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STRATEGIC ROAD MAINTENANCE FACILITY AT DRUMFIN

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

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An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport

Bonneagar Iompair Éireann
Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Sligo County Council
Comhairle Chontae Shligigh

Sligo.

ROD
ROUGHAN & O'DONOVAN

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Roughan & O'Donovan was appointed by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Sligo County Council (SCC) to provide environmental consultancy services in relation to the development of a Strategic Road Maintenance Facility at Drumfin ("the proposed development"). It is proposed to construct a Strategic Resilience Salt Barn facility, Maintenance/Operation Depot and a Local Authority Municipal District (MD) Machinery Yard, with ancillary buildings and structures in order to provide a range of national, regional and local road maintenance services.

This Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report is intended to determine whether or not the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of best scientific knowledge, is likely to have a significant effect on areas designated as being of European importance for nature conservation ("European sites"), thereby enabling Sligo County Council, as the Competent Authority in this case, to fulfil its obligations under Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ("the Habitats Directive").

This document comprises the AA Screening Report in respect of the proposed development and was prepared by ROD on behalf of TII, DoT and SCC and in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive, as transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended (S.I. No.477 of 2011) ("the Habitats Regulations"), including Part 5 thereof). The aim of this AA Screening Report is to inform and assist the Competent Authority in carrying out its AA Screening by determining whether or not the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, has the potential to significantly affect one or more European sites in view of their Conservation Objectives.

It is the considered opinion of ROD, as the author of this AA Screening Report, that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of best scientific knowledge, does not have the potential to result in likely significant effects on the Unshin River SAC, or any other European site, in view of their Conservation Objectives. Therefore, AA is not required in respect of the proposed development.

1.2 Competent Experts

This AA Screening Report was prepared by Rachel Heaphy and reviewed by Patrick O'Shea. Rachel is a Graduate Ecologist with two years' experience in ecological assessment. She holds a BSc in Zoology from University College Cork and an MRes from the University of Roehampton. She is a Qualifying Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (QualCIEEM).

Patrick is a Principal Ecologist with ten years' experience in ecological consultancy and research. Patrick has a BA (Hons) in Natural Sciences from Trinity College Dublin and an MSc in Ecological Management and Conservation Biology from Queen's University Belfast. Patrick is a Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

1.3 Legislative Context

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21st May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora ("the Habitats Directive") and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 30th November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds ("the Birds Directive") list habitats and species which are, in a European context, important for conservation and in need of protection. This protection is afforded in part through the designation of sites which support significant examples of habitats or populations of species. ("European sites"). Sites designated for wild birds are termed "Special Protection Areas" (SPAs) and sites designated for natural habitat types or other species are termed "Special Areas of Conservation" (SACs). The complete network of European sites is referred to as "Natura 2000".

In order to ensure the protection of European sites in the context of land use planning and development, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive provides for the assessment of the implications of plans and projects for European sites, as follows:

> *"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site[1] and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public."*

In *Case C-323/17* [§34*], People Over Wind*, the Court of Justice of the European Union ('the CJEU') referred to the nature of the test to be applied in making a screening determination as follows:

> *"[...] it is settled case-law that Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive makes the requirement for an appropriate assessment of the implications of a plan or project conditional on there being a probability or a risk that the plan or project in question will have a significant effect on the site concerned. In the light, in particular, of the precautionary principle, such a risk exists if it cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information that the plan or project will have a significant effect on the site concerned (judgment of 26 May 2011, Commission v Belgium, C-538/09, EU:C:2011:349, paragraph 39 and the case-law cited). The assessment of that risk must be made in the light inter alia of the characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the site concerned by such a plan or project (see, to that effect, judgment of 21 July 2016, Orleans and Others, C-387/15 and C-388/15, EU:C:2016:583, paragraph 45 and the case-law cited)."*

Further clarification on the use of mitigation measures was provided in *Eco Advocacy*[2], where the CJEU ruled that where constituent elements are incorporated into the design of a project as standard features required for all projects of that nature and not with the aim of reducing negative effects of a project on European sites, those features cannot be regarded as indicative of likely significant effects on European sites concerned and should not be interpreted as mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects of a plan or project on those European sites. The judgement stated that:

[1] Including, where applicable, 'sites'.
2 Eco Advocacy v. An Bord Pleanála [2023] C-721/21

"*In the light of the foregoing considerations, the answer to the fourth question is that Article 6(3) of the Directive 92/43 must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out an appropriate assessment of the implications of a plan or project for a site, account may be taken of the features of that plan or project which involve the removal of contaminants and which therefore may have the effect of reducing harmful effects of the plan or project on that site, where those features have been incorporated into that plan or project as standard features, inherent in such a plan or project, irrespective of any effect on the site*."

Article 7 of the Habitats Directive provides that the provisions of, *inter alia*, Article 6(3) are to apply to SPAs under Directive 2009/147/EC (the "Birds Directive").

As stated, the requirements arising out of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive are transposed into Irish law by Part XAB of the 2000 Act and by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended[3] (S.I. No.477 of 2011) (the Habitats Regulations), including Part 5 thereof.

The determination of whether or not a plan or project requires AA is referred to as "Stage 1" or "AA Screening". A "Stage 1" or "AA Screening" is completed to determine whether or not the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of best scientific knowledge, is likely to have a significant effect on areas designated as being of European importance for nature conservation ("European sites"), thereby enabling the Applicant, to fulfil its obligations under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive specifies that AA must be undertaken by the "competent national authorities". In Ireland, the "competent authority" is the relevant planning authority for each plan or project, e.g. the local authority or An Bord Pleanála. Consequently, the responsibility for carrying out AA Screening lies solely with the competent authority. In that respect, the AA Screening Report is not in itself an AA Screening Assessment but provides the competent authority with the information it needs in order to carry out its AA Screening.

1.4 Screening Methodology

At this stage of the process, the AA Screening Report assesses the potential effects from the plan or project on the European sites within the zone of influence and evaluates them in view of the sites' Conservation Objectives.

[3] Including inter alia S.I. 290 of 2013; SI 499 of 2013; SI 355 of 2015; the Planning, Heritage and Broadcasting (Amendment) Act 2021, Chapter 4; SI 293 of 2021.

This AA Screening Report has had regard inter alia to the following matters[4]:

- The threshold test is that an appropriate assessment will be required if a plan or project is likely *to have a significant effect* on (a) European site(s) either individually or in combination with other plans or protects.
- It is not necessary, in order to trigger the requirement to proceed to stage 2 AA that a plan or project will '*definitely*' have significant effects on the protected site, but such a requirement will arise if it is a '*mere probability*' that such an effect exists. The requirement to carry out an AA will be satisfied if there is a 'probability *or a risk*' that a plan or project will have '*significant effects*' on (a) European site(s).
- Consequent upon the application of the precautionary principle, such a '*risk*' will be found to exist if '*it cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information'* that the particular plan or project '*will have significant effects*' on (a) European site(s).
- An AA will be required if, on the basis of objective information, a '*significant effect*' on a European site 'cannot be *excluded'.* An AA will not be required if, on the basis of objective information, a '*significant effect*' on (a) European site(s) '*can be excluded*'.
- In the case of '*doubt as to the absence of significant effects*' an AA must be carried out.
- The requirement to conduct an AA will arise where, at the screening stage, it is ascertained that the particular plan or project is '*capable of having any effect*' (albeit this must be any '*significant effect*') on (a) European site(s).
- The '*possibility*' of there being a '*significant effect*' on (a) European site(s) will give rise to a requirement to carry out an AA for the purposes of Article 6(3). There is no need to '*establish*' such an effect and it is merely necessary to determine that there '*may be*' such an effect.
- In order to meet the threshold of likelihood of significant effect, the word '*likely'* in Article 6(3) means less than the balance of probabilities. The test does not require any *'hard and fast evidence' that such a significant effect was likely.* It merely has to be shown that there is a '*possibility'* that this significant effect is likely.
- The assessment of whether there is a risk of '*significant effect'* on the European site must be made in light, inter *alia*, of the '*characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the site concerned*' by the relevant plan or project.
- Plans or projects or applications for developments which have *no appreciable effect* on European sites are excluded from the requirement to proceed to AA. If all applications for permission for proposed developments capable of having *any effect whatsoever* on such sites were to be caught by Article 6(3) *activities on or near the site would risk being impossible by reason of legislative overkill.*

While the threshold at the screening stage of Article 6(3) is very low nonetheless it is a threshold which must be met before it is necessary to proceed to the stage 2 AA.

4 See Eoin Kelly v. An Bord Pleanála [2019] IEHC 84; Kelly v. An Bord Pleanála [2014] IEHC 400; Connelly v. An Bord Pleanála [2018] IESC 31; [2018] ILRM 453.

Accordingly, best practice in undertaking AA Screening involves five steps as follows:

(1) The first step involves gathering the information and data necessary to carry out a screening assessment. These include, but are not limited to, the details of all phases of the plan or project, environmental data pertaining to the area in which the plan or project is located, e.g. rare or protected habitats and species present or likely to be present, and the details of the European sites within the zone of influence.

(2) The second step involves examining the information gathered in the first step and a scientific analysis of the potential impacts of the project on the receiving environment, particularly the European sites in the zone of influence.

(3) The third step evaluates the impacts analysed in the second step against the Conservation Objectives of the relevant European sites, thereby determining whether or not those impacts constitute "likely significant effects", within the meaning of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

(4) The fourth step involves considering the potential for likely significant effects to arise from the combination of the impacts of the plan or project with those of other plans or projects. If it is determined in the third step that Stage 2 (AA) is required, consideration of potential cumulative impacts may be deferred to that stage.

(5) The last step involves the issuing of a statement of the determination of the AA Screening. Notwithstanding the recommendation made in the AA Screening Report, the responsibility for completing this step lies solely with the competent authority.

The following guidance documents informed the assessment methodology:

- European Commission (EC) (2021) *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. Environment Directorate-General of the European Commission.
- European Commission (EC) (2018) *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission, Brussels.
- Department of Environment, Heritage, and Local Government (DEHLG) (2010) *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) (2010) *Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Circular Letter NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10. National Parks & Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021) *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.* Office of the Planning Regulator.

1.5 Ecological Assessment

In order to fully inform this AA Screening Report in respect of the proposed development, it was necessary to establish the baseline ecological conditions in the receiving environment, particularly with regard to European sites.

1.5.1 Desk Study

During the desk study, the statutory consultee, the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS), provided data on designations of sites, habitats and species of conservation interest. This included reports pursuant to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive[5] (NPWS, 2019a, b & c) and Article 12 of the Birds Directive[6] (Eionet, 2018), as well as the Site Synopses, Natura 2000 Standard Data Forms and Conservation Objectives for the relevant European sites.

The desk study involved a thorough review of existing information relating to ecology in the vicinity of the proposed development and in the surrounding area. The following web-based geographic information systems (GISs) were used to obtain information relating to the natural environment surrounding the proposed development. These included the NPWS *Map Viewer* (NPWS, 2023), which provided information on the locations of protected sites, the National Biodiversity Data Centre's *Biodiversity Maps* (NBDC, 2023), which provided recent and historic records of rare and protected species in the area as well as the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) *Unified GIS Application* (EPA, 2023) which provided additional information on the wider environment.

As with all desk studies, the data considered were only as good as the data supplied by the recorders and recording schemes. The recording schemes provide disclaimers in relation to the quality and quantity of the data they provide, and these were considered when examining outputs of the desk study.

1.5.2 Field Survey

A targeted ecological field survey was undertaken within the site boundary by ROD ecologists on 09/05/2023 to inform this assessment.

1.5.3 Assessment

The ecological baseline which was established by the desk study described above and an ecological field survey on 09/05/2023 which informed the assessment of the potential ecological effects likely to arise from the proposed development, particularly with regard to European sites. Any assumptions that were made in view of gaps in the ecological data were made in strict accordance with the Precautionary Principle.

[5] Under Article 17, to report to the European Commission every six years on their status and on the implementation of the measures taken under the Directive.

[6] Every three years, Member States of the European Union are required by Article 12 of the Birds Directive to report on implementation of the Directive. The most recent reporting available is for the period 2008-2012.

2. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Overview

The proposed development aligns with the Government's National Adaptation Framework (NAF), by facilitating reduced carbon footprint for road maintenance services through delivery, storage and security of salt supplies proximate to demand, thereby significantly reducing haulage distances to serve the north-western region. It will facilitate the roll out of consistent proactive network management for the entire north-western region and environs including counties Sligo, Leitrim, Longford, Galway, Donegal, Mayo and Roscommon. Further specific benefits include:

Strategic Salt Barn facility:

- The Strategic Salt Barn facility will ensure full control, security and the supply of salt in the north-western region for all proximate local authorities, TII and DoT.
- A large portion of the strategic salt for the region is currently stored in the private sector. The risks and costs associated with this arrangement will be removed with the construction of the strategic salt barn facility.

Maintenance/Operation Depot:

- Provision of a Municipal District (MD) Depot for Sligo County Council will allow for efficient storage of materials and plant proximate to need.
- Local authorities are designated as the lead agency for coordinating and delivering the response to severe weather emergencies and lead the local response in collaboration with TII, DoT and other principal response agencies. The proposed integrated facility will enable coordinated management in severe weather conditions.
- The proposed Maintenance/Operation Depot will allow for the scale up to full maintenance services by TII including winter maintenance, incident response and renewals on the 24km of N4 Dual Carriageway in county Sligo and other routes in the region.

Maintenance and management of infrastructure assets has a very high priority in the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) investment hierarchy, which is the Department of Transport's framework for prioritising future investment in the land transport network to support the delivery of National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) identified within the National Planning Framework (NPF). The proposed development of a Strategic Road Maintenance Facility will support journey time reliability, road safety and accessibility for the north-western region by facilitating the provision of road maintenance services, including winter maintenance and incident response services. The provision of such road maintenance services supports enhanced regional connectivity which is an NSO and an investment priority of NIFTI. Enhanced connectivity to the Northwest supports the regional balance of economic growth through providing journey time reliability for commercial activities. The proposed development also supports the Government's Climate Action Plan 2023 which sets out the Avoid-Shift-Improve framework for decarbonisation of the transport sector. The development predominantly aligns with 'Improve' measures, which are measures which aim to improve the efficiency of the vehicles and the network itself, including during periods of severe weather conditions.

2.2 Site Location and Description

The proposed development is a 3.1 hectare (ha) site (ITM coordinates of 571198 E 819452 N) within the townland of Drumfin in Co. Sligo, approximately 16km south of Sligo town and 6.0km northeast of Ballymote. It is strategically located adjacent to the N4 National Road which was recently re-aligned and upgraded to dual carriageway between Castlebaldwin and Collooney. The site location is shown in Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2.

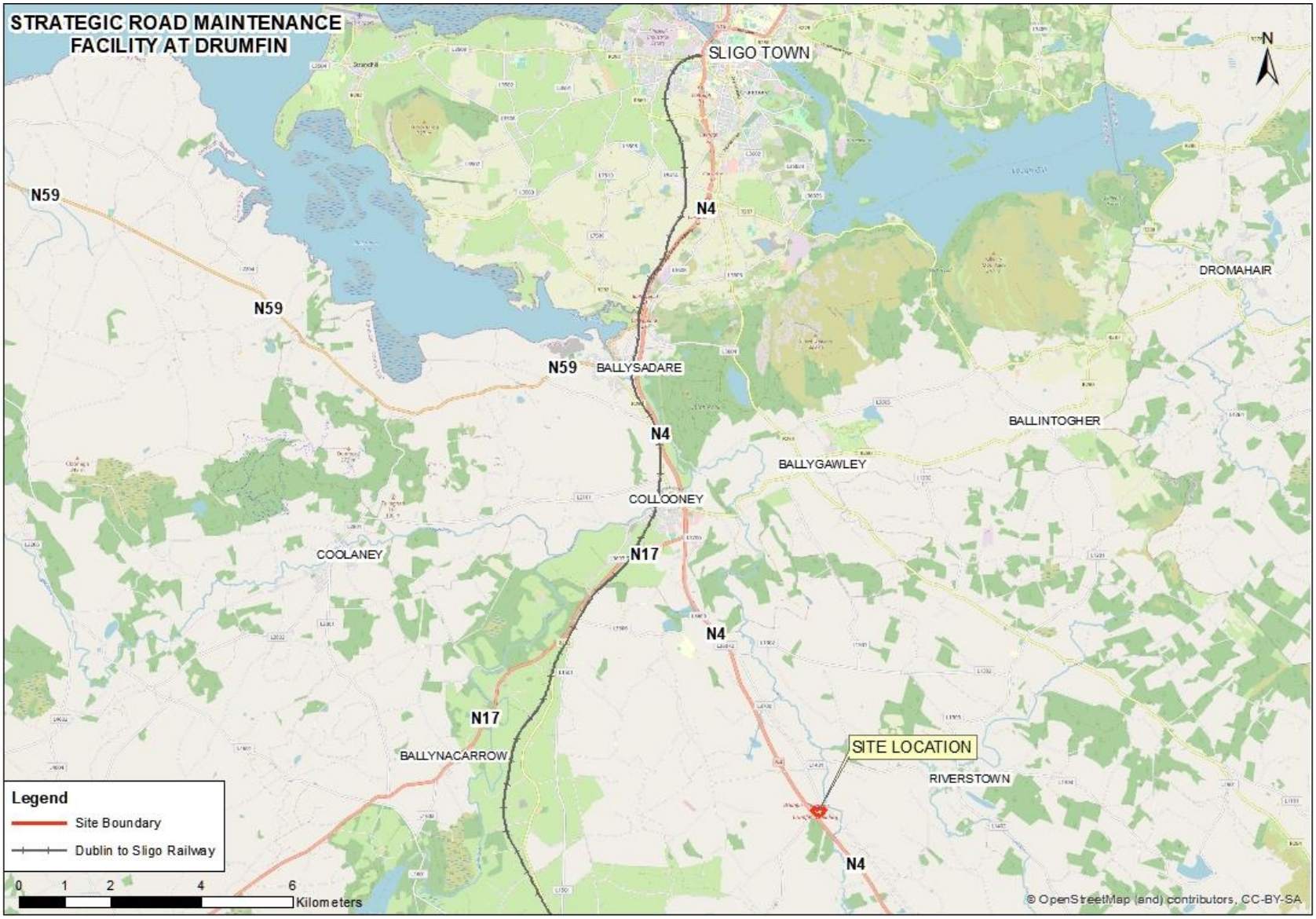

Figure 2.1 - Location of the proposed development site in Drumfin, Co. Sligo

Figure 2.2 - Strategic Road Maintenance Facility Site (map underlay source: Bing)

The proposed development is bounded by the N4 dual carriageway to the south-west, the L1502 local road to the north-west and the L3700 to the north-east. There are two private dwellings to the north of the site and one private dwelling with ancillary farm buildings to the east. The remaining site is bounded by agricultural lands.

The western part of the site is sloping to south-west, towards the N4, and the eastern part is sloping to south-east. The levels across the site vary, with the highest point approx. 60mOD and the lowest approx. 50mOD.

The proposed site is a combination of greenfield and brownfield conditions. The brownfield section of the site is located to the south-west of the development, adjacent to the N4 dual carriageway and L1502 and extends to approx. 0.9 ha. This area comprises of a redundant and now unauthorised site compound and storage area developed for the construction of the N4 dual carriageway scheme between Castlebaldwin and Collooney. The remaining approx. 2.2 ha is a greenfield site.

The Drumfin River is located approximately 90m north-east of the site. The Drumfin River connects to the Unshin River approximately 1.3km to the north.

A drainage ditch, constructed during the N4 dual carriageway scheme, flows in a south-easterly direction along the western and southern boundary. This ditch continues parallel to the N4 before outfalling into a local watercourse network and ultimately to the Drumfin River approximately 0.5km downstream of the site.

The land is currently in private ownership, however Sligo County Council have a draft agreement in place to purchase the lands.

2.3 Receiving Natural Environment

The proposed development site comprises of two agricultural fields and one built-land area which was previously in-use as a construction compound and storage area. The primary land use in the surrounding area is agricultural with several residential dwellings bordering the north of the proposed development site. The site is bordered to the east by the L3700 local road, to the south by agricultural fields and scrub woodland and to the west by the N4 national road.

Water Courses

The Drumfin River runs in a northerly direction approximately 90m (directly) northeast of the proposed development site, separated by a buffer of the existing L3700 road, hedgerows, and greenfields. This river merges with the Unshin River approx. 1.3km downstream from where it runs close to the proposed development site. Drainage network mapping shows the proposed development site drains towards the Drumfin River from both the northeastern and southwestern sections of the proposed development site – refer to Figure 2.3. The shortest hydrological distance to the Drumfin River from the proposed development is 170m via the existing drainage network. The EPA is responsible for monitoring the quality of all waterbodies in Ireland and these results are available online. The current statuses for the waterbodies connected to the proposed development are presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 - EPA Water Quality Results

Name of watercourse	River Waterbody WFD Status 2016 - 2021	River Waterbody WFD Status 2013 - 2018	River Waterbodies Risk
Drumfin_010	Good	Good	Not at Risk
Unshin_030	Good	Good	Not at Risk
Unshin_040	High	High	Not at Risk
Unshin_050	High	High	Not at Risk
Ballysodare_010	Moderate	Good	At Risk

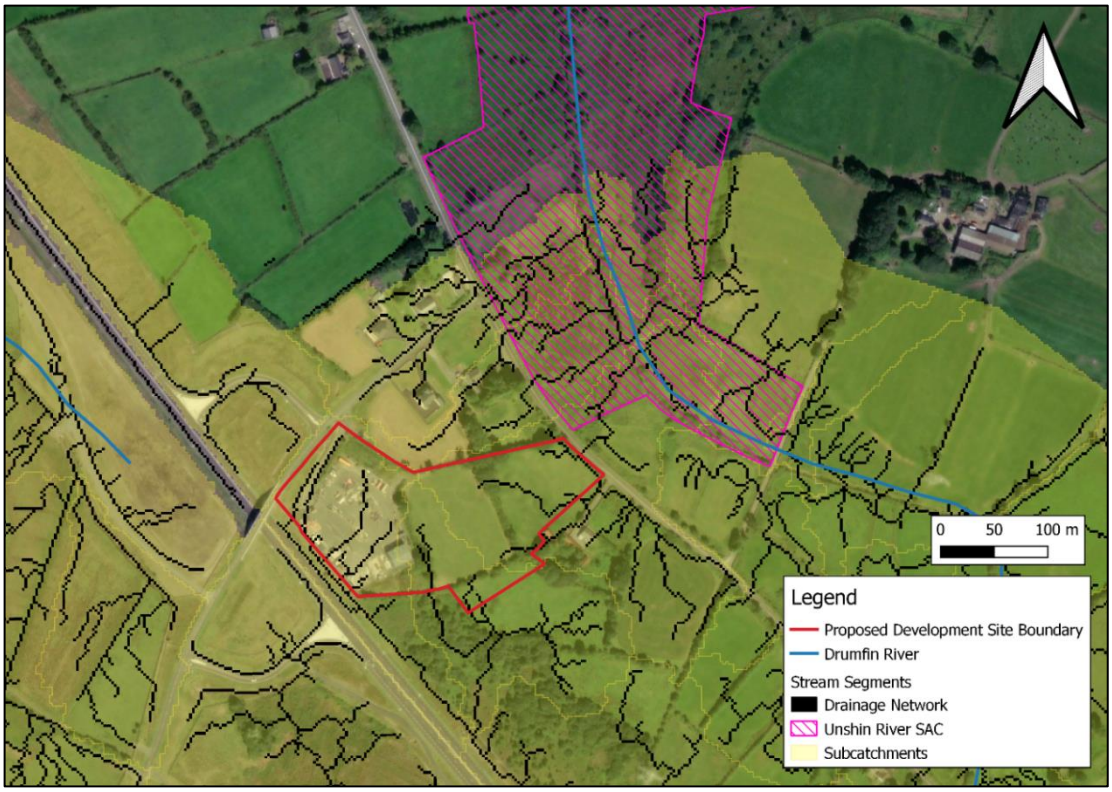

Figure 2.3 - Existing drainage network (map underlay source: ESRI World Imagery)

2.4 Description of the Proposed Development

Sligo County Council proposes to construct a Strategic Road Maintenance Facility, including resilience regional salt barns, a maintenance and operation depot and a Local Authority MD machinery yard with ancillary buildings and structures to provide a range of national, regional and local road maintenance services. The regional reach will cover the whole northwest region, including Donegal, Sligo, Longford, Leitrim, Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.

The main infrastructural elements proposed on the site are:

- 4 no. Strategic Salt Barns for national reserves and Resilience Salt stocks
- Two-storey Administration Building for Maintenance/Operation activities which includes internal storage area, welfare facilities, offices and canteen facilities on the ground floor, with offices and meeting/training room on the first floor.
- Maintenance & Operation Barn including lean-to vehicle storage and secure internal storage for maintenance and operation salt supplies.
- Single-storey workshop and staff welfare facility.
- Ancillary structures and associated works.

Strategic Resilience Salt Barns

The proposed salt barn facility is a reinforced concrete plinth structure with profiled metal roof, comprising of four salt barns. Each barn will be 50.9m x 20.0m x 8.8m with a total floor area of 4,072m^2. The walls will be made of concrete and each barn entrance will have 1 No. industrial metal roller shutter. The resilience salt barns will store approx. 30,000 tons of salt supplied by TII and DoT to ensure that carriageways on the Roads network are kept free of frost, ice and snow as far as is reasonably practicable.

The barns will have an isolated drainage network, intercepting salt-contaminated runoff and outfalling to a sealed underground storage tank. This tank will be periodically emptied on an 'as-needed' basis, with the contents transferred to a licensed water treatment facility by an appropriately licensed Contractor.

It is proposed to incorporate solar panel arrays on the roofs of the four salt barns to generate electricity for use by the depot offices, lighting, electric vehicle charging, etc., with excess generation stored on-site through batteries with provisions in place for the excess to be fed back into the electricity grid network.

TII Maintenance/Operation Depot

TII's maintenance and operation depot for the ongoing maintenance and operations of the National Road network extends to approximately 13,200m^2 and comprises the following:

- Two storey Administration Building for Maintenance/Operation activities which includes internal storage area, welfare facilities, offices and canteen facilities on the ground floor, with offices and meeting/training room on the first floor;
- Maintenance & Operation Barn including lean-to vehicle storage and secure internal storage for maintenance and operation salt supplies;
- Truck washdown area with isolated drainage network for salt-contaminated runoff;
- Underground storage tank for collection of brine/contaminated runoff from salt containment and truck washdown;
- Bunded fuel storage for approximately 15,000L of on-site diesel storage tanks. The fuel storage will be bunded with the bund providing a storage capacity equivalent to 110% of the tank capacity it protects, in compliance with the EPA 'Guidance Note on Storage and Transfer of Materials for Scheduled Activities';
- Staff/visitor car park for Maintenance/Operation Depot with provision for EV charging points;
- Rainwater harvesting system;
- Air-source heat pump for temperature control within the office building.

Sligo County Council Municipal District Depot

Sligo County Council's operational depot is approximately 3,810m^2 comprising of the following:

- Single storey Maintenance & Operation Depot Building (375m^2) which includes vehicle storage, workshop and secure internal storage;
- Road materials storage areas for Local Authority Machinery Yard (640m^2);
- Secure storage area for Local Authority Machinery Yard;
- Parking Area for Sligo County Council staff (approx. 5-10 spaces anticipated).

Ancillary Structures and Works

Other ancillary structures and associated works at the proposed development include:

- 7.0m internal access road with access to the L3700 road via simple priority junction;
- Weighbridge for use during loading and unloading of resilience salt supplies;
- Site clearance, including removal of partly constructed access from the L1502 and removal of unauthorised site compound, shed and all associated elements;
- Site boundary and internal boundary treatments;
- Drainage works, including surface water systems and foul wastewater treatment and outfalls
- Lighting for internal road network and compounds.
- Landscaping.

Construction Methodology

It is anticipated that the main construction works will be carried out in a single construction phase over a 6-to-9-month period commencing in 2024. The total construction time accounting for site clearance, ground works, concreting, construction, finishing and tying in will take in the order of 9 months. Normal working hours are anticipated to be Monday to Friday between 07.00 and 19.00 and on Saturdays between 08.00 and 16.30.

The main phases applicable to the main construction phase of this project will include:

- Establishment of the site office compound;
- Mobilisation of construction plant;
- Site clearance and preparation;
- Excavation and re-grading of inert soils;
- Disposal of unsuitable and excess material;
- Import of material to site;
- Construction of main buildings, other ancillary and associated works;
- Demobilisation of plant and deconstruction of site office compound.

Main Contract Works

The Main Contract Works are anticipated to include the following:

- Site clearance;
- Removal of partly constructed access road from L1502;
- Removal of the unauthorised site compound, shed and all associated elements within the site;
- Excavation and filling of material to design level of depot compounds. This will include the lowering of ground levels in the area of the existing unauthorised compound, with an approx. 5m reduction in levels at an existing spoil head adjacent to the compound and a typical maximum reduction elsewhere in the region of 2.5m. The existing site compound hardcore material, typically 0.7m deep, may be excavated, depending on suitability. At the location of the wastewater treatment area, it is proposed to excavate a further 0.5m to remove unsuitable clay material.
    - It is anticipated that there will be a net excess of excavation material to be disposed of either on the site or exported off-site by an appropriately licensed contractor.
- Construction of internal road network and connection to L3700 via simple priority junction.
- Construction of substructure and superstructure for the salt barns, office buildings and road making material storage.
- Construction of approximately 12,000m^2 of concrete surface for the resilience, maintenance and SCC depots.
- Construction of surface water drainage networks, attenuation and storage facilities and connections to existing regimes at outfall locations.
- Construction of foul water networks, treatment facilities and outfalling to ground via percolation area.
- Construction of internal watermain network and connection to Castlebaldwin Group Water Scheme.
- Landscaping works, including the planting of native tree and hedgerow species around the site to provide visual screening to the compounds.
- Lighting for the internal road network and compounds. The lighting design will adopt current best practices and comply with relevant standards, including the use of LED luminaries to reduce energy consumption and light spillage outside of the intended focus area.
- Utility diversions and connections.
- Other associated works.

Operation Phase

The operation phase will coincide with the end of construction and the commissioning of the proposed resilience salt barn and maintenance and operation depot. The proposed development at Drumfin, Co. Sligo will provide a range of national, regional and local road maintenance services to SCC, TII and DoT. These include:

- Coordination of road maintenance activities including winter maintenance;
- Strategic resilience salt storage;
- Plant storage;
- Fuel storage;
- Road materials storage;
- Workshop;
- Administration Area.

It is anticipated that there will be four employees will be on site on a permanent basis. In addition, there will be a small number of SCC employees from the local area who may access or use the storage yard from time to time.

Operating hours at the proposed development are Monday to Friday between 07.00 and 17.30, however some maintenance activities will require access to the proposed development outside of normal operating hours.

2.4.1 Wastewater Treatment

The new foul water drainage system will treat and outfall the drainage on site through a secondary treatment system followed by a tertiary polishing filter. Wastewater is treated in a secondary treatment package plant and then polished in the tertiary treatment package. The tertiary polishing filter, such as the Ecoflo Coconut filter, is placed on a bed 300mm deep bed of 20mm pebble distribution gravel and effluent from this polishing filter percolates into the distribution gravel by gravity.

A Site Suitability Assessment was undertaken by Dr. Eugene Bolton of Trinity Green Environmental Consultants in June 2023 which confirmed that the site is suitable for such wastewater treatment.

2.4.2 Surface Water Treatment

The collection and discharge of surface water runoff will comply with the requirements of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). During the operational phase, rainwater from the roofs and roads will be conveyed directly to a surface water drainage system (designed following SuDS principles) which will include a petrol interceptor, such as a Klargester Class 1 Bypass Seperator or similar, and an underground attenuation tank. Surface water will be discharged from the site via a flow control device to the existing greenfield runoff rate. A high-level overflow will be provided to the main drainage system for use during extreme rain events. The surface water drainage system will discharge runoff from the resilience/maintenance depots into the existing ditch flowing adjacent to the site which continues parallel the N4, eventually flowing into a local watercourse 0.5km downstream and into the Drumfin River. The surface water drainage system will discharge runoff from the SCC depot and road drainage into a drainage ditch adjacent to the L3700 which eventually flows into the Drumfin River.

Given the nature of the works and the nature of the hydrological connection between the site the Drumfin River, which is through a series of ephemeral drainage ditches, there is no risk of pollutants including hydrocarbons, cement or suspended solids reaching the Drumfin River at levels that could affect aquatic species and habitats during the construction phase.

2.4.3 Saltwater Treatment

The salt barns and associated hardstanding areas, which include a washdown area, will be constructed on impermeable ground surfaces. These surfaces will be drained by gravity to a sealed drainage system which will collect and convey brine/contaminated runoff to an underground storage tank. This tank will be emptied by an appropriately licensed Contractor periodically on an 'as-needed' basis, with an alarm system notifying the depot operator when the tank capacity is 70% full. This storage tank will be segregated from other site runoff subject to SuDS as part of the design of the proposed development. A 'Klargester Cesspool & Silage Tank' or similar product will be utilised for the underground storage of contaminated runoff.

Through this sealed system, brine and contaminated runoff will be intercepted at source, thereby preventing potential pollutants from entering the surrounding ditches by overland flow and groundwater by percolation.

2.5 Likely Effects on the Natural Environment

Several elements of the proposed development are considered likely to give rise to environmental and ecological impacts.

Habitat Loss/Fragmentation
Semi-natural and artificial habitats within the proposed development footprint will be lost or fragmented during the construction of the proposed development. These habitats provide suitable habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna.

Disturbance/Displacement
Minor levels of disturbance will occur during construction of the proposed development as a result of noise, lighting and vibration. This could cause disturbance to both birds and other wildlife. Bird species found in the area will be disturbed and a precautionary disturbance distance of 550m around the proposed development site is considered appropriate.

Water Quality
The proposed development has the potential for negative effects on water quality due to the presence of equipment, machinery and hazardous chemicals (e.g., road salt) being transported on and off site. These elements present on site increase the potential for the spillage of pollutants entering watercourses through surface water runoff.

Invasive Species
The proposed development has the potential to introduce and spread invasive species through the movement of equipment to, from, or within the site. A patch Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) has been recorded outside the proposed development site approx. 50m northeast of the site (ITM 571308 819572) along the existing L3700 road, and is currently undergoing treatment.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

3.1 Establishing the Zone of Influence

Section 3.2.3 of DEHLG (2010) outlines the procedure for selecting the European sites to be considered in Appropriate Assessment. It states that European sites potentially affected should be identified and listed, bearing in mind the potential for direct, indirect and in-combination effects. It also states that the specific approach in each case is likely to differ depending on the scale and likely effects of the plan or project. However, it advises that the following sites should generally be included:

- All European sites within or immediately adjacent to the plan or project area;
- All European sites within the zone of influence of the plan or project; and,
- In accordance with the Precautionary Principle, all European sites for which there is doubt as to whether or not they might be significantly affected.

The "Zone of Influence" of a project is the geographic extent over which significant ecological effects are likely to occur. In the case of projects, the guidance recognises that the zone of influence must be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor Model (OPR, 2021). A project may only lead to significant effects on the integrity of the European site where all three elements of Source-Pathway-Receptor are linked. In the absence of one element of this model, likely significant effects can be screened out with confidence. The assessment should make reference to the following key variables:

- The nature, size and location of the project;
- The nature of the impacts which may arise from the project;
- The sensitivities of the ecological receptors; and,
- The potential for in-combination effects.

For example, in the case of a project that could affect a watercourse, it may be necessary to include the entire upstream and/or downstream catchment in order to capture all European sites with water-dependent features of interest.

Having regard to the above key variables, the zone of influence was defined as:

- The entire area within 550m of the proposed development.
- Hydrologically connected watercourses downstream of the proposed development as far as the Ballysadare Estuary.

The area was defined as the zone of influence because Ballysadare Estuary is the extent to which hydrological impacts could potentially occur downstream of the proposed development. Beyond 550m around the proposed development site, there will be no discernable increase in noise, vibration or visual disturbance to bird species in the wider area.

A geographical representation of the zone of influence was produced in QGIS 3.16.9. using the proposed development boundary and publicly available OpenStreet Maps. This was used in combination with NPWS shapefiles to identify the boundaries of European sites in relation to the zone of influence. The zone of influence is illustrated in Figure 3.1

It was determined that one European site occurs within the zone of influence for the proposed development. Table 3.1 lists and describes how this site is connected to the proposed development. Detailed descriptions of this site are provided in Section 3.2.

Table 3.1 European sites located within the zone of influence.

European site [site code]	Are there potential pathways for impacts from the proposed development to this site? Explain.
Special Areas of Conservation	
Unshin River SAC [001898]	**Yes.** At its closest point, this European site is located approx. 20m north of the proposed development over the existing L3700 road. The proposed development shares a catchment with this European site. There is hydrological connectivity from the proposed development to this European site via the existing drainage network.

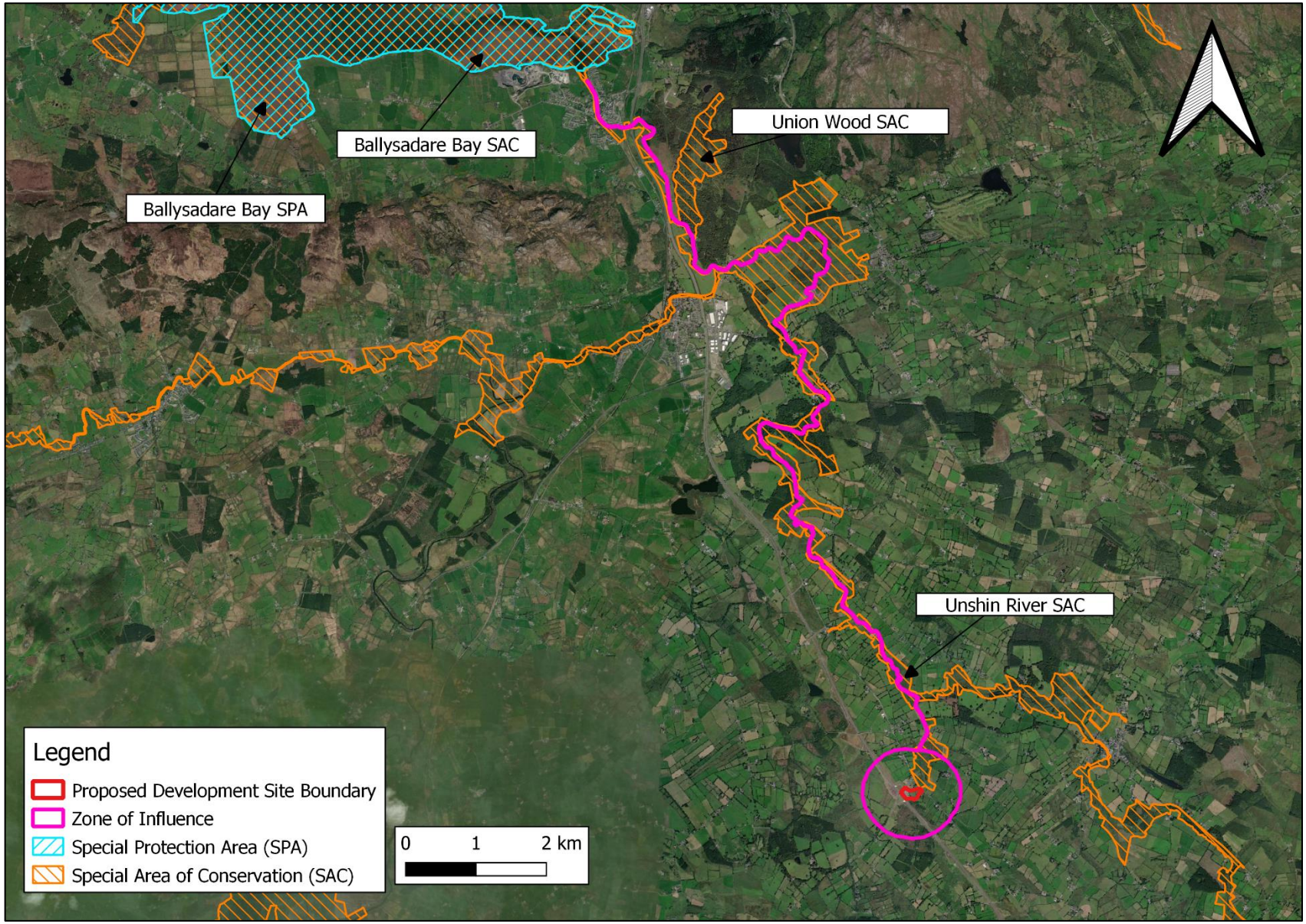

Figure 3.1 - Location of European sites in relation to the zone of influence of the proposed development (map underlay source: ESRI World Imagery).

3.2 Site Descriptions

3.2.1 Unshin River SAC

The description of the Unshin River SAC provided here is based on the Conservation Objectives (NPWS, 2021) and Site Synopsis (NPWS, 2016) for the site.

Qualifying Interests of the Site

[3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation

[6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (*important orchid sites)

[6410] *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*)

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

[1106] Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*)

[1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

Site Overview

The Unshin River runs from Lough Arrow north to Ballysadare Bay, Co. Sligo. The river is largely undrained and unaltered along much of its course. The marginal vegetation associated with the river is also included in the site, along with other semi-natural habitats adjacent to the river (included in order to enhance its protection). Many of these habitat types are interesting and of conservation value in their own right. Other watercourses included within the site are the Owenboy/ Owenbeg and a number of smaller tributaries. The Unshin River flows across a number of geological boundaries between sandstone, shales and limestone. This results in unusual physico-chemical qualities which in turn are reflected in the rich and varied plant and animal populations.

The Unshin River supports an excellent example of floating river vegetation. The diversity of aquatic macrophytes is exceptional, and to a certain extent the unusual combinations and richness of species can be accounted for by the good quality water being discharged from Lough Arrow upstream. The lake also imparts a stabilising influence on the flow regime and provides a source of lacustrine species – for example, Long-stalked Pondweed (*Potamogeton praelongus*). Plant species present which indicate base-rich conditions include Lesser Water-parsnip (*Berula erecta*), Blunt-fruited Water-starwort (*Callitriche obtusangula*), Fan-leaved Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus circinatus*) and the internationally rare River Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe fluviatilis*). Species such as Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*), normally associated with more acidic peat pools, also occur. Fen and floating mire communities are represented by Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), Cowbane (*Cicuta virosa*), Yellow Loosestrife (*Lysimachia vulgaris*) and Water Avens (*Geum rivale*). A rare and unusual alga, *Nostoc parmelioides*, is also present.

There are a number of areas of woodland, many of which flood, included within the site. These wet alluvial woodlands are found on water-logged soils and species such as Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), willows (*Salix* spp.), Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and birch (*Betula* spp.) are common. Occasionally, Lime (*Tilia* sp.) and Horse-chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) are found also. The ground flora is diverse in places, and species such as Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*), Wood Anemone

(*Anemone nemorosa*), Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), Common Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), Enchanter's-nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Golden Saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*), Greater Tussock-sedge (*Carex paniculata*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Bottle Sedge (*C. rostrata*), Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Hart's-tongue (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*), Broad Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*) and Lady-fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) are all found. A number of non-native shrub species, some of which are invasive, are found: Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) and Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*). The non-native herbs Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) and Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) have also been recorded.

Areas of grassland, ascribable to the E.U. Habitats Directive Annex I types: Orchidrich Calcareous Grassland and Molinia Meadows, have been reported at Cloonmacduff, according to the Irish Semi-natural Grasslands Survey, 2010. There are also extensive wetlands within this site, and one area contains the Red Data Book plant Swamp Meadow-grass (*Poa palustris*).

The Unshin and its tributaries form a very important system for Atlantic Salmon, a species that is listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The Owenboy/ Owenbeg river is the principle spawning and nursery tributary for the system's salmon fishery. The Unshin and its tributaries is the most important salmon producing river in Co. Sligo. The system also supports a good population of Trout.

The Annex II species Otter has been recorded in and near this site.

Two notable bird species which occur along the river are Whooper Swan, which feeds in the wet grasslands that flank the river, and Kingfisher. Both are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

The trophic status of the river increases downstream indicating that some enrichment is taking place. However, the quality of the Unshin River and particularly its aquatic macrophyte communities, make it rare in both an Irish and European context, and it is considered one of the most pristine rivers in the country.

3.3 Evaluation against Conservation Objectives

Table 3.2 below details the evaluation of the likely effects of the proposed development in view of the Conservation Objectives of the site identified in Section 3.1 and described in Section 3.2. As explained in Sections 1.2 and 1.3, AA Screening is carried out in view of the Conservation Objectives of the relevant European site(s), which are in turn defined by detailed Attributes and corresponding Targets. Therefore, the evaluation of whether or not a likely effect is significant (in view of the Conservation Objective in question) is made with regard to these Attributes and Targets.

Table 3.2 Evaluation of the likely effects of the proposed development in view of the Conservation Objectives of the Unshin River SAC [001898].

Qualifying Interest *indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive	**Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2021)**	**Does the proposed development provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?**	**Likely Significant Effect**
Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation [3260]	*"To maintain the favourable conservation condition of water courses of plain to montane levels with the* Ranunculion fluitantis *and* Callitricho-Batrachion *vegetation in the River Unshin SAC"*	The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on *"Habitat area", "Habitat distribution", "Hydrological regime", "Substratum composition", "Water quality", "Typical species", "Floodplain connectivity"* and *"Riparian habitat".* This Qualifying Interest (QI) is a freshwater habitat which occurs in the Drumfin River and the Unshin River. While mapping is not available for this QI, the nearest possible location from the proposed development is 90m (direct distance). The drainage network shows the proposed development site drains to the Drumfin River at two locations – at the northeast and southwest of the proposed development. The shortest hydrological distance from the proposed development to the SAC is 170m from the northeastern boundary of the proposed development via the existing ephemeral drainage network. The proposed development does not provide for any reduction in the permanent area of this habitat within this European site. The only possible impact to this QI arising from the proposed development is a reduction in water quality during the construction phase. *Construction Phase* During the construction phase, the drainage ditches provide a pathway for sediment laden runoff and pollutants to be discharged to this European site during periods of heavy rainfall or high-water levels, causing water quality impacts to this habitat. it should be noted that standard construction best practices will be adhered to, including CIRIA Document C532 Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites and Guidelines for the Crossing of Watercourses during the Construction of National Road Schemes (NRA, 2008). Given that the works are of a relatively small scale and nature, the aforementioned standard construction best practices will be adhered to, and that the hydrological connection is 170m at its closest and via a series of ephemeral drainage ditches between the site and the Drumfin River and Unshin River SAC, there is no risk of pollutants including hydrocarbons, cement or suspended solids reaching this European site at levels that could lead to likely significant effects on this QI. *Operational Phase*	No

Qualifying Interest *indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive	**Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2021)**	**Does the proposed development provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?**	**Likely Significant Effect**
		As previously mentioned, the existing drainage ditches provide a 170m long hydrological pathway for sediment laden runoff and pollutants to be discharged to this European site during periods of heavy rainfall or high-water levels, causing water quality impacts to this habitat. However, considering the requirement for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which is integral to the design of the proposed development, there are no pathways for potential impacts to this QI during the operational phase of the proposed development. As described in Section 2.4, the resilience salt barn will be an enclosed, reinforced concrete plinth structure with profiled metal roof comprising of four segregated salt barns on hardstanding surface. As part of the design of the maintenance and operation depot, an underground storage tank will collect brine/contaminated water from salt containment and truck washdown which will be subsequently removed for offsite treatment and disposal. This storage tank will be segregated from other site runoff subject to SuDS as part of the design of the proposed development. Catchment national indicative fluvial flood maps indicate flooding in the vicinity of the proposed development site, but not crossing into the site. A hydraulic model was prepared as part of the Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) for the proposed development to ascertain the effects of extreme fluvial flood events on site. The hydraulic model concluded that the proposed development site is not affected by fluvial flooding. Considering the lack of flooding potential, the requirement for SuDS and the additional measures required to contain and treat saltwater runoff on the site, there are no potential impact to this QI as a result of the proposed development. **Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed development does not have the potential to significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.**	
Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates	*"To restore the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on*	The Attributes of these Conservation Objectives focus on *"Habitat area", "Habitat distribution", "Vegetation composition", "Vegetation structure"* and *"Physical structure".*	No

Qualifying Interest *indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive	**Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2021)**	**Does the proposed development provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?**	**Likely Significant Effect**
(*Festuco-Brometalia*) (* important orchid sites) [6210]	*calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (* important orchid sites) in the River Unshin SAC"*	These Qualifying Interests (QIs) are terrestrial habitats and thus have no hydrological connection to the proposed development. Catchment national indicative fluvial flood maps indicate flooding in the vicinity of the proposed development site but not crossing into the site. A hydraulic model was prepared as part of the SSFRA for the proposed development to ascertain the effects of extreme fluvial flood events on site. The hydraulic model concluded that the proposed development site is not affected by any fluvial floodings. Considering the lack of hydrological connection and flooding potential from the proposed development site, there are no pathways for impact between the proposed development and these QIs. **Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed development will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for these Qualifying Interests.**	
Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) [6410]	*"To restore the favourable conservation condition of molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) in the River Unshin SAC"*		No
***Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae*) [91E0]**	*"To restore the favourable conservation condition of alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae*) in the River Unshin SAC"*	The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on *"Habitat area", "Habitat distribution", "Woodland size", "Woodland structure", "Hydrological regime"* and *"Vegetation composition".* The NPWS has mapping available for this QI habitat and the nearest occurrence is 1.2km directly north east and upstream of the proposed development. The next nearest occurrence is approximately 6.5km hydrologically downstream of the proposed development via the Drumfin River and Unshin River. The proposed development does not provide for any reduction in the permanent area of this habitat within this European site. This QI is periodically inundated by the annual rise of the river and has the potential to be affected during periods of high-water level only. The only possible impact to this QI arising from the proposed development is a reduction in water quality during the construction phase. *Construction Phase*	No

Qualifying Interest *indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive	**Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2021)**	**Does the proposed development provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?**	**Likely Significant Effect**
		During the construction phase, the drainage ditches provide a pathway for sediment laden runoff and pollutants to be discharged to this European site during periods of heavy rainfall or high-water levels, causing water quality impacts to this habitat. it should be noted that standard construction best practices will be adhered to, including CIRIA Document C532 Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites and Guidelines for the Crossing of Watercourses during the Construction of National Road Schemes (NRA, 2008). Given that the works are of a relatively small scale and nature, the aforementioned standard construction best practices will be adhered to, and that the hydrological connection is 6.5km at its closest and via a series of ephemeral drainage ditches, the Drumfin River, and the Unshin River between the site and this QI, there is no risk of pollutants including hydrocarbons, cement or suspended solids reaching this QI at levels that could lead to likely significant effects. *Operational Phase* The existing drainage ditches, Drumfin River, and Unshin River provide a hydrological pathway (6.5km) for sediment laden runoff and pollutants to be discharged to this European site during periods of heavy rainfall or high-water levels, causing water quality impacts to this QI. However, considering the requirement for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which is integral to the design of the proposed development, there are no pathways for potential impacts to this QI during the operational phase of the proposed development. As described in Section 2.4, the resilience salt barn will be an enclosed, reinforced concrete plinth structure with profiled metal roof comprising of four segregated salt barns on hardstanding surface. As part of the design of the maintenance and operation depot, an underground storage tank will collect brine/contaminated water from salt containment and truck washdown which will be subsequently removed for offsite treatment and disposal. This storage tank will be segregated from other site runoff subject to SuDS as part of the design of the proposed development. *Invasive Species* As mentioned in Section 2.5, there is a known patch of Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) in the grassy verges adjacent to the L3700 road, 75m northwest of	

Qualifying Interest *indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive	**Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2021)**	**Does the proposed development provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?**	**Likely Significant Effect**
		the proposed site access location which has been undergoing treatment for several years. Due to its location along the road, this patch of Japanese Knotweed will not be traversed by plant machinery and equipment and does not have the potential to impact his QI. Considering the lack of flooding potential on the proposed development site, as shown on the SSFRA, there are no pathways for impact between the proposed development and this QI. **Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed development has the potential to significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.**	

Qualifying Interest *indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive	**Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2021)**	**Does the proposed development provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?**	**Likely Significant Effect**
Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) [1106]	*To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic Salmon* (Salmo salar) *in the River Unshin SAC*	The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on *"Distribution", "Adult spawning fish", "Salmon fry abundance", "Out-migrating smolt abundance", "Number and distribution of redds" and "Water Quality".* This Qualifying Interest is a migratory species that spawns in freshwater habitats. The drainage network shows the proposed development site drains to the Drumfin River at two locations – at the northeast and southeast of the proposed development. The shortest hydrological distance from the proposed development to the SAC is 170m from the northeastern boundary of the proposed development via the existing ephemeral drainage network. The proposed development does not provide for any barriers to connectivity for this QI. The main impact to this QI arising from the proposed development relates to water quality. <u>*Construction Phase*</u> During the construction phase, the drainage ditches provide a pathway for sediment laden runoff and pollutants to be discharged to this European site during periods of heavy rainfall or high-water levels, causing water quality impacts to the Drumfin River and Unshin River which may affect this QI species. As previously mentioned, standard construction best practices will be adhered to, including CIRIA Document C532 Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites and Guidelines for the Crossing of Watercourses during the Construction of National Road Schemes (NRA, 2008). Given that the works are of a relatively small scale and nature, the aforementioned standard construction best practices will be adhered to, and that the hydrological connection is 170m at its closest and via a series of ephemeral drainage ditches between the site and the Drumfin River and Unshin River SAC, there is no risk of pollutants including hydrocarbons, cement or suspended solids reaching this European site at levels that could lead to likely significant effects on this QI species. <u>*Operational Phase*</u> The existing drainage ditches provide a pathway for sediment laden runoff and pollutants to be discharged to this European site via the Drumfin River during periods of heavy rainfall	No

Qualifying Interest *indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive	**Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2021)**	**Does the proposed development provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?**	**Likely Significant Effect**
		or high-water levels, causing water quality impacts to this QI species. However, considering the requirement for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which is integral to the design of the proposed development, there are no pathways for potential impacts to this QI during the operational phase of the proposed development. As described in Section 2.4, the resilience salt barn will be an enclosed, reinforced concrete plinth structure with profiled metal roof comprising of four segregated salt barns on hardstanding surface. As part of the design of the maintenance and operation depot, an underground storage tank will collect brine/contaminated water from salt containment and truck washdown which will be subsequently removed for offsite treatment and disposal. This storage tank will be segregated from other site runoff subject to SuDS as part of the design of the proposed development. Catchment national indicative fluvial flood maps indicate flooding in the vicinity of the proposed development site, but not crossing into the site. A hydraulic model was prepared as part of the Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) for the proposed development to ascertain the effects of extreme fluvial flood events on site. The hydraulic model concluded that the proposed development site is not affected by any fluvial floodings. Considering the lack of flooding potential, the requirement for SuDS and the additional measures required to contain and treat saltwater runoff on the site, there are no pathways for impacts from the proposed development to this QI. **Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed development does not have the potential to significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.**	

Qualifying Interest *indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive	**Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2021)**	**Does the proposed development provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?**	**Likely Significant Effect**
Otter (*Lutra lutra*) [1355]	*"To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Otter* (Lutra lutra) *in the River Unshin SAC"*	The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on *"Distribution", "Extent of terrestrial habitat", "Extent of freshwater (river) habitat", "Couching sites and holts", "Fish biomass available"* and *"Barriers to connectivity".* The drainage network shows the proposed development site drains to the Drumfin River at two locations – at the northeast and southeast of the proposed development. The shortest hydrological distance from the proposed development to the SAC is 170m from the northeastern boundary of the proposed development via the existing ephemeral drainage network. The proposed development does not provide for any barriers to connectivity for this QI or any reduction in the extent of freshwater (river) habitat. The main impact to this QI arising from the proposed development relates to water quality. <u>*Construction Phase*</u> • During the construction phase, the drainage ditches provide a pathway for sediment laden runoff and pollutants to be discharged to this European site during periods of heavy rainfall or high-water levels, causing water quality impacts to the Drumfin River and Unshin River which may affect this QI species. As previously mentioned, standard construction best practices will be adhered to, including CIRIA Document C532 Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites and Guidelines for the Crossing of Watercourses during the Construction of National Road Schemes (NRA, 2008). Given that the works are of a relatively small scale and nature, the aforementioned standard construction best practices will be adhered to, and that the hydrological connection is 170m at its closest and via a series of ephemeral drainage ditches between the site and the Drumfin River and Unshin River SAC, there is no risk of pollutants including hydrocarbons, cement or suspended solids reaching this European site at levels that could lead to likely significant effects on this QI species. • It should be noted that no signs of Otter were identified during the ecological survey carried out by ROD ecologists on 09/05/2023. As such, it can be confirmed that the proposed development site is not utilised by way of holting sites. However, Otter are likely to be present in the Drumfin River, which runs in a northerly direction approximately 90m (directly) northeast of the proposed development site, separated	No

Qualifying Interest *indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive	**Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2021)**	**Does the proposed development provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?**	**Likely Significant Effect**
		by a buffer of the L3700 road and greenfields. Otter may be using the Drumfin River and surrounding lands for foraging, commuting, and holting opportunities etc. Noise and vibration impacts during the construction phase of the proposed development works will be localised and occur during daylight hours only. Otter are a very mobile species, generally more active at night, and should any individuals be in the vicinity of the proposed development, along the watercourses or on land, they will have the ability to move away from the area, as their ecological corridors will not be obstructed, modified, or deteriorated. The 90m (direct distance) buffer including the L3700 road and greenfields between the proposed development site and suitable Otter habitat in the Drumfin River is considered sufficient distance to rule out potential disturbance impacts as a result of the proposed development. *Operational Phase* • The existing drainage ditches provide a hydrological pathway (170m) for sediment laden runoff and pollutants to be discharged to this European site via the Drumfin River during periods of heavy rainfall or high-water levels, causing water quality impacts to this habitat. However, considering the requirement for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which is integral to the design of the proposed development, there are no pathways for potential impacts to this QI during the operational phase of the proposed development. • As described in Section 2.4, the salt barn will be an enclosed, reinforced concrete plinth structure with profiled metal roof comprising of four segregated salt barns on hardstanding surface. As part of the design of the maintenance and operation depot, an underground storage tank will collect brine/contaminated water from salt containment and truck washdown which will be subsequently removed for offsite treatment and disposal. This storage tank will be segregated from other site runoff subject to SuDS as part of the design of the proposed development. • During the operational phase of the proposed development, the noise impacts associated with the movement of vehicles to and from the proposed development site will not be significantly above the existing levels of disturbance in the area.	

Qualifying Interest *indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive	**Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2021)**	**Does the proposed development provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?**	**Likely Significant Effect**
		Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed development will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.	

3.4 Summary of Likely Significant Effects

In Section 3.1, it was established that one European site, namely the River Unshin SAC occurs within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development. It was determined that potential pathways for effects exist between the proposed development this site. No pathways for effects exist between the proposed development and any other European site. The European site is described in detail in Section 3.2.

In Section 3.3, it was established, in light of best scientific knowledge, that the proposed development will not give rise to ecological impacts which would constitute significant effects on any of the sites, in view of the sites' Conservation Objectives. This finding had regard to the nature, size and location of the proposed development as well as the sensitivities of the Qualifying Interests of the sites concerned.

4. IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

4.1 Introduction

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that AA be carried out in respect of plans and projects that are likely to have significant effects on European sites, "*either individually or in combination with other plans or projects*". Therefore, regardless of whether or not the likely effects of a plan or project are significant when considered on their own, the significance of the combined effects of the plan or project under assessment and other plans and projects must also be evaluated.

4.2 Methodology

Plans and projects with potential for interactions with the proposed development were selected for assessment. For the purposes of the assessment, small scale and domestic developments were not considered given the nature of the proposed development and the fact that these developments would be subject to stringent planning controls.

The ePlanning website for Sligo County Council, Leitrim County Council and the EIA Portal was used to search for planning applications.

4.3 Outcome

Table 4.1 below details the assessment of the likelihood of significant effects arising from the proposed development in combination with other plans or projects. This assessment was undertaken in view of the Conservation Objectives of the relevant European sites and found that the proposed development does not have the potential to significantly affect any European site in combination with other plans or projects.

Table 4.1 Assessment of the likelihood of significant effects on European sites arising from the combination of the proposed development with other plans and projects.

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-combination effects
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 17130 **Name:** Coillte Teoranta **Address:** Cloonlurg, Riverstown, Co. Sligo	**Planning Application Lodged:** 6th April 2017 **Decision Due Date:** 25th May 2017 Development consisting of a new forest road access onto the L1502 with associated security barriers.	This project is located approx. 200m south of the proposed development. Owing to the schedule of conditions laid out in the planning permission, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 16474 **Name:** Aaron Tonry **Address:** Drumfin, Via Boyle, Co. Sligo	**Planning Application Lodged:** 6th December 2016 **Decision Date:** 19th April 2017 development consisting of the construction of a 4-bay slatted shed with creep at the rear, plus services and site works as necessary.	This project is located approx. 750m northwest of the proposed development. Owing to the schedule of conditions laid out in the planning permission, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 18345 **Name:** Lagan Bitumen Ltd	**Planning Application Lodged:** 30th August 2018 **Decision Date:** 17th October 2019 For development consisting of the continued use and operation of the existing permitted quarry (Planning Reg. Ref. 02/271), the deepening of the quarry area by a further bench, from -34.5m OD to -50m OD, within an extraction area of c. 10.9ha and the provision of a settlement lagoon (c. 2,830m2), all within an overall application area of c. 18 hectares.	This project is located approx. 12.4km north of the proposed development. The potential effects arising from this project and the proposed development are similar. The EIAR and NIS have identified impacts such as disturbance from noise and vibration and water quality deterioration from surface water pathways, respectively.

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-combination effects
Address: Aghamore Near and Carrownamaddoo Townlands, Co. Sligo	Significant Further Information has been furnished to the Planning Authority in respect of this proposed development. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the project and were submitted to the Planning Authority with the application.	Provided the mitigation measures in relation to disturbance and water quality protection and outlined in the EIAR and NIS for the project are adhered to, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 1850; 02299 **Name:** Harrington Concrete Sligo (Unlimited Company) **Address:** Abbeytown and Kilboglasy towlands, Ballysadare, Co Sligo	**Planning Application Lodged:** 23rd February 2018 **Decision Date:** 4th January 2019 PP - for development consisting of the continued use and operation of the existing quarry and quarry extension area (19 hectares) permitted under Plan Reg. Ref. No. PL02/299 (ABP Ref. No. PL21.201367) including the existing concrete batching plant and block making facility (in its current location at the eastern end of the site); the existing access onto the N59 road; existing weighbridges; existing wheel wash; existing crushing and screening plant; existing washing plant and closed circuit washwater management system; revisions to the permitted quarry extraction area along the northern boundary; provision of a landscaped screening berm along the northern boundary; existing landscaped screening berms and associated landscaping works; and for final restoration of the quarry all within an application area of c.45 hectares. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening report have been prepared in respect of the project and were submitted to the Planning Authority with the application.	This project is located approx. 11.3km northwest of the proposed development. The potential effects arising from this project and the proposed development are similar. The AA Screening report identified impacts such as water quality deterioration from surface water pathways and disturbance from noise and vibration. Considering the findings and conclusion of the AA Screening Report and EIAR, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 15332 **Name:** Health Service Executive	**Planning Application Lodged:** 28th September 2015 **Decision Date:** 7th March 2016 Development consisting of the upgrading of existing wastewater treatment system on site including the installation of a raised soil polishing filter on site, together with all ancillary site works and services.	This project is located approx. 4.5km northwest of the proposed development. Owing to the schedule of conditions laid out in the planning permission, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-combination effects
Address: Cloonamahon, Collooney, Co. Sligo		
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 20444; 16235 **Name:** Anthony & Lydia Murray **Address:** Markree House, Clooneenroe, Collooney, Co. Sligo	**Planning Application Lodged:** 22nd December 2020 **Decision Date:** 7th May 2021 Development consisting of the change of use at Markree Stable Block, a Protected Structure, to provide a Function Venue and a self-Catering Apartment in lieu of 10 no. Bedrooms previously approved as Bed and Breakfast accommodation under Planning Ref. 16/235	This project is located approx. 5.8km north of the proposed development. Owing to the schedule of conditions laid out in the planning permission, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 14174 **Name:** Markree Castle Ltd **Address:** Markree Demesne, Collooney, Co Sligo	**Planning Application Lodged:** 17th June 2014 **Decision Date:** 6th August 2014 Renovation of part of the lower ground floor of Markree Castle to provide a new bar, lounge and restaurant, kitchen, toilet facilities and all other necessary ancillary works. It is proposed to provide a new entrance on the North West elevation of the castle at Markree Castle (Markree Castle is RPS No: 195 on the Sligo County Council Register)	This project is located approx. 5.6km north of the proposed development. Owing to the schedule of conditions laid out in the planning permission, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 22241	**Planning Application Lodged:** 11th July 2022 **Decision Date:** 27th October 2022	This project is located approx. 6.6km northwest of the proposed development.

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-combination effects
Name: Carty Contractors Ltd **Address:** Rathrippon, Collooney, Co. Sligo	Development consisting of construction of 2 no. motor sales showrooms with accommodation over two levels and 2 no. service garage buildings with accommodation over one level (3,201 m2 gross floor area). The proposed accommodation comprises of car sales showroom (792 m2), aftersales (971 m2), valeting, photo booth and tyre fitting bay (504 m2) and staff accommodation. The proposed development includes an access road, 36 customer parking spaces and 227 spaces for display and storage of cars for sale. Permission is also sought for provision of roof canopy to the front and side of each proposed showroom building and associated support columns, signage, lighting, hard and soft landscaping, new boundary treatments and all associated site development works. Access to the proposed development is to be from a new access road linked to a road within Toberbride Business Park granted permission under PL21105.	Owing to the schedule of conditions laid out in the planning permission, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 21211 **Name:** Carty Contractors Ltd. **Address:** Knockbeg West, Collooney, Co. Sligo	**Planning Application Lodged:** 3rd June 2021 **Decision Date:** 6th December 2021 Development consisting of the completion of an unfinished housing estate (previously granted under PL041502) including the construction of 59 no. new two-storey dwelling houses (18 no. 2-bedroom semi-detached houses, 4 no. 3 bedroom semi-detached houses, 11 no 3-bedroom detached houses, 15 no. 3 bedroom detached houses with integral internal garages, 11 no. 4-bedroom detached houses) together with connection to the existing sewer system, works to the site boundaries, completion of all associated site development works including lighting, hard and soft landscaping. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the project and will be submitted with the application.	This project is located approx. 7.3km northwest of the proposed development. The potential effects arising from this project and the proposed development are similar. The NIS identified impacts such as water quality deterioration from surface water pathways. Provided the mitigation measures in relation to water quality protection outlined in the NIS for the project are adhered to, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 20126	**Planning Application Lodged:** 29th April 2020 **Decision Date:** 9th July 2020 Development conisisting of the installation of 22 no. Solar powered luminaires to provide lighting to the existing walking/running track around the perimeter of the main playing pitch.	This project is located approx. 6.6km northwest of the proposed development. Owing to the schedule of conditions laid out in the planning permission, it

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-combination effects
Name: Owenmore Gaels GAA Club **Address:** Collooney, Co. Sligo		can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 19310 **Name:** Knoxpark Developments Ltd **Address:** Carraig Abhainn, Knoxspark, Ballisodare, Co.Sligo	**Planning Application Lodged:** 29th July 2019 **Decision Date:** 6th December 2019 Development for 1. Permission to construct 13 dwelling houses (12 no. 3 bed semi detached, 1 no. detached bungalow) within existing housing development currently being completed known as Carraig Abhainn, with connection to existing services and associated works. 2. Alterations to internal roads layout of existing permitted development to facilitate new dwellings with alterations to site boundaries as permitted under PL 99/81 and PL 16/179 refers.	This project is located approx. 10km northwest of the proposed development. Owing to the schedule of conditions laid out in the planning permission, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 22167 **Name:** Knoxpark Developments Ltd **Address:** Kilboglashy, Leyney, Ballisodare, County Sligo	**Planning Application Lodged:** 16th May 2022 **Decision Date:** 10th November 2022 development consisting of: A) the demolition of existing derelict structures on site, and B) the construction of 22 no. houses, comprising 7 no. 2 bed units, 10 no 3 bed units and 5 no. 4 bed units, together with the creation of public open space, works to site boundaries, and all other associated site works and services. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the project and will be submitted with the application.	This project is located approx. 10.5km northwest of the proposed development. The potential effects arising from this project and the proposed development are similar. The NIS identified impacts such as water quality deterioration from surface and groundwater pathways. Provided the mitigation measures in relation to water quality protection outlined in the NIS for the project are adhered to, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-combination effects
		development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 18246 **Name:** Greenway Properties Ltd **Address:** Fair Green, Ballisodare, Co. Sligo	**Planning Application Lodged:** 28th June 2018 **Decision Date:** 16th August 2018 Development consisting of the change of use of 4 No. retail units to apartments, including 3 No. two-bed apartments (Units 8, 41 and 62) and 1 No. one-bed apartment (Unit 69). Previous Planning PL 04/1504 refers.	This project is located approx. 10.3km northwest of the proposed development. Owing to the schedule of conditions laid out in the planning permission, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 2360119 **Name:** Altitude Distribution Ltd (Cathal O'Connor) **Address:** Kilboglashy, Leyney, Ballisodare, County Sligo	**Planning Application Lodged:** 17th May 2023 **Decision Due Date:** 11th July 2023 A) demolition of existing derelict house on site; B) construction of 15 no. residential units comprising of 5 no. - type A - 5 bed semi-detached and terraced units, 5 no. - type B - 3 bed terraced units, 4 no. - type C - 2 bed apartments and 1 no. - type D - 2 bed terraced unit; C) pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access/egress with the existing public road to the east of the site; D) works associated with the widening and upgrade of the existing public road from the Woodbrook Heights junction to the proposed site entrance to include minor landscaping of the adjacent public park; E) all car parking, landscaping, boundary treatments, pedestrian links, public lighting, service connections and all associated site works. An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the project and will be submitted with the application.	This project is located approx. 10.9km northwest of the proposed development. The potential effects arising from this project and the proposed development are similar. The NIS identified impacts such as water quality deterioration from surface water pathways. Provided the mitigation measures in relation to water quality protection outlined in the NIS for the project are adhered to, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 17294	**Planning Application Lodged:** 31st July 2017 **Decision Date:** 21st September 2017	This project is located approx. 11.7km northwest of the proposed development.

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-combination effects
Name: Coillte Teoranta **Address:** Seevness, Altnavelick, Carrowgaveen, Gortakeeran,, Lismacbryan, Lugbaun, Lugnadeffa, Mullanashee, Rathosey and Tullaghan, Coolaney, Co. Sligo	for development consisting of 10-year permission for a mountain bike trail recreational development in the townlands, Seevness, Altnavelick, Carrowgaveen, Gortakeeran, Lismacbryan, Lugbaun, Lugnadeffa, Mullanashee, Rathosey, and Tullaghan, Coolaney, Co. Sligo. The proposed development includes 80km of bike trails, approximately 0.6m wide (within a corridor of 100m) including boundary treatments, signage, and all associated works. The proposed development will also include a new building containing changing and washing facilities, a cafe, bicycle hire facilities, the construction of parking areas, a bike wash, the installation of a wastewater treatment plant and percolation area and all associated works, water connection/supply from a public main and associated services.	Owing to the schedule of conditions laid out in the planning permission, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.
Sligo County Council **Planning Ref.:** 20251 **ABP Case Ref.:** PL21.310788-21 **Name:** Coillte CGA **Address:** Townlands of Carrowmore, and Carrownyclowan, County Sligo	**Planning Application Lodged:** 29th July 2020 **Decision Date:** 15th June 2021 **Planning Status:** Appealed For development consisting of a ten-year planning permission for a renewable energy development with a 30-year operational life (from the date of commissioning along with a recreational and amenity facility. The entirety of the renewable energy development constitutes the provision of a ten-turbine wind farm and associated site works on lands in both Counties Leitrim and Sligo. The development will consist of: i. Construction of 2 no. wind turbines with a maximum overall blade tip height of up to 170 metres and associated hardstand areas; ii. 1 no. permanent Meteorological Mast with a maximum height of up to 100 metres, iii. All associated underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the turbines to the proposed wind farm 38kV electricity substation (which is proposed to be located in the townland of Garvagh Glebe, Co Leitrim); iv. Upgrade of existing tracks, roads and provision of new site access roads; v. Recreation and amenity works, including marked trails and associated recreation and amenity signage; vi. Site drainage; vii. Permanent signage; viii. Ancillary forestry felling to facilitate construction and operation of the proposed development; and ix. All associated site development works. A concurrent planning application is being lodged with Leitrim County Council in relation to the elements of the project that are within County Leitrim (which include the provision of 8	This project is located approx. 12.8km northeast of the proposed development. The potential effects arising from this project and the proposed development are similar. The NIS and EIAR have identified impacts such as water quality deterioration from surface water pathways. This project is located in a different subcatchment to the proposed development and is not hydrologically connected to the European sites associated with the proposed development. Therefore, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-combination effects
	no. wind turbines, electrical substation, underground cabling, connection to national electricity grid, access tracks/roads, access junction improvements, amenity works and all associated works). An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the project and will be submitted with the application.	
Leitrim County Council **Planning Ref.:** 20120 **ABP Case Ref.:** PI12.310789-21 **Name:** Coillte CGA **Address:** Townlands of Bargowla, Boleymaguire, Braudphark, Derreens, Derrybofin, Derrycullinan, Derrycullinan Beg, Drummanacappul, Garvagh, Garvagh Glebe, Glassalt, Lisfuiltaghan, Seltan, Sheena and Tinnybeg, County Leitrim	**Planning Application Lodged:** 29th July 2020 **Decision Date:** 15th June 2021 **Planning Status:** Appealed Construction of 8 No. Wind turbines with a maximum overall blade tip height of up to 170 metres, and associated hard-stand areas; (b) 1no. 38kV permanent electrical substation including a control building with welfare facilities, all associated electrical plant and equipment, security fencing, all associated underground cabling, waste water holding tank and all ancillary works; (c) all associated underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the turbines to the proposed wind farm substation; (d) all works associated with the connection of the proposed wind farm to the national electricity grid, via underground cabling to the existing Garvagh substation; (e) upgrade of existing tracks and roads, provision of new site access roads and hard-stand areas; (f) the partial demolition and alteration of two agricultural buildings in the townlands of Sheena and associated junction access and road works to the existing yard, agricultural buildings and agricultural lands in the townlands of Sheena and Derrybofin to provide link road primarily for construction traffic off the R280. this link road will be for the delivery of abnormal roads to the site during the construction period and may be used during the operational period if necessary or to facilitate the decommissioning of the wind farm. Following construction, access to the link road will be closed off and the yard / agricultural building will revert to its use for agricultural purposes except if and when required for delivery of abnormal loads during the operation period of the wind farm or to facilitate the decommissioning of the wind farm (g)1 no. borrow pit; (h) 2 no. peat and spoil repository areas; (i)2 no. temporary construction compounds; (j) recreation and amenity works including marked trails, boardwalk and viewing area, provision of a permanent amenity car park, and associated recreation and amenity signage; (k) site drainage; (l) permanent signage, (m) ancillary	This project is located approx. 12.8km northeast of the proposed development. The potential effects arising from this project and the proposed development are similar. The NIS and EIAR have identified impacts such as water quality deterioration from surface water pathways. This project is located in a different subcatchment to the proposed development and is not hydrologically connected to the European sites associated with the proposed development. Therefore, it can be concluded that this project and the proposed development will not lead to significant in-combination effects.

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-combination effects
	forestry felling to facilitate construction and operation of the proposed development and (n) all associated site development works. An Environment Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the project.	

5. CONCLUSION

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, Part 5 of the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulation, Part XAB of the Planning and Development Acts, the relevant case law, established best practice and the Precautionary Principle; this AA Screening Report has examined the details of the proposed development and the relevant European sites and has concluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is not likely to give rise to impacts that would constitute likely significant effects in view of the Conservation Objectives of those sites.

In light of this conclusion, it is the considered opinion of ROD, as the author of this AA Screening Report, that the Competent Authority, Sligo County Council, may find in completing its AA Screening in respect of the Strategic Road Maintenance Facility at Drumfin, that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site, in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of the sites concerned. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the author of this AA Screening Report that the Competent Authority may determine that AA is not required in respect of the proposed development.

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APPENDIX A

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DRAWING

Bonneagar Iompair Éireann
Transport Infrastructure Ireland

An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport

Sligo County Council
Comhairle Chontae Shligigh

Sligo.

No.	Revision	Date	By	Chk'd	App'd

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Drawn:	Designed:	Checked:	Approved:	Status:
MJM	CL	EW	EW	S2 - Information/Planning

Project Title: STRATEGIC ROAD MAINTENANCE FACILITY AT DRUMFIN

Drawing Title: DEPOT AT DRUMFIN/CLOONLURG PROPOSED LAYOUT

Drawing Number: Project | Originator | Volume | Location | Type | Role | Number
MCAAS2W- ROD - EGN - TO15_AE - DR - CH - 300050

Scale (A1): 1:500 | Date: JULY 2023 | Job No: 21.114 | Rev: P01

CYAL50320424

Jul 19, 2023 - 4:13pm

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