Reports and Natura 2000 Standard Data 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
- 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 (NBDC) - http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie and the NPWS - http://www.npws.ie/mapsanddata/.

1.5. Statement of Authority

This report has been prepared by Dr Brendan O'Connor (BSc PhD MCIEEM) and Caoimhe Tweedy (BSc MSc).

Brendan O'Connor is the ecology lead for the Carrick on Shannon Town Project. 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).

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.

Caoimhe has a BSc in Marine Science and a MSc in Marine Biology. Caoimhe has been working as an environmental consultant in AQUAFACT for 1.5 years Caoimhe has worked on a variety of projects in AQUAFACT and has a full appreciation of the objectives and mechanisms of national and international environmental legislation and policy.

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

2. Screening for Appropriate Assessment

2.1. Management of European Site(s)

Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires that for onshore developments requiring development consent AA are carried out, while under the 2011 Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations all competent authorities are required to conduct a screening for AA and, if necessary, an AA on any plan or project for which it receives an application for consent including those projects on the foreshore.

The obligation to undertake AA under the Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and 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 1.1**, 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 Carrick on Shannon Destination Town Project (the 'Project') is to to enhance visitor public areas, improve bus collection areas, add set down areas for coaches, improve lighting of heritage stone buildings including Costello Chapel, St. George's church spire, Catholic Church Tower and to add information stands around the town as part of the Carrick on Shannon Destination Towns Project (see **Figure 2.1**). The project will involve:

1. **To undertake a Public Realm Improvements Scheme** within the Town, to enhance the existing streetscape between Cryan's Hotel and the Carrick Plaza Suites along Local road L3401-1. The nature of the public realm works includes, inter alia, the widening of footpaths, the provision of enhanced uncontrolled pedestrian crossings, the provision of new public lighting in addition to the existing lighting, to replace the existing road surface, to relocate the existing street furniture and signage, the provision of soft and hard landscaping measures and to alter the existing on street car-parking provision.
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6. **The provision of 16 No. Way Finding Signs** to include additional hard/soft landscaping works in the vicinity of Sign No. 5 and 6 as indicated on the submitted documentation

2.2.1. Construction

Construction aspects will include:

- A site compound shall be established at the current Leitrim County Council base on Priests Lane.
- The compound shall be secured and all Plant shall be stored in this defined area.

- Fuels, oils, greases and hydraulic fluids will be stored in bunded containers or bunded trailers/bowsers.
- 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.
- Construction shall be entirely land based.
- Tracked excavators and dump trucks will be used on the site and will be re-fuelled in the storage area.
- Works will be undertaken in accordance with HSE & Government Guidelines with regard to physical distancing and other COVID 19 restrictions.

2.2.1.1. Construction of the Coach Set Down Area, Improved Public Realm and Collection Point

This will include:

- These elements of the scheme shall be set out in accordance with the Scheme Design
- The areas for these construction works is currently impermeable *i.e.* road, footpath, hardstand areas.
- These areas will be stripped down approx 500mm below current level to allow for foundation build up to underside of proposed, footpaths, road, hardstand etc as per the Scheme design
- Any green areas on this site shall be stripped back and topsoil stored in mounds for reuse where required for landscaping works

2.2.1.2. Lighting of Heritage Stone Buildings Including Costello Chapel, St. George's Church Spire, Catholic Church Tower

- These buildings are currently lit externally, this lightly will be assessed by a competent Lighting Specialist and re designed to minimize light pollution and provide a more focused suitable lighting of the buildings

2.2.1.3. Information Stands to be Located Around the Town

- Information mapping will be designed by a Graphic Design Specialist for the installation on suitable designed information Stands. There will be approx 16 of these stands located at suitable locations around the town, to inform visitors to the Town of Sites/buildings of Interest.
- Excavations to a depth of approx 400mm below existing ground level to accommodation concrete foundations of 1500mm x 600mm x 200mm deep to support these stands. These stands will be bolted to the concrete foundations.

All proposed development activities will be carried according to best practice guidance, including but not limited to guidance on preventing pollution from construction sites and pollution prevention guidance (*e.g."Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects*" (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2006). The details of the best practice measures to be implemented for the development to avoid environmental effects occurring will be detailed by the appointed Contractor.

Substrate to be excavated to facilitate the construction of the proposed development, Unless re-used as backfill or in local landscaping works all material arising on the site will be removed from the site and disposed of as a waste or, where appropriate, as a by-product by an appropriately permitted Contractor subject to the relevant permissions by consenting authorities. In the event that any soil arising are **suspected** as being potentially contaminated

- with fill or other pollutants, soil will be tested and classified as hazardous or non-hazardous in accordance with the EPA Waste Classification – List of Waste & Determining if Waste is Hazardous or Non-Hazardous publication, HazWasteOnline tool or similar approved method following consultation with LCC. The material will then need to be classified as inert, non-hazardous, stable non-reactive hazardous or hazardous in accordance with EC Decision 2003/33/EC to inform the most appropriate disposal location.
- A *Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plan* (as part of the overall *Construction & Demolition Waste Management Plan*) which will provide for the segregation of all construction wastes into recyclable, biodegradable and residual wastes. All operations at the site will be managed and programmed in such a manner so as to minimise waste production and maximise recycling in order to prevent potential ground pollution. Wastes sent off site for recovery or disposal will only be conveyed by an authorised waste contractor and transported

from the proposed development site to an authorised site of recovery / disposal in a manner which will not adversely affect the environment.

- Bunds for the storage of chemicals 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).

Where refuelling is to take place on site it will be within a designated impermeable, bunded area, away from all drains. In the event of a machine requiring refuelling outside of this area,

- fuel will be transported in a mobile double skinned tank. An adequate supply of spill kits and hydrocarbon adsorbent packs will be stored in this area. All relevant personnel will be fully trained in the use of this equipment.
- Drip trays will be used where hydrocarbons are being used for vehicle maintenance/refuelling.
- Portable chemical toilets will be provided for the duration of the works and all waste material will be removed from site and disposed of to an appropriately licensed facility.

2.2.2. Operation

Activities associated with the operational phase of the development include occasional inspection and minor maintenance of buildings, carpark surface, access roadway, and surface water network and petrol interceptor. Other minor activities include the periodic maintenance of landscaped areas and parks and recreation furniture.

2.2.3. Decommissioning

Decommissioning is not expected to happen.

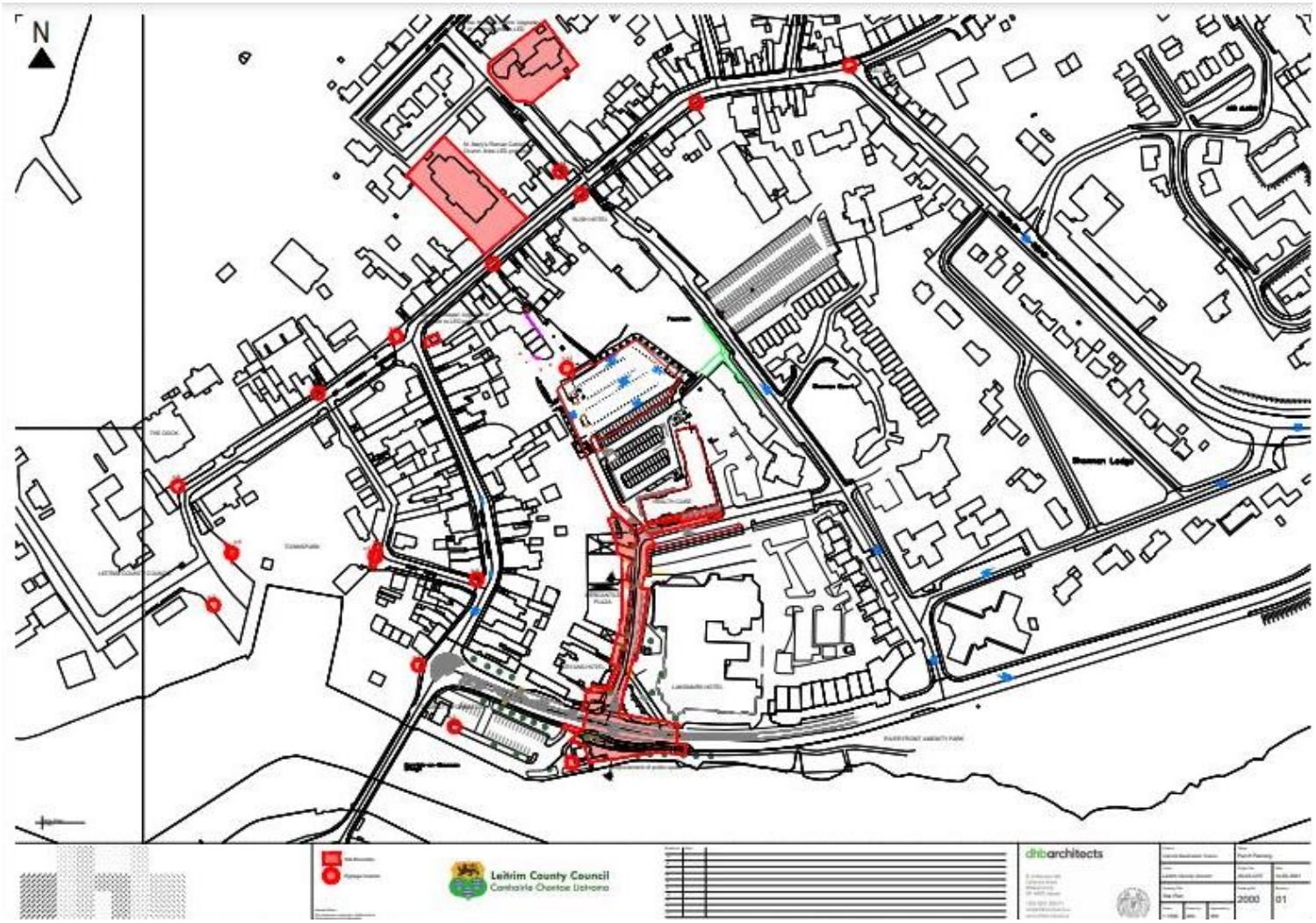

Figure 2.1: The location of the proposed project works.

2.3. Characteristics of European Site(s)

2.3.1. Source-Pathway-Receptor and Impact Assessment

2.3.1.1. Overview

As outlined in **Section 1.2** above, this *Screening Statement for AA* has been prepared to address Article 6(3) obligations under the Habitats Directive and focuses on the potential effects of the project to European sites.

A key factor in the consideration as to whether or not a QI or a SCI (collectively referred to herein as conservation features) and conservation objectives are likely to be affected by a proposed project is the existence of connectivity (or interaction/ or impact pathway) between the conservation 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 likely zone of impact of a plan or project.

2.3.1.2. Methodology

Guidance outlines that the potential zone of impact of a project 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 describes the potential impact mechanism associated with the project. **Section 2.3.1.4** identifies the SACs and SPAs relevant to the current assessment in light of the project impact mechanisms. **Section 2.3.1.5** considers the potential for significant effect of the project on SACs and SPAs while **Section 2.3.2** assesses potential in combination effects with other plans and projects.

In order to establish the zone of impact of the proposed project, the assessment of connectivity between project impact mechanisms (or source) and a conservation feature (*i.e.* QIs of SACs and SCIs of SPAs) considers the location of the project relative to habitats and non-mobile species, species foraging distances and migration routes, and the proximity of the project to foraging and breeding areas, and potential changes in species behaviour, 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.

2.3.1.3. Identification of Impact Mechanisms based on the Nature, Size and Location of the Project

A detailed description of the street enhancement project is provided in **Section 2.2** above. In summary, the project will set out to enhance the image and setting of this historic city through improvements to its streets and spaces, conserving its built heritage, encouraging people to explore, enabling businesses to flourish and creating a vibrant street scene .A full description of the project is provided in **Section 2.2** above.

Given the nature of the proposed activities, the potential project impact mechanisms (or sources of impact to the environment) are:

1. Construction discharges - activities associated with construction and civil works may result in the release of sediment, chemical or other waste material pollution during construction periods.
2. Noise disturbance - construction noise impacts.

Descriptions of the impact mechanisms **1** and **2** is provided in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1: Impact mechanism

Impact Mechanism	
1 Noise disturbance	Activities required for the street enhancement, widening the existing footpaths, and new paving for existing footpaths will result in noise disturbance. These sources of impact are of particular relevance to terrestrial and aquatic fauna residing in the area and/ or migrating through or transiting the project area.
2 Construction discharges	The nature of the project means that there is a potential for the release of sediment during the construction phase of the project. Sediment discharges to the environment can give rise to increased bottom sedimentation, which, in turn, can adversely impact macroinvertebrates and aquatic habitat quality. Elevated suspended solids levels within the water column can damage the gills of salmonid fish, white-clawed crayfish and benthic macroinvertebrates and can smother fish spawning areas when deposited. The density of salmonid fish varies according to habitat type; riffles, runs and shallow glides are likely to be important nursery areas for salmonids with some pockets of localised spawning present, whist pools and deeper glides will hold older fish. Juvenile fish are likely to be more susceptible to gill damage than older fish as a result of temporary increases in suspended solids. Lamprey ammocoetes would not be expected to be adversely impacted by sediment release as a result of works since they inhabit areas of silt deposition during their nursery stage. The risk of release of significant sediment during the construction phase can be minimised through the management of construction activities. There is a potential for the loss of cement or hydrocarbons such as diesel and hydraulic fluids during the construction phase. Bulk liquid concrete will be used to construct abutments gives rise to the possibility that spills could occur. Cement is highly alkaline and can give rise to very serious fish kills with similar effects on invertebrates, including white-clawed crayfish. Wash off from poorly cured cement can also be highly alkaline and potentially dangerous to fish. Careful supervision of cement handling, curing times, and general good engineering practice can greatly reduce the risk from concrete-related impacts so that the likelihood of impacts is best described as low. Hydrocarbon spills from poorly secured or non-bunded fuel storage areas, leaks from vehicles or plant or spills during re-fuelling can all give rise to the escape of hydrocarbons from construction sites to water courses. These spills can give rise to tainting of fish or, if large enough, fish kills and invertebrate kills. Just like cement, the likelihood of their occurrence in a well-equipped, maintained and managed construction site is low.

2.3.1.4. Identification of Relevant SACs and SPAs based on Project Impact Mechanisms

Adopting a precautionary principle, the identification of SACs and SPAs relevant to the impact mechanisms (listed in **Section 2.3.1.3**) considered European sites within a 15km buffer area of the proposed development site were included in this assessment (see **Figure 1.2**). As there were no sites within 15km of the development, sites with hydrological connectivity to the project were assessed:

- Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code: 001818) (21.35 km away from the project)
- Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (Site code: 004101) (21.36 km away from the project)

The QIs of the SACs and the SCIs of the SPA are listed in **Table 2.2** and **Table 2.3** alongside conservation objectives set for the conservation features. In **Table 2.2** and **Table 2.3** the QIs and SCIs are assigned to broad ecological groups and feeding guilds respectively. A preliminary assessment of potential pathways of effect existing between the project impact mechanisms and the European sites is presented below.

Lough Forbes Complex SAC (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 and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes): [3150] Natural Eutrophic Lakes, [7110] Raised Bog (Active)*, [7120] Degraded Raised Bog, [7150] Rhynchosporion Vegetation, and [91E0] Alluvial Forests* (NPWS, 2013)

Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101)

Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA is located on the border between Counties Longford and Roscommon in the north-central midlands and is underlain by Carboniferous limestone. It is centred around Lough Forbes, a naturally eutrophic lake on the River Shannon system which is fed also from the north by the River Rinn. The lake has well-developed swamp vegetation and displays natural transitions to seasonally flooded grassland, marsh and raised bog. The raised bogs, known as the Ballykenny-Fishertown complex, are separated by the Camlin River, which has further areas of callow grassland. The central core areas of the bogs are quite wet with a good complement of bog mosses (*Sphagnum spp*.) and well-developed hummocks. Ballykenny Bog is unusual in that some of its margins are intact, a rare feature in the Irish midlands. Between the Camlin River and this bog, a complete transition from

raised bog to callow grasslands can be seen, while the interface between the bog and lake is colonised by a narrow band of deciduous woodland.

At the time this site was designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) it was being used by part of the Loughs Kilglass and Forbes Greenland White-fronted Goose population (NPWS 2012).

Table 2.2: Qualifying Interests of SACs

Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code: 001818)		
Qualifying Interest (*=Priority Habitat)	**Ecological Group**	**Conservation Objective**
Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150]	Annex I freshwater/terrestrial habitat	To restore the favourable conservation condition
Active raised bogs [7110]	Annex I terrestrial habitat	To restore the favourable conservation condition
Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]		The long-term aim for Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration is that its peat-forming capability is re-established; therefore, the conservation objective for this habitat is inherently linked to that of Active raised bogs (7110) and a separate conservation objective has not been set in Lough Forbes Complex SAC
Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]		Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion is an integral part of good quality Active raised bogs (7110) and thus a separate conservation objective has not been set for the habitat in Lough Forbes Complex SAC
Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)* [91E0]		To restore the favourable conservation condition

Table 2.3: Special Conservation Interest Species of SPA

Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (Site code: 004101)			
Special Conservation Interest	**Ecological Group**	**Waterbird Foraging and Feeding Guild (based on Weller 1999)**	**Conservation Objective**
Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) [A395]	Species associated with Polder land - agricultural habitats	Terrestrial walker	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation status

2.3.1.5. Assessment of Potential Significant Effects

2.3.1.5.1. Overview

This section presents the screening assessments of the potential effects (direct or indirect) of project impact mechanisms **1** and impact mechanism **2** (as identified in **Section 2.3.1.2** above) to the conservation features (*i.e.* QIs and SCIs) and conservation objectives for which the following sites are designated:

- Lough Forbes Complex SAC (Site code: 001818) (21.35 km away from the project)
- Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (Site code: 004101) (21.36 km away from the project)

Where the risk of a significant effect to a designated feature 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.

2.3.1.5.2. Relevant European Sites

The following provides summaries of the findings of the screening assessments outlined in **Section 2.3.1.4.**

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

  The SAC lies 21.35km south of the proposed project. The site is designated for the following Qis:

  - 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]
  - Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae*) [91E0]

  There is no viable pathway for effects to the Qis due to no hydrological connectivity and distance from the SAC to the project, **therefore potential effects can be screened out.**

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

The SPA which is located c. 21.36 km southeast of the project. The site is designated for the following SCI:

- Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) [A395]

The proposed project does not overlap suitable foraging habitat for the species; **consequently there is no pathway significant effects.**

2.3.2. Plans or Projects That Might Act In Combination

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 are considered in combination with other relevant plans or projects.

As described above in **Section 2.3.1.2** the impact mechanisms of the proposed project that are likely to result in significant effects to European sites are:

1. Construction discharges - activities associated with construction and civil works may result in the release of sediment, chemical or other waste material pollution during construction periods.
2. Noise disturbance - construction noise impacts.

The assessment of potential in combination effects considers the above potential impact mechanisms associated with the proposed project that in combination with other plans and project may result in significant effects.

To inform the assessment of potential cumulative or in-combination effects a review of consent applications for projects in the vicinity of the development site included on the following websites was completed in February 2021:

1) Leitrim County Council – Planning System http://www.leitrimcoco.ie/eng/Services_A-Z/Planning-and-Development/Online-Planning-Search/

2) DHPLG – EIA Portal https://www.housing.gov.ie/planning/environmental-assessment/environmental-impact-assessment-eia/eia-portal

3) An Bord Pleanála – Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) Portal http://www.pleanala.ie/lists/2020/sid/index.htm

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 sites.

Screening assessments of potential cumulative or in-combination effects from current and proposed projects listed on above websites are summarised in **Table 2.4**.

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

Table 2.4: Assessment of potential in combination effects.

Website	Details	File Reference	Date Application Received	Assessment Summary	Potential for Significant Effects
Leitrim County Council Planning System	A search of the Leitrim County Council planning database (http://www.leitrimcoco.ie/eng/Services A-Z/Planning-and-Development/Online-Planning-Search/) was undertaken to examine projects with potential for in combination effects.	15192	10/06/2018	Leitrim County Council are proposing to construct a 3 storey Primary Healthcare Centre. The proposed development comprises of a medical centre, an out of office hours medical centre and retail pharmacy at ground floor level with primary health care facilities provided at ground, first and second floor levels. The development will also comprise of a new access roadway to connect the existing roadway to the new Centre; a landscaped car park providing 69 no. car park spaces; connections to public utility and drainage services, along will all other ancillary site services and alterations to existing drainage layout in lieu of development on 0.526ha site.	There is no potential likelihood for significant effects from the proposed development in combination with other plans or projects.
DHPLG EIA Portal	A search of the DHPLG – EIA Portal (https://www.housing.gov.ie/planning/environmental-assessment/environmental-impact-assessment-eia/eia-portal) was undertaken to examine projects with potential for in combination effects.	-	-	Projects listed on the portal were located significant distance for the proposed project at Dromahair. Given this distance, there is no potential for in cumulative effects in-combination with the proposed project.	There is no potential likelihood for significant effects from the proposed development in combination with other plans or projects

An Bord Pleanála	A search of the An Bord Pleanála planning database (http://www.pleanala.ie/lists/2020/sid/index.htm) was undertaken to examine projects with potential for in combination effects.	-	-	Projects listed on the portal were located significant distance for the proposed project at Dromahair. Given this distance, there is no potential for in cumulative effects in-combination with the proposed project.	There is no potential likelihood for significant effects from the proposed development in combination with other plans or projects

2.4. Screening Outcome

The screening 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 Lough Forbes Complex SAC (001818) and Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101).

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 2.5**.

Table 2.5: Screening matrix of the proposed project.

Screening Matrix	
Brief description of the project or plan	The objective of the Project is The Project set out to enhance Carrick on Shannon through the following steps: The objective of the Project is The Project set out to enhance Carrick on Shannon through the following steps: • To undertake a Public Realm Improvements Scheme within the Town, to enhance the existing streetscape between Cryan's Hotel and the Carrick Plaza Suites along Local road L3401-1. The nature of the public realm works includes, inter alia, the widening of footpaths, the provision of enhanced uncontrolled pedestrian crossings, the provision of new public lighting in addition to the existing lighting, to replace the existing road surface, to relocate the existing street furniture and signage, the provision of soft and hard landscaping measures and to alter the existing on street car-parking provision. • The Replacement of the existing Bus stop shelter with a covered structure along the N4 on the Southern carriage-way that will shelter people waiting on or arriving by bus while equally providing shelter to enjoy overlooking the public space along the river edge. External seating and improved landscaping of the area to the rear of this covered structure and the river walk. • The Installation of a new covered bus shelter along Local Road L3401-1 to the front of the Primary Care Building as a bus departure area. • The Relocation of the existing ESB Networks Sub-station currently located in front of the Carrick Plaza Suites. • Improvements to external lighting of the following protected structures: Costello Memorial Chapel, St. George's Church and St Mary's Catholic Church. • The provision of 16 No. Way Finding Signs to include additional hard/soft landscaping works in the vicinity of Sign No. 5 and 6 as indicated on the submitted documentation
European Site(s)	

Brief description of the European site(s)	Adopting a precautionary principle, sites with hydrological connectivity to the proposed project were considered in this screening for AA; The sites are: • Lough Forbes Complex SAC (001818) (21.35 km) • Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101) (21.36 km)
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, the potential project impact mechanisms (or sources of impact to the environment) are: **1.** Construction discharges - activities associated with construction and civil works may result in the release of sediment, chemical or other waste material pollution during construction periods. **2.** Noise disturbance - construction noise impacts. 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 2.3.1.5.** 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. In summary, the assessments conclude that there is no potential likelihood for significant effects caused by cumulative or in-combination effects.
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 sites and Conservation Objectives by virtue of Size and scale, Land-take.	
Distance from the Natura 2000 site or key interests of the site;	The location of the project relative to SAC and SPAs is shown in **Figure 1.2** and **Figure 1.3** respectively.
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. Resources required include: • a dumper • digger • roller
Emissions (disposal to land, water or air);	**Onshore activities:** Atmospheric and noise emissions from construction equipment, dumper trucks, plant *etc.* Potential release of sediment, chemicals or other waste material pollution at the landfall sites during construction periods. Noise emissions associated with the construction works.
Excavation requirements; Transportation requirements;	***Excavation requirements*** Small scale excavation works for the new screen base and abutments. Where possible excavated material will be reused. ***Transportation requirements*** Material not used will be taken from site using dumper trucks for disposal at licenced facilities. Material to be used will be delivered using trucks.
Duration of construction, operation, Decommissioning Other.	The proposed works will take total of 3 months and are planned to take place between November 2021 and February 2022.

Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of: Reduction in habitat area; Disturbance to key species; Habitat or species fragmentation; Reduction in species density; Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality *etc*.); Climate change	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 • Disturbance to key species • Habitat or species fragmentation • Reduction in species density • Water quality 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 3 months), 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: Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site; 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: Loss; Fragmentation; Disruption; Disturbance; Change to key elements of the site.	Indicators of significance are loss of QI species. Indicators of significance are behavioural changes QI species.
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. Conclusions

To determine the potential impacts, if any, of the proposed enhancement of streets in Carrick on Shannon Town on nearby Natura 2000 sites, a screening process for Appropriate Assessment was undertaken

The AA screening process considered potential impacts which may arise during the construction and operational phases of the proposed project. This assessment comprised an evaluation of the pathways for effects on the qualifying interests of designated European Sites, with reference to the location, size, scale, and duration (construction and operation) associated with the proposal. It is considered that the proposed project does not include any element that has the potential to significantly alter the

favourable conservation objectives associated with the species and habitats, or, interfere with the key relationships that define the structure or function, either alone or in combination with other impacts, of the Natura 2000 sites considered in this document.

It is concluded that there are no likely potential impacts, whether direct, indirect or cumulative/in-combination, which could give rise to adverse effects on the qualifying interests or the conservation objectives of the Lough Forbes Complex SAC and Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA and that the integrity of these sites will not be affected. Consequently, this proposed development does not require an NIS or need to advance in the Appropriate Assessment process.

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