



An Ciste um Athghiniúint
agus Forbairt Tuaithe
Rural Regeneration and
Development Fund

WESTMEATH REGENERATION PROJECTS

Proposed Town Park At Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath



PLANNING STATEMENT
MARCH 2023



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1.0 Introduction

Westmeath County Council (WCC) is seeking approval under Part XI of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) for the development of a Town Park and associated works at Kinnegad, County Westmeath. The area of the site is approximately 1.33 hectares (3.27 acres) and is located off the Athlone Road (R161). The overall site encompasses the former community hall building, playground and adjoining lands which were previously used as a playing field and as a pitch and putt course.

The proposed development will include the following:

- a) Redevelopment of the site of the former community hall and surrounding lands to provide a new town park incorporating skate park, children's play areas, adult exercise areas, walkways and street furniture
- b) Upgrade of established entrance to the former community hall building on the Athlone Road (R161)
- c) New entrance at the North corner of the site to the Mullingar Road (former N4) via the existing lane to the Kinnegad water reservoir
- d) New entrance from the Easternmost corner of the site to the adjacent car park at Mullingar Road (former N4)
- e) Demolition of former community hall building
- f) Public lighting, Boundary treatment works, hard and soft landscaping, signage and all associated ancillary works.

2.0 Site Context – Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027

2.1 Land Use Zoning

Below is an extract from the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Land Use Zoning Map (Map 08 Volume 2).



The site is zoned as open space (green), community, education and institutional (yellow) and mixed use (blue) respectively.

2.2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Below is an extract from the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Map Viewer.



The Office of Public Works (OPW) Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) fluvial (river level based) flood risk extents are shown shaded in green. The site is approximately 250m away from identified potential flood risk area. The site is deemed not to be at risk of fluvial / pluvial flooding. Pluvial (rainfall based) flood risk extents are shown shaded in orange.

2.3 Built Heritage

There are no Protected Structures or Recorded Monuments within the site. Below is an extract from the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Built Heritage Map Viewer.



The nearest Protected Structures are located to the Southwest of the site as follows:

- 027-007 Former Church of Ireland Graveyard
- 027-008 Former School Master's House
- 027-009 Former Kinnegad National School

The Former National School and School Master's House are scheduled to be refurbished and extended to provide a community library and other community and education facilities.

3.0 Design Statement

3.1 Site Overview

3.1.1 Existing Topography

The site slopes gently, falling by approximately 1m from the North to the South.

3.1.2 Previous Use

The principle of community uses has been established on these lands. The Community Centre Building has been vacant for a number of years. The surrounding lands were previously used as playing fields and a pitch and putt course.

3.1.3 Existing Boundary Treatments

The West and Northwest boundaries comprise a timber fence lined with trees and shrubs between the site and the Heathfield Estate. The Northeast boundary comprises metal fencing with intermittent trees and shrubs. The Southeast boundary comprises a mix of walls, gates and metal fencing.

3.1.4 Surrounding Context

The Heathfield Estate is situated to the West and Northwest of the site. The Mullingar Road is to the Northeast of the site and the Athlone Road (R161) is located to the Southeast of the site.

3.2 Site Strategy

3.2.1 Demolition of Former Community Centre Building

The existing Community Centre Building has lay vacant for a number of years. Moisture penetration has caused damage to floors and ceilings and asbestos has been identified in the roof of the building.

An asbestos report will be prepared at detailed design stage and proposals for the removal and disposal of all asbestos and other waste arising from the demolition will be included in the construction environmental management plan (CEMP).

The delivery of a community facility befitting of the needs of the town is included within the Council's Regeneration Programme for Kinnegad.

3. 2.2 Proposed Town Park Layout

The layout of the proposed town park is shown on drawing RRDF0080-2023-04 and will include a flat multi use grass parkland with additional grass mounded areas for informal seating and relaxation. Other sporting and children's play areas together with adult exercise areas will be provided.

The layouts for the skate park and play areas will be subject to an assessment by RoSPA at detailed design stage and agreed prior to completion of construction.

A skate park and stone stepped viewing area will be developed. The skate park can be accessed directly off the Athlone Road via the existing iron gate to be retained as well as being connected to the walkway network in the park. The overall layout design ensures passive surveillance of all features within the park.

A toddler play area and an adventure play area are being provided in close proximity. Both playgrounds will have a selection of play equipment and will have the required safety surfacing.

An all-inclusive adult exercise area with associated safety surfacing is proposed.

The tree planted area at the West corner of the site will allow for nature-based features and enhancements such as stump stools, timber huts, arches, bug / hedgehog hotels etc. to further allow the community to engage with nature.

3. 2.3 Proposed Access

The proposed town park will be accessed via the existing entrance to the former community hall building. There will be another entrance at the link through to the existing carpark and another entrance at the North corner of the site, providing connectivity to the Mullingar Road.

A looped walkway within the site is proposed. The main walkway will be three meters wide. Other walkways will be two meters wide.

3.3 Existing Site Services

3.3.1 Overhead Lines

There is low voltage power supply available on the Athlone Road and on the Mullingar Road. It is proposed that feeder pillars be installed on the Athlone Road to provide power to new high efficiency lighting columns within the proposed town park.

Existing overhead electricity and telecoms lines within the site will be removed and any future power lines where required will be undergrounded.

3.3.2 Water Infrastructure

Adjacent to the North corner of the site along the Mullingar Road there is an existing water reservoir and several below ground watermains going to and from the reservoir. Provisions for Irish water to access existing infrastructure for maintenance purposes will continue. Construction works will not impact on existing infrastructure.

There is an existing 100mm diameter cast iron water main on the Athlone Road within the footway adjacent to the site. The potential delivery of a water bottle refill point will be considered.

3.3.3 Wastewater

No public WC facilities are proposed.

3.3.4 Surface Water Drains

There is an existing 375mm diameter concrete surface water sewer running along the back gardens of numbers 9 to 13 Heathfield at the West boundary of the site.

3.4 Proposed Public Lighting

Public lighting will be provided within the town park. Lighting will comprise varying height lighting columns at approximately 20m spacings. The potential incorporation of motion sensors will enhance energy efficiency and positively contribute to local biodiversity in this urban setting.

No spilling over of light to adjacent areas will be ensured through careful design of lighting. Exact number and height of lighting columns will be confirmed at detailed design stage.

3.5 Proposed Street Furniture and Boundary Treatments

Street furniture including picnic tables, park benches and bins located at regular intervals along walkways and adjacent to play areas and other features will be provided. Masonry piers and walls with railings will be provided at certain locations.

3.6 Proposed Surface Water Drainage

The area of hard standing on the existing site is approx. 2700m² comprising the roof of the existing former community hall building and surrounding yards and the former playground. The roof down pipes and gullies currently discharge to soakaways. The rest of the site is grass and rainwater discharges to the subsoil by way of percolation.

The proposed area of hard standing on the site, comprising walkways, skate park, steps, exercise area and playgrounds amounts to approx. 3100m² meaning there is approximately 400m² of additional hard standing due to the proposed development.

It is proposed to use over the edge drainage to the grass for most of the walkways and for larger areas such as playgrounds and skate park it is proposed to use French drains along the edge of the hard standing connecting to soakaways designed in accordance with BRE Digest 365.

3.7 Proposed Car and Bicycle Parking

The town park will be served by existing on-street and other car parks within the town. These lands are centrally located and within walking or cycling distance of all residential areas and community / educational / sporting facilities in Kinnegad. Bicycle stands will be provided.

3.8 Proposed landscaping

All landscaping will be carried out by a suitably qualified person. The open space within the park and mounded areas will be planted with grass seed.

Extensive tree and shrub planting will be delivered and enhanced with wildflower and other species as appropriate. Trees will comprise a mix of Horse chestnut, Maple, Birch, Hazel, Hawthorn, Beech, Crab apple and Cherry, among others. Shrubs will comprise Dog Rose and Guelder Rose.

3.9 Proposed Signage

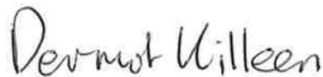
Required signage and information boards will be erected subject to detailed design and approval.

4.0 Environmental and Ecological Impact

External consultants were commissioned, and the proposed scheme underwent Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and screening for Environmental Impact Assessment under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU.

The reports concluded that a Natura Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Assessment Report are not required for the scheme. Refer to Appendix 4 and 5 for the full reports.

Signed



Dermot Killeen
Executive Engineer

Date 21st March 2023

Endorsed by



Deirdre Reilly, Senior Executive Officer
Regeneration Project Manager

Date 21st March 2023

Appendix 1

Drawing Register

- Drawing RRDF -0080-2023-01 Location Map
- Drawing RRDF -0080-2023-02 Existing Site layout Plan
- Drawing RRDF -0080-2023-03 Proposed Demolitions
- Drawing RRDF -0080-2023-04 Proposed Town park Layout
- Drawing RRDF -0080-2023-05 Standard Details

Appendix 2

Site Notice

**PART XI OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000
(AS AMENDED) PART 8 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
REGULATIONS, 2001 (AS AMENDED)**

SITE NOTICE

Pursuant to the requirements of the above, notice is hereby given that Westmeath County Council proposes to undertake the following works:

DEVELOPMENT OF A TOWN PARK AT ATHLONE ROAD (R161), KINNEGAD, COUNTY WESTMEATH.

The proposed development will include the following:

- a) Redevelopment of the site of the former community hall and surrounding lands to provide a new town park incorporating skate park, children's play areas, adult exercise areas, walkways and street furniture
- b) Upgrade of established entrance to the former community hall building on the Athlone Road (R161)
- c) New entrance at the North corner of the site to the Mullingar Road (former N4) via the existing lane to the Kinnegad water reservoir
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- e) Demolition of former community hall building
- f) Public lighting, Boundary treatment works, hard and soft landscaping, signage and all associated ancillary works.

The Proposed scheme has undergone **Appropriate Assessment Screening** under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and screening for **Environmental Impact Assessment** under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU.

Any person may, within 4 weeks from the date of this notice, apply to An Bord Pleanála for a screening determination as to whether the proposed development would be likely to have significant effect on the environment.

Plans and Particulars of the proposed development are available for inspection at <https://consult.westmeathcoco.ie/en> and can be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of the Municipal District of Mullingar-Kinnegad, Westmeath County Council, Áras An Chontae, Mount Street, Mullingar, N91 FH4N from 9.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. each day, excluding weekends and Bank Holidays, from the **27th March 2023 up to and including the 27th April 2023**.

Submissions and observations with respect to the proposed development, may be made in writing no later than **5:00 p.m. on Thursday the 11th May 2023** either:

- Online at <https://consult.westmeathcoco.ie/en> or
- In writing, clearly marked "Proposed Development of a Town Park at Athlone Road Kinnegad" to the Administrative Officer, Planning Section, Westmeath County Council, Áras An Chontae, Mount Street, Mullingar, N91 FH4N.

Written submissions or observations received, will form part of a statutory report to be presented to a meeting of Westmeath County Council and will form part of a public document. The information contained in submissions may be available for public inspection, to be published on the Council's website and available at the Council's public counter. Details, including the names of those making submissions may be shared with relevant Council Departments or their agents involved in this Part 8 process.

David Jones, Director of Services,

Áras an Chontae, Mullingar

Date: 21-03-2023

Appendix 3

Newspaper Notice

PART XI OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED) PART 8 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, 2001 (AS AMENDED) PUBLIC NOTICE

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**David Jones, Director of Services,
Áras an Chontae, Mullingar**

Date: 21-03-2023

NEWS

GAA volunteer wins

A member of Crookedwood GAA Club has been named as the Westmeath winner of the 2023 Volunteers in Sports Award.

The awards are run by the Federation of Irish Sport to celebrate the contributions of people like the Westmeath winner Déirdre Orme, who give their time to sport and physical activity every year.

Déirdre, a member of Crookedwood GAA, has been volunteering for more than a decade. She has spent her whole life involved with the club and when her playing days were cut short due to illness,

she continued to contribute through committee and promotional roles.

Déirdre helps with coaching and fundraising and helped with community work during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as a range of mental health initiatives.

Also a member of the Civil Defence, Déirdre has used her first aid training to assist teams that need it, and never misses a game. It is her dedication and commitment to her club and county that has set her apart and Déirdre has become an inspiration for many.

Minister of State with respon-

sibility for Sport and Physical Education Thomas Byrne TD is the special guest speaker at the awards, on Wednesday, March 22 at The Crowne Plaza Hotel, Blanchardstown and hosted by sports broadcaster Gráinne McElwain. The overall Outstanding Achievement Award will be revealed on the day.

Volunteers from all 32 counties will be honoured for their dedication to volunteering across a variety of different sports.

Throughout December and January the public, sports clubs and governing bodies



Déirdre Orme.

were invited by the Federation of Irish Sport in partnership with the National Network of 29 Local Sports Partnerships to nominate individuals whose contribution to sport and physical activity in Ireland has made a real difference to their community, club or county.

Following a shortlisting process, the judging panel of nine individuals drawn from sports administration, academia, the volunteer community and media, including former director general of the GAA, Paraic Duffy, RTÉ broadcaster, Marie Crowe, and Declan Jordan, senior lecturer in Economics at UCC.

Westmeath planning

AN application for a three-story apartment building at Robinstown has been submitted to Westmeath County Council by BFJ Developments Limited of Carrickmacross, County Monaghan. The building is to contain 38 units; 26 two-bed apartments and 12 one-bed. Four one-beds are to be transferred to the council under Part V obligation.

Coralstown Kinnegad GAA were refused permission for an extension of duration to extend the clubhouse. The additions included a sports hall with stage, four dressing rooms, toilets, two meeting rooms, and gym. The grounds for the refusal were that the local authority was not satisfied that development works have commenced on site.

"Furthermore, substantial works were not carried out on this site in accordance with the requirements of Section 42 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)," the refusal notice stated.

Also refused planning permission in the last week was Luke Murtagh, for a house at Rathcaled, Ballynacargy, Micheál Savage for demolition of a cottage, proposed construction of a replacement

dwelling at Kilmore, Streete.

Conditional permission was granted to two applicants seeking retention for the change of use of two houses at Loughstown Holiday Village, Drumcree, Collinstown, from holiday home to private residential dwelling. The applicants were Elizabeth Moore and Vanessa Cunningham.

Sean and Laura Delamere have received permission to build a single-story house at Cullionbeg, Mullingar.

The Men's Shed in Ballymore has submitted an application to Westmeath County Council seeking permission to erect a workshop/ storage unit at Low Street, Ballymore. Submitted on March 10, the application is due a decision on May 4 next.

Other new applications submitted to the council include one from Edwin Dunne seeking permission to retain and complete an existing partially-constructed house at Clonlost, Killucan; and one from Sean Scally seeking permission to renovate and extend a house at Killucan.

Christopher and Adrienne Geraghty have sought retention permission for an attic conversion at Gorteen, Mullingar; Amy Ballesty has applied to build a new house at Ballyglass, Rathconrath.



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David Jones, Director of Services, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar

Date: 21-03-2023



PUBLIC NOTICE (UPDATE 15/03/23) MOATE TOWN CENTRE FIRST PLAN – 'EMERGING IDEAS' PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Following the first round of public consultation, Westmeath Co. Co. is inviting the public to get involved in the next stage of the plan making process and 'Have your Say' on the emerging ideas and design concepts being developed for the Moate Town Centre First (TCF) Masterplan.

How to take part – Where and When:

View: View the emerging ideas and design concepts via:-

- The online consultation portal from Tuesday 21st March to Tuesday 04th April 2023.
- Moate Library during public opening hours.

Engage:

- Drop-in Session- invited groups:** Tuesday 28th March 2023, from 2pm – 4pm Moate Library.
- Stakeholder and interested parties' presentation and workshop:** Tuesday 28th March 2023, from 7pm – 9pm Carmelite Centre.
- Public Drop-in Session:** Wednesday 29th March 2023, from 10am – 2pm Moate Library.
- Online Consultation Survey:** Live from Tuesday 21st March, <https://consult.westmeathcoco.ie/en>.

If you are unable to attend any of the events, an online public consultation survey will be available from the 21st March 2023. Hard Copies of the survey are available on request. Please note the survey will close at: **5pm Tuesday 04th April 2023.**

For more information visit our website: <https://www.westmeathcoco.ie/en/ourservices/regeneration/> or contact us via:

Email: Regen@westmeathcoco.ie

Tel: 044-9332000.



An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe agus Pobail Department of Rural and Community Development

Tionscadal Éireann Project Ireland 2040



Appendix 4

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report

Proposed Town Park on Site of Former Community Hall and Surrounding Lands, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath

EIA Screening Report

March 2023

Project number: 2023s0142

Westmeath County Council

JBA Project Manager

Conor O'Neill
Unit 8, Greenogue Business Plaza
Greenogue Business Park
Rathcoole
Dublin
Ireland

Revision History

Revision Ref / Date Issued	Amendments	Issued to
S3-P01/ 08/03/2023	Draft Report	Westmeath County Council
A3-C01 / 15/03/2023	Final Report	Westmeath County Council

Contract

This report describes work commissioned by Westmeath County Council, by an email dated 25/01/2023. Conor O'Neill of JBA Consulting carried out this work.

Prepared by Conor O'Neill B.A. (Mod) M.Sc.
Environmental Scientist

Reviewed by Bernadette O'Connell B.A. M.Sc. PG Dip
Managing Director

Patricia Byrne BSc (Hons), PhD, MCIEEM
Senior Ecologist

Purpose

This document has been prepared as a Final Report for Westmeath County Council ('the Client'). JBA Consulting accepts no responsibility or liability for any use that is made of this document other than by the Client for the purposes for which it was originally commissioned and prepared.

JBA Consulting has no liability regarding the use of this report except to Westmeath County Council.

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JBA is aiming to reduce its per capita carbon emissions.

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Abbreviations

- AA - Appropriate Assessment
- EclA - Ecological Impact Assessment
- EIAR - Environmental Impact Assessment Report
- NIAH - National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
- NMS - National Monuments Service
- SFRA - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- WFD - Water Framework Directive

1 Introduction

JBA Consulting Engineers and Scientists Ltd. (hereafter JBA) has been commissioned by Westmeath County Council to prepare an EIA Screening Report for a proposed town park at the former Kinnegad Community Hall and surrounding lands in Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath (the 'proposed development'). The proposed development will be submitted as a Part 8 application, and will consist of a town park with footpaths, playgrounds, skate park, exercise area and associated tree and shrub planting.

1.1 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to identify whether there is a need under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, for an EIAR for the proposed development.

Schedule 5 (Parts 1 and 2) of the Act lists the groups of development projects which are subject to EIA screening under the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU. Part 1 lists those projects which are automatically subject to an EIAR due to the scale and nature of the project. Part 2 lists projects which are also likely to have significant environmental effects based on the nature and size of the development set out by threshold criteria.

An additional group of projects, which are considered sub-threshold developments under Part 2, may fall below the thresholds set but may, under further analysis, be deemed to have significant effects due to their location within a catchment, size, or proximity to sensitive areas.

This report documents the methodology employed to determine whether the proposed development falls under any of these groups, and therefore will have significant environmental impacts. Rationale has been given for the decision made in reference to the relevant legislation, and additional documents have been referenced where required.

This report is intended for the project as described below. Any significant changes to the project description or location would require preparation of a new EIA screening report.

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report has been prepared by JBA Consulting and identifies any potential impacts to Natura 2000 sites and other protected species and habitats, respectively. This EIA Screening document, along with the AA Screening Report, will be submitted as part of the planning process for the proposed development.

2 Description of Proposed Works

2.1 Site Location

The site is approximately 1.77Ha in area and is on the Athlone Road, close to the town centre of Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath (Figure 2.1). The site is bound by small-scale residential areas to the north and west, the Athlone Road to the south, and the Mullingar Road to the east.

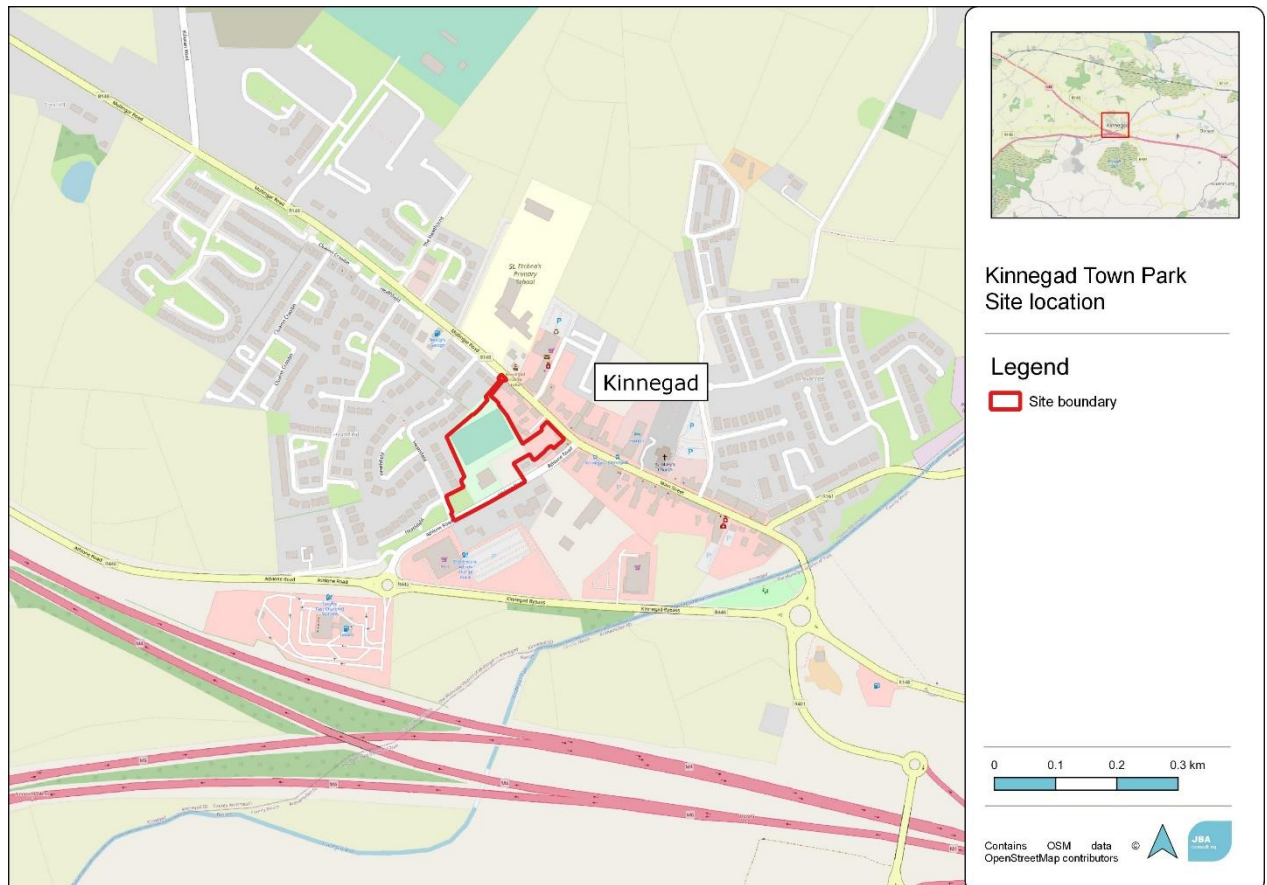


Figure 2.1: Site Location

2.2 Proposed Development

The proposed development will include the following:

- Redevelopment of the site of the former community hall and surrounding lands to provide a new town park incorporating skate park, children's play areas, adult exercise areas, walkways and street furniture
- Upgrade of established entrance to the former community hall building on the Athlone Road (R161)
- New entrance at the North corner of the site to the Mullingar Road (former N4) via the existing lane to the Kinnegad water reservoir
- New entrance from the Easternmost corner of the site to the adjacent car park at Mullingar Road (former N4)
- Demolition of former community hall building
- Public lighting, Boundary treatment works, hard and soft landscaping, signage and all associated ancillary works.

The proposed site layout plan is shown in Appendix A.

It is proposed to discharge surface water from the proposed footpaths to the ground via over the edge drainage. Larger areas of hard standing such as the playgrounds, proposed skate park and

the lane from the North of the park to the Mullingar Road will have gullies and / or channels connecting into soakaways which will be designed in accordance with BRE Digest 365.

3 Purpose of Screening

3.1 Legislative Context for EIAR in Ireland

The EU has set out mandatory requirements for Environmental Impact Assessments under the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU). The Directive identifies certain project types, described under Annex I, that will always have significant environmental effects due to their nature and size. These projects are required to undergo an EIAR in every Member State.

For projects listed under Annex II, the EIA Directive gives Member States discretion to decide the limits of projects requiring an EIAR. In Ireland, mandatory thresholds have been set for projects that would otherwise fall under Annex II, which are described in Schedule 5 of The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended. These thresholds are based on project characteristics including size and location. Projects within these thresholds are always subject to an EIAR. In some circumstances, projects considered below the thresholds set under Schedule 5 Part 2 may still be considered by the Planning Authority to have significant effects on the environment, such as in cases where the projects are in a location of particular environmental sensitivity and may also be subject to an EIAR. These sub-threshold projects are reviewed by the Planning Authority on a case-by-case basis.

The principal piece of legislation under which an EIAR may be undertaken for various developments is The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Further regulations are explained in The Planning and Development (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2001-2018.

Legislation is examined below as to whether an EIAR will be required for this project.

3.2 The Planning and Development Act 2000 - Mandatory EIAR

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, Section 172 sets out the types of projects that require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR):

An environmental impact assessment shall be carried out by the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, in respect of an application for consent for proposed development where either:

a. the proposed development would be of a class specified in

- i. Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, and either-
 - I. such development would exceed any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, or
 - II. no quantity, area or other limit is specified in that Part in respect of the development concerned, or
- ii. Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 and either-
 - I. such development would exceed any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, or
 - II. no quantity, area or other limit is specified in that Part in respect of the development concerned, or

b.

- i. the proposed development would be of a class specified in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 but does not exceed the relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, and
- ii. the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, determines that the proposed development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

3.2.1 Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018

Projects which fall under Schedule 5, Part 1 are typically large infrastructure and energy projects and by their nature will always have significant environmental effects. The proposed residential development does not fall under Schedule 5, Part 1.

3.2.2 Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018

With regards to Part 2 projects, the categories and thresholds were examined for the following category:

10. Infrastructure projects

(b) (iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.

(In this paragraph, “business district” means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)

The proposed development has a site area of 1.77 ha. It does not fall under any of the other categories in Schedule 5. Therefore, an EIAR has not been automatically triggered for this proposed development.

However, it is necessary to consider if this development could result in significant environmental effects under the category of sub-threshold developments.

3.3 Sub-threshold EIAR

In accordance with the requirement to submit an EIAR with sub-threshold planning application (Article 103 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018), where a planning application for sub-threshold development is not accompanied by an EIAR, and the Planning Authority considers that the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment it shall, by notice in writing, require the applicant to submit an EIAR. This process therefore occurs after submission of an application, if that application is not accompanied by an EIAR.

The decision as to whether a development is likely to have ‘significant effects’ on the environment must be taken with reference to the criteria set out in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018. Schedule 7A requires that the following information be provided for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for EIAR:

1. A description of the proposed development, including in particular—
 - a) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works, and
 - b) a description of the location of the proposed development, with regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.
2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.
3. A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the proposed development on the environment resulting from—
 - a) the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant, and
 - b) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.
 - c) The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018 (DHPLG 2018).

In order to assist planning and other consenting authorities in deciding if significant effects on the environment are likely to arise in the case of development below the national mandatory EIAR thresholds, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published a Guidance document in August 2003, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development and the Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (DHPLG 2018b)

The criteria, as transposed in Irish legislation, are grouped under three headings:

- i. Characteristics of Proposed Development
- ii. Location of Proposed Development
- iii. Characteristics of Potential Impacts

For the purposes of assessing if the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment in reference to these three parameters, the project is examined below in further detail.

4 Overview of Environmental Impacts

An overview of the potential environmental impacts of the development, according to theme presented in an EIAR, is provided below.

4.1 Population and Human Health

The development is in line with the objectives of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2022-2028 (see Section 4.10.1). The development will fall under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund of the CDP, the aim of which is to support job creation in rural areas and support improvements in towns and villages of less than 10,000 population, which Kinnegad is part of.

Kinnegad has a younger population than the average of Westmeath (with only 6% over the age of 65, compared to 19.7% of the rest of the county). As such, providing a town park with play areas and a skate park will lead to an improvement in the town facilities for younger people. The park can also be enjoyed by older people in Kinnegad, with footpaths and landscaping to view.

There is a risk to the health and safety of workers on the development, as with any construction project. This will be mitigated against by the operational plans devised by the contractor. No impacts to human health are expected as a result of the operation of the development.

4.2 Biodiversity

Ecological receptors that must be examined include protected Natura 2000 sites under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), as well as species protected under the Wildlife Act (1976, and amendments), and any ecological receptors which may be negatively impacted by the proposed development, both directly and indirectly.

4.2.1 Proximity to Protected Sites

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been completed by JBA Consulting for this project to determine whether there is a potential for impacts on nearby Natura 2000 sites. The AA Screening Report should be read in full, however a summary of the results is included here for information.

Those sites within the 5km Zone of Influence of the proposed development are shown in Table 4.1. The AA Screening determined that there are no likely significant impacts on any Natura 2000 sites as a result of the proposed development.

Table 4.1: Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development

Natura 2000 site	Site Code	Approximate Distance from Site	Hydrological Distance from Site
Mount Hevey Bog SAC	002342	2.3km	n/a
River Boyne and Blackwater SAC	002299	4.9km	11.5km (Indirect)
River Boyne and Blackwater SPA	002342	4.9km	11.5km (Indirect)

4.2.2 Other Ecological Receptors

An ecological walkover survey was undertaken on 8th February 2023 by JBA ecologists as part of the assessment.

There were no floral species listed under the Flora (Protection) Order 2022 recorded by the Ecologist during the ecological walkover survey. However the ecological survey were conducted outside of the optimal window for vegetation, as such, some vegetation species may not have been present at the time of survey efforts.

There were no direct evidence of faunal species listed under the Wildlife Act 1976 and its amendments recorded by the Ecologists during the walkover survey. However habitat exists that is suitable for mammals such as Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and Pygmy Shrew *Sorex minutus*.

Within the old community centre building there were a large number of deceased pigeons, a blackbird, and a bird's nest, while there was also indirect evidence of bat feeding present in the form of discarded tortoiseshell butterfly wings.

There were three identified non-native invasive species recorded by JBA Ecologists within the site, these species include Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* and Winter Heliotrope *Petasites fragrans*. Cherry Laurel is a high-impact non-native invasive species, Sycamore is a medium impact non-native invasive species, and Winter Heliotrope is a low impact non-native invasive species, however none of these are species listed under the third schedule of the EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 S.I. No. 477/2011.

4.2.3 Additional pre-works surveys, reporting, and mitigation measures

JBA recommend that additional surveys and reporting take place during the summer months prior to any site clearance, demolition, or construction work. These surveys are required to fully assess for the presence or absence of protected species (i.e., plants, bats, mammals, and birds) and to devise mitigation measures as necessary. The surveys recommended by JBA include:

- Mammal survey
- Bat Roost survey of the former Community Hall, including emergence survey and static bat detector survey.
- Invasive species survey. Three non-native invasive species were identified during the walkover survey in Winter. Additional species may be visible during the Summer months.
- Nesting Bird survey of community Hall
- Grassland and plant survey. The available seed bank on site could be used in the operational phase to enhance the native planting on site and prevent the need for import of plant seeds. A survey of the vegetation (e.g. Bryophytes) on the stone walls will ensure protection of any rare species that may be impacted by clearing/cleaning of walls.

The above surveying and associated reporting will allow detailed mitigation measures to be devised that will be put in place by the contractor during site clearance, demolition, and construction. The mitigation measures will include, but will not be limited to:

- A buffer zone of 5m around boundary vegetation/hedgerow to be retained while works are taking place. The buffer zone will be defined by the erection of protective fencing, with "Construction Exclusion Zone" notices placed at regular intervals along the fencing. This will ensure the protection of habitats which are being retained, and their continued use by any species using them.
- Root protection zone around trees that are to be retained.
- Any clearance of trees and scrub will be conducted outside the bird breeding season (March to September inclusive). It is expected that the majority of vegetation within the site will be retained and provide shelter and commuting routes for species within the site during construction. Planting can take place on a phased basis to replace this vegetation if required.
- There is a risk of spread of invasive species during site clearance, demolition, and construction. Measures will need to be put in place to reduce this risk. The Check-Clean-Dry approach should be followed, ensuring that all PPE and equipment is cleaned before leaving the site. For more information refer to: www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry

If bat roosts are noted in the former Community Hall building, bat enhancements and mitigation measures will be put in place. A derogation license would be required from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) prior to demolition. During demolition and construction, site lighting should be switched off or at a lower light output with cowling in place.

If bat roosts are noted, an artificial bat roost will be required to be erected in the proposed park, after consultation with NPWS. Bat box or replacement roost design will depend on species recorded. In general, bat boxes should be south-facing and at least 4m off the ground. They should be placed on a mature tree, with the placement free from ivy with no branches within a 1m radius around the location of the box. Example of suitable bat boxes include the 1FF Schwegler Bat Box with Built-in Wooden Rear Panel and the 2F Schwegler Bat Box (General Purpose). This will accommodate Leisler's bat, Pipistrelle species and Myotis species. A bat nursery roost may require a replacement with a roof-like structure.

If roof nesting birds are noted (e.g. Swift, House Martin), demolition of building will have to take place outside of bird nesting season (March to August inclusive).

4.3 Soils and Geology

The underlying bedrock of the site is composed mainly of made ground, with a small section of limestone till at the far western end.

The underlying subsoil is composed mostly of made ground with the north-eastern section of the site comprised of shale and sandstone till.

4.4 Hydrology and Hydrogeology

4.4.1 Surface Water

The proposed site lies within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Boyne catchment and Boyne_SC_030 sub-catchment. The Kinnegad River, a tributary of the River Boyne, flows eastwards approximately 55-200m south of the proposed development away from the site. The river is classified as by the WFD having Moderate status for the period 2016-2021. The stream is At Risk of not achieving its WFD objectives, with agriculture and urban run-off its significant pressures.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was completed as part of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027. The development site is outside Flood Zones A (1 in 100 chance in any given year) and B (1 in 1000 chance) according to the Westmeath County SFRA.

During construction, there is the potential for emissions of dust and silt into nearby watercourses or adjacent drains. This could therefore lead to a reduction in water quality. This is unlikely given the nature of the proposed development and the distance to watercourses, and will be further mitigated against by the implementation of water protection measures and best practice procedures during construction as outlined by the appointed constructor.

4.4.2 Groundwater

The groundwater body Athboy (IE_EA_G_001) is underlying the site and is of Good status and At Risk according to the EPA. Groundwater vulnerability, a measure of the likelihood of groundwater contamination occurring, within the site is classified by the Geological Survey Ireland (GSI, 2020) as 'High'. This classification is a function of the underlying bedrock and subsoils at the site.

Groundwater vulnerability underlying the site is classified as 'High', indicating a high likelihood of groundwater contamination by human activities. The risk of groundwater contamination will only be present during the construction phase of the development; once operational, the development is unlikely to result in hydrological impacts. Deep excavations are not anticipated for the proposed development, further reducing the risk of impacts to groundwater.

4.5 Cultural Heritage

No recorded archaeological features are within 100m of the proposed development. Given the proposed development's characteristics, including the lack of deep excavation works, impacts to undiscovered archaeology are not likely.

Three recorded National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) designations are within 100m of the proposed development. All on Mullingar Road to the site's northeast. These are:

- Kinnegad graveyard (Reg. No. 15316002)
- Kinnegad National School, former schoolmaster's house (Reg. No. 15316003)
- Kinnegad National School (Reg. No. 15316004)

These three designations are also listed on the Westmeath Record of Protected Structures (RPS), numbers 027-007, 027-008, and 027-009 respectively.

Given the nature of the works, no significant impacts are expected.

4.6 Air and Climate

There is potential for impacts to air quality through emissions during the construction phase of the development, due to the operation of machinery on site and transport of materials to and from the site. These impacts will not be significant and will be mitigated against with measures outlined in the contractor's operating plans.

The proposed development will not give rise to any significant impacts on air quality or climate during operational period.

4.7 Noise and Vibration

There is potential for localised noise and vibration impacts during the construction phase due to operation of machinery on site. These impacts would be temporary and only during the construction phase. Mitigation measures against such impacts will be outlined in the operating plans to be devised by the contractor.

The proposed development will not lead to any significant noise or vibration impacts during operational period.

4.8 Landscape and Visual

The proposed development is situated in the Lough Ennell and South Eastern Corridor Landscape Character Area (LCA), as defined by the Westmeath CDP. The LCA is characterised by pastureland of mixed productivity and the large Lough Ennell.

The proposed development will give rise to temporary landscape or visual impacts to residents living in proximity to the development during the construction phase.

Once operational, the proposed development will be low in landscape and visual impact for surrounding receptors, and will be in character with the surrounding landscape. A landscape masterplan has been prepared for the proposed development, the planting proposals of which will mitigate visual impacts of the development and enhance the overall visual amenity of the area.

4.9 Material Assets including Traffic, Utilities, and Waste

4.9.1 Traffic

There may be some localised impacts on traffic associated with the construction phase of the development. These will be temporary and limited in duration.

Once operational, the proposed development is unlikely to create additional traffic or parking demand. Included in the design is a pedestrian link to the existing carpark on Mullingar Road, with car and bicycle parking available there. The proposed development is also within walking distance of much of Kinnegad.

4.9.2 Utilities

Surface water from the proposed footpaths to the ground via over the edge drainage. Larger areas of hard standing such as the playgrounds, proposed skate park and the lane from the North of the park to the Mullingar Road will have gullies and / or channels connecting into soakaways which will be designed in accordance with BRE Digest 365. No significant impacts are expected on utilities.

4.9.3 Waste

During construction, a waste management plan will be devised and implemented by the contractor on site.

A Condition Report prepared for the community hall by Taylor-Boyd Consulting Structural and Civil Engineers noted the likely presence of asbestos with uPVC infill panels in the roof of the building. A refurbishment/demolition asbestos survey (RDAS) will be needed prior to any works at the building.

Once operational, the proposed development will not generate waste.

4.10 Cumulative Impacts

4.10.1 Plans

Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027

Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 has been prepared in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000. The plan sets out the overall strategy for planning and sustainable development in the county.

The proposed development is identified as Opportunity Site 3 for Kinnegad in the CDP.

Objective CPO 8.120 aims to support the creation of an easily accessible public park with recreational and amenity facilities at the site.

4.10.2 Projects

There are several other recent developments or planning applications in the vicinity of the proposed project. Larger development planning applications in the near vicinity from the last three years that have been granted permission are listed below. Applications for home extensions, internal alterations and retention are not considered.

Planning Application Reference	21697
Development address	Manorfield, Kinnegad, Co Westmeath
Description: Construction of one number prefabricated steel framed single storey sports unit with open gym, activity area and toilet facility and all associated site works	
Final Decision on Application	Grant permission
Decision Date	25/02/2022

Planning Application Reference	2189
Development address	Killucan Road, Kinnegad, Co Westmeath
Description: Permission to construct a prefabricated steel framed unit to be used as dressing room, install a proprietary wastewater treatment system and all associated site development works	
Final Decision on Application	Grant permission
Decision Date	24/11/2021

Planning Application Reference	Part 8 Planning Application
Development address	Kinnegad National School, Main Street, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath, N91 DP22
Description: The proposed development will include the following: Restoration and adaption of the former National School into a Community Library and Education and Training Centre, including a two-storey rear extension and glazed links to the front and rear; Alterations to the boundary walls and public footpath; Provision of hard and soft landscaping including a new civic space adjoining the site; Installation of all associated services above and below ground to connect to the existing systems; The provision of signage; The provision of cycle stands and Ancillary Works.	
Final Decision on Application	Grant permission
Decision Date	Contract awarded February 2023

The potential for cumulative impact of the plans and projects identified above are assessed in the Screening section below in combination with the currently proposed project.

5 Screening Assessment

5.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

To determine whether the characteristics of the proposed development are likely to have significant impacts on the environment, the following questions are answered in Table 5.1, following guidelines set out in Guidance for Consenting Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development (DoEHLG 2003).

Table 5.1: Characteristics of the proposed development

Characteristics of the Proposed Development - Screening Questions	Comment
Could the scale (size or design) of the proposed development be considered significant?	The proposed development boundary is 1.77 hectares in size. The proposals for planting, hard and soft landscaping, and built elements are in line with their surroundings. For the reasons outlined, the scale of the proposed development is not considered to be significant.
Considered cumulatively with other adjacent proposed developments, would the size of the proposed development be considered significant?	The size of the development is considered small. A number of planning applications have been granted permission in the area around the proposed development in the last three years. The applications are all small scale. As such, the cumulative effect is not expected to be significant.
Will the proposed development utilise a significant quantity of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water or biodiversity?	In terms of land area, the proposed development is small (1.77ha), and comprised mainly of open space. The development will not require significant quantities of soil, water or biodiversity, with the majority of vegetation on site being retained. Therefore, there will not be a significant quantity of natural resources used.
Will the proposed development produce a significant quantity of waste?	No. A small quantity of waste will be produced during the construction phase of the development. During this phase, should excavated materials require off-site removal, they will be tested to determine the most appropriate means of disposal, and disposed of at appropriately licenced or permitted sites. This will be detailed in the contractor's operating plans. During operation, the proposed development will not produce waste.
Will the proposed development create a significant amount or type of pollution?	No. Temporary air and noise pollution may occur during the construction phase, but will be mitigated against by operational plans devised by the contractor.
Will the proposed development create a significant amount of nuisance?	No. During construction, some noise will be created, however this will be temporary and short-term. Construction works will be limited to certain times of day to avoid nuisance to local residences. Once operational, the proposed development will not produce a significant amount of nuisance.
Will there be a risk of major accidents having regard to substances or technologies used?	No. The risks of this development will be those typically associated with normal construction practices.

	Construction machinery will be used during the construction phase and will be operated by licensed contractors, and following best practice guidance.
Will there be a risk of natural disasters which are relevant to the project, including those caused by climate change?	The proposed development is outside the Flood Zone A and B extents as described in the Westmeath SFRA. The site is therefore at low risk of flooding, and risk of natural disasters to the project is therefore low.
Will there be a risk to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)?	<p>No. Any potential risk to human health will be as a result of the construction phase of this project. All contractors will be subject to best practice methodologies and risk assessments in order to minimize any risk to human health.</p> <p>A refurbishment/demolition asbestos survey (RDAS) will be required prior to any works to the community hall. Any asbestos will be removed following the relevant guidelines by a competent and qualified asbestos specialist.</p>
Would any combination of the above factors be considered likely to have significant effects on the environment?	No. The development is relatively small scale. Environmental impacts are predictable and easily mitigated through the use of best practice guidelines during the construction phase. As such, significant impacts on the environment are not expected as a result of the proposed development.

Conclusion: The characteristics of the proposed development are not considered likely to result in a significant impact on the environment by virtue of its size, nature or operational activities.

Reasoning: The proposed development is relatively small in extent. Any environmental or noise impacts will be during the construction phase and not during operation of the development. Construction will not require significant use of natural resources, nor will it generate significant amounts of waste.

5.2 Location of the Proposed Development

The following questions are answered below in Table 5.2 to determine whether the geographical location of the proposed development can be considered ecologically or environmentally sensitive.

Table 5.2: Location of the proposed development

Location of the Proposed Development - Screening Questions	Comment
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any site designated for conservation interest (e.g., SAC, SPA, pNHA)?	No. The AA Screening for the site concluded that there are no Natura 2000 sites likely to be directly or indirectly impacted by the development.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any habitats listed as Annex I in the EU Habitats Directive?	No. The AA Screening for the site found no potential impacts on habitats listed as Annex I in the EU Habitats Directive.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any habitats listed as Priority Annex I in the EU Habitats Directive?	No. The AA Screening for the site found no potential impacts on habitats listed as Priority Annex I in the EU Habitats Directive.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any species listed as Annex II in the EU Habitats Directive?	No. The AA Screening for the site found no potential impacts on species listed as Annex II in the EU Habitats Directive.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on the breeding places of any species protected under the Wildlife Act?	<p>The ecological walkover survey found indirect evidence of bats in the former Community Hall.</p> <p>Additional surveys are recommended in the summer months, prior to any works taking place. These should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mammal survey • Bat Roost survey of the former Community Hall, including emergence survey and static bat detector survey. • Invasive species survey • Nesting bird survey of building • Botanical survey of grassland and stone walls. <p>If bats, mammals, or birds protected under the Wildlife Act are noted during these surveys, mitigation measures will be put in place for their protection. These will be outlined in full following the surveys.</p>
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on the existing or approved land use?	No. The proposed development is in line with the objectives of the Westmeath CDP.
Has the proposed development the potential to significantly impact directly or indirectly the relative abundance, availability, quality or regenerative capacity of natural	No. The proposed development will not impact the relative abundance, availability, or regenerative capacity of natural resources, nor will it require the use of water or biodiversity.

resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground?	
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any protected structures or Recorded Monuments and Places of Archaeological Interest?	No. Three structures on the Westmeath RPS are within 100m but will not be impacted by the proposed development.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on listed or scenic views or protected landscapes as outlined in the County Development Plan?	No.

Conclusion: The location of the proposed development is not likely to result in a significant impact on the environment.

Reasoning: The proposed development is located at an existing open space, with the disused community hall to be demolished. There are no Natura 2000 sites or designated ecological sites which will be impacted by the proposed development. Additional surveying will take place in the summer months prior to any works taking place. These will assess the site for protected species (i.e., flora, bats, mammals, and birds) and allow mitigation measures to be devised as necessary.

5.3 Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The following questions were answered in Table 5.3, in line with Guidance on EIA Screening - June 2001, prepared for the European Commission by ERM (UK), to determine whether the environmental impacts of the development can be considered significant.

Table 5.3: Characteristics of potential impacts

Characteristics of Potential Impacts - Screening Questions	Comment
Will there be a large change in environmental conditions?	No. The area to be developed is small (1.77 hectares), with the proposed development to have a similar area of open space.
Will new features be out of scale with the existing environment?	No. The proposed development is set to the same scale as the existing developments in the area and thus will not be out of place in the local environment.
Will the effect be particularly complex?	No. The primary environmental impacts are expected to occur during the construction phase, and will be mitigated by operational plans devised by the on-site contractor. These include temporary impacts to surface water quality, air quality, noise and vibration, and through the generation of waste.
Will the effect extend over a large area?	No. Given the small scale and nature of the proposed development this is highly unlikely.
Will there be any potential for trans-frontier impacts?	No.
Will many people be affected?	Only residents and business owners in the local vicinity will be affected by the construction phase, however such impacts will be temporary.
Will many receptors of other types (fauna and flora, businesses, facilities) be affected?	No. Impacts on other receptors are expected to be temporary and limited to the construction phase. Once operational, impacts to receptors are expected to be negligible.
Will valuable or scarce features or resources be affected?	No. There will be no effect on scarce features or resources.
Is there a risk that environmental standards will be breached?	No. The appointed contractor will be contractually obligated to follow environmental guidance and standards, which will be outlined in the contract documents and operating plans devised for construction.
Is there a risk that protected sites, areas, features will be affected?	No.
Is there a high probability of the effect occurring?	No.
Will the effect continue for a long time?	No. Potential impacts would be brief to temporary, only occurring occasionally within the construction phase of the development or in the case of a breach of environmental standards.
Will the effect be permanent rather than temporary?	No. Potential impacts would be temporary.
Will the impact be continuous rather than intermittent?	No. Potential impacts would be intermittent.

If it is intermittent, will it be frequent rather than rare?	No. Potential impacts would be rare, occurring only in the case of accidental breach of environmental standards during the construction phase.
Will the impacts be irreversible?	No.
Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effect?	No. Mitigation measures to be put in place during construction will be sufficient to avoid or reduce potential impacts.

Conclusions: The characteristics of the potential impacts as a result of the proposed development are unlikely to be significant and are easily mitigated.

Reasoning: The potential impacts from this development would be primarily during the construction phase. It is easy to predict these impacts and mitigate them through the use of standard environmental procedures.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this report was to identify whether there is a need under The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, for an EIAR for the proposed development at the former Community Hall and surrounding land at Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath.

The proposed development consists of demolition of the Community Hall and development of a community park at the site including play areas, footpaths, and landscaping including tree planting.

It was determined that the proposed development does not fall under Schedule 5 (Parts 1 and 2) of the Act. As such, an EIAR has not been automatically triggered. To determine whether the development may fall under the category of Sub-threshold development, with the potential to give rise to significant environmental effects, a screening exercise was undertaken.

During construction, typical impacts such as noise, dust, traffic disruption, and the generation of small amounts of waste are to be expected. These are typical construction phase impacts, and will be mitigated against by environmental operating plans devised by the on-site contractor, following best practice guidance.

An AA Screening Report completed by JBA for the proposed development determined that no likely significant impacts are expected as a result of the proposed development. This is due to the small size of the development and the distance and lack of pathways to Natura 2000 sites.

An ecological walkover survey identified evidence of bats feeding at the community hall, and suitable habitat on the site for protected mammals Hedgehog and Pygmy Shrew. Additional surveys will take place in the summer months prior to any works (site clearance, demolition, or construction). Based on the results of these surveys, suitable protections and mitigation measures will be put in place.

The condition report for the community hall building noted that asbestos-containing materials are likely to be in the roof of the structure. A refurbishment/demolition asbestos survey will be required prior to works on the community hall.

Once operational, the proposed development is expected to be low in environmental impact, with positive impacts for population and human health and landscape and visual amenity. The scale of the development is in keeping with the surrounding area, and includes open space and vegetation planting.

It has been concluded that, provided that the additional surveys described in Section 4.2.3 are undertaken prior to any site clearance, demolition, or construction taking place, and any resulting recommendations including mitigation measures or enhancements are put in place, the proposed development does not fall under the category of sub-threshold development, and thus does not require an EIAR.

The overall conclusion is based on the details of the scheme available at the time of preparation of this report. If the extent of the scheme or the construction methods for the scheme are changed then the EIA Screening assessment should be reviewed.

Appendix A

Proposed Site Layout



Legend

- Site Boundary
- Existing trees to be retained
- Proposed park bench with back support
- Proposed picnic bench and seating
- Proposed timber stump stools
- Proposed Lighting column 5m height
- Proposed Lighting column 6m height
- Proposed Lighting column 10m height

Paving

- Asphalt concrete footpath
Colour: grey / black, Width varies
- Safety surfacing to Toddler Play Area
Colour: Blue
- Rubber bark safety surfacing to Adventure Play Area
Colour: Brown
- Safety surfacing to exercise equipment area
- Concrete paving to skatepark and steps
- Proposed paving to existing footway

Toddler Play Area

- Perussion play 6+ months
- Swing 1+ years
- Timber play hut with slide 1+ years

Adventure Play Area

- Climbing beams 4+ years
- Climbing nets 4+ years
- See-saw 4+ years
- Basket swing 6+ years
- Climbing frame 6+ years
- Balancing beams 6+ years
- Wobble bridge 6+ years

Softworks

Trees					
Tag	Species	Girth	Height	Spec	
(Tree icon)	Various species	16-18cm	4.5m	2m Clear Stem 3xtr. (WRB)	

Specimen shrubs					
Tag	Species	Stock	Height	Spec	
(Shrub icon)	Various Species	C15	1.5m+	Multi-stem	

Grass seeding					
Seed with Colum's 'A15 - Road Verge and Embankments' mix - Sowing rate: 35g/m ²					
30% Strong Creeping Red Fescue	25% Dwarf Perennial Ryegrass				
20% Fescue Chewings	12.5% Smooth Stalked Meadow Grass				
7.5% Brown-top Bentgrass	5% White Clover				

Bulbs within Grass					
Species	Stock	Spec	Density	% Mix	
Various species	Bulb	5-7cm	25/sqm	16	

Rev	Description	Date	CHK	APP

WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí

PROJECT:
Former Community Hall and Lands at Kinneag, Co. Westmeath

TITLE:
Proposed Town Park Layout

Stage	Drawing No.	Revision
DRAFT	RRDF0080-2023-04	-

Scale:	Date:	Drawn:	Checked:	Approved:
1:500 @ A1	01-03-2023			
DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	

Regeneration Project
Team Area on Chronos
Area on Chronos (2023)
Area on Chronos (2023)

Director
R0080-2023-04 Proposed Layout.dwg
Preliminary Design (P) Public Health & Landscape (L) Design



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Appendix 5

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report

Kinnegad Community Centre, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath

Screening for Appropriate Assessment

March 2023

Project number: 2023s0142

Westmeath
County Council

JBA Project Manager

Conor O'Neill
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Revision History

Revision Ref / Date Issued	Amendments	Issued to
S3-P01/ 28/02/2023	Draft Report	Westmeath County Council
A3-C01 / 15/03/2023	Final Report	Westmeath County Council

Contract

This report describes work commissioned by Dermot Killeen of Westmeath County Council, by an email dated 25th of January 2023. Michael Coyle of JBA Consulting carried out this work.

Prepared by Michael Coyle, BA (Hons), MSc

..... Assistant Ecologist

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..... Senior Ecologist

Purpose

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Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
DoEHLG	Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
EC	European Communities
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
GSI	Geological Survey Ireland
INNS	Invasive Non-native Species
IROPI	Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest
NBDC	National Biodiversity Data Centre
NO _x	Nitrogen Oxides
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
OPR	Office of the Planning Regulator
QI	Qualifying Interest
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WWTP	Waste Water Treatment Plant
ZoI	Zone of Influence
WCC	Westmeath County Council

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

JBA Consulting Engineers and Scientists Ltd. (hereafter JBA) has been commissioned by Westmeath County Council to prepare an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for the proposed refurbishment and development of the St Finnegan's Community Centre and the lands immediately adjacent, in Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath.

Screening for appropriate assessment is intended to be an initial examination which must be carried out by the Planning Authority or An Bord Pleanála as the competent authority. However, this screening is completed on behalf of the project proposer to show that likely significant effects have been considered in the project development and design, and where necessary progress with further assessment.

1.2 Legislative Context

Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora, known as the 'Habitats Directive' - provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of habitats and species of European Community interest, at a favourable conservation status. Articles 3 - 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000 sites are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79 / 409 / EEC).

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

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

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

Article 6(4) states:

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

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

The requirements of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive have been transposed into Irish legislation by means of *inter alia* the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015 (S.I. No. 477 / 2011) as amended.

1.3 Appropriate Assessment Process

Guidance on the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process was produced by the European Commission in 2002, which was subsequently developed into guidance specifically for Ireland by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) (2009). Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR)

produced a Practice Note in 2021, PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (OPR, 2021). These guidance documents identify a staged approach to conducting an AA, as shown Figure 1-1.

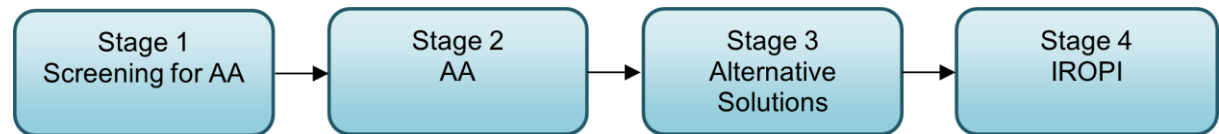


Figure 1-1: The Appropriate Assessment Process (from: Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities, DEHLG, 2009)

1.3.1 Stage 1 - Screening for AA

The initial, screening stage of the Appropriate Assessment is to determine:

- whether the proposed plan or project is directly connected with or necessary for the management of the European designated site for nature conservation
- if it is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the European designated site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

For those sites where, potential adverse impacts are identified, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, further assessment is necessary to determine if the proposals will have an adverse impact on the integrity of a European designated site, in view of the site's conservation objectives (i.e. the process proceeds to Stage 2).

1.3.2 Stage 2 - AA

This stage requires a more in-depth evaluation of the plan or project, and the potential direct and indirect impacts of them on the integrity and interest features of the European designated site(s), alone and in combination with other plans and projects, taking into account the site's structure, function and conservation objectives. Where required, mitigation or avoidance measures will be suggested.

The competent authority can only agree to the plan or project after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site(s) concerned. If this cannot be determined, and where mitigation cannot be achieved, then alternative solutions will need to be considered (i.e. the process proceeds to Stage 3).

1.3.3 Stage 3 - Alternative Solutions

Where adverse impacts on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites are identified, and mitigation cannot be satisfactorily implemented, alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the plan or project that avoid adverse impacts need to be considered. If none can be found, the process proceeds to Stage 4.

1.3.4 Stage 4 - IROPI

Where adverse impacts of a plan or project on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites are identified and no alternative solutions exist, the plan will only be allowed to progress if imperative reasons of overriding public interest can be demonstrated. In this case compensatory measures will be required.

The process only proceeds through each of the four stages for certain plans or projects. For example, for a plan or project, not connected with management of a site, but where no likely significant impacts are identified, the process stops at stage 1. Throughout the process, the precautionary principle must be applied, so that any uncertainties do not result in adverse impacts on a site.

This report is in support of a Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

1.3.5 Recent judgements of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and how they are used in this assessment

The CJEU issued a ruling on the consideration of avoidance and reduction measures as a result of the case known as People over Wind, Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (Case C-323/17). This judgement stated that measures intended to reduce or avoid effects on a Natura 2000 site should only be considered within the framework of an Appropriate Assessment, and it is not permissible to take into

account such measures at the screening stage. In practice, this means that any activities that are not integral to the project (i.e., the project could conceivably take place without them) and have the effect of avoiding or reducing an impact on a Natura 2000 site, cannot be considered at the screening stage.

The CJEU ruling in the case of *Grace & Sweetman* [2018] (C-164/17) clarified the difference between avoidance and reduction (mitigation) measures and compensation. Measures intended to compensate for the negative effects of a project cannot be taken into account in the assessment of the implications of a project, and instead are considered under Article 6(4). This means that any project where an effect on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site remains and can only be offset by compensation, would need to proceed under Article 6(4), demonstrating “imperative reasons of overriding public interest”.

The judgements referred to as the Dutch Nitrogen cases [2018] (C-293/17 and C-294/17) have important implications for projects that could potentially impact on sites that are exceeding critical thresholds for input of damaging ammonia (but could also reasonably apply where other nutrients are impacting Natura 2000 sites). The judgements state that the use of thresholds to exclude project impacts is acceptable in principle, and that strategic plans can be used as mitigation but only with consideration of the certainty (or otherwise) of the outcomes of those strategic plans. It clarifies that where the status of a habitat type is already unfavourable the possibility of authorising activities which increase the problem is necessarily limited.

The CJEU ruling in the case of *Holohan v An Bord Pleanala* (C-462/17) also clarified the importance in Appropriate Assessment of taking into account habitat types and species outside the boundary of the Natura 2000 site where implications of the impacts on those habitat and species may impact the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site. In this assessment functionally linked and supporting habitat for species outside of Natura 2000 sites are assessed where they could potentially impact the conservation objectives of any screened in Natura 2000 sites.

1.4 Methodology

The Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been prepared having regard to the Birds and Habitats Directives, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-15 as amended and relevant jurisprudence of the EU and Irish courts. The following documents have also been used to provide guidance for the assessment:

- DEHLG (2009 rev 2010) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG, 2009).
- Office of the Planning Regulator (2021) OPR Practice Note PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (OPR, 2021).
- European Communities (EC) (2018) Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission (European Commission, 2000).
- EC (2002) Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission (European Commission et al., 2002).
- EC (2007) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission. European Commission Management (European Commission, 2007).
- EC (2021) Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (European Commission 2021)

1.4.1 Desktop study

A desktop study was conducted of available published and unpublished information, along with a review of data available on the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) web-based databases, in order to identify key habitats and species (including legally protected and species of conservation concern) that may be present within ecologically relevant

distances from the project as explained below. A baseline habitat assessment was performed using satellite imagery of the site. The data sources below were consulted for the desktop study:

- Aerial photography available from www.osi.ie and Esri World Imagery.
- NPWS website (www.npws.ie) where Natura 2000 site synopses, data forms and conservation objectives were obtained along with Annex I habitat distribution data and status reports.
- River Basin Management Plans (www.wfdireland.ie)
- NBDC Biodiversity Maps (maps.biodiversityireland.ie)
- Catchments (www.catchments.ie)
- Environmental Protection Agency Maps (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps>)
- Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) website (www.gsi.ie)
- GSI - Groundwater data viewer (<https://dcentr.maps.arcgis.com>)
- Planning Applications (myplan.ie)

1.4.2 Ecological Site Survey

To inform this AA Screening ecological surveys were carried out by JBA Ecologists, Mark Desmond, Dominic Tilley and Michael Coyle, on the 8th of February 2023.

The ecological walkover survey recorded habitats and protected species, following the methods outlined in the documents below:

- Heritage Council (2011). Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping (Smith et al. 2011).
- Ecological Surveying Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna during the Planning of National Road Schemes (NRA, 2009).

Aerial photographs and site maps assisted the survey. Habitats have been classified and described following Fossitt (2000). Identification of Irish plants generally follows Webb's An Irish Flora (Parnell and Curtis, 2012).

1.4.3 In-combination Assessment

The in-combination assessment followed the process for in-combination set out by the DTA Handbook (Tyldesley and Chapman, 2013). The in-combination impacts are considered only after the assessment of the project alone. If the result of this is that the project will have no effect at all on a European site then no in-combination assessment would be necessary. However, where there is no adverse effect on site integrity, but some adverse effect an assessment of this adverse effect in-combination with other plans or projects is carried out. Other plans or projects were searched for using the National Planning Application Database, EIA portal and Myplan.ie databases all accessed online. If no other plans or projects are identified, then the assessment is complete. Where other plans or projects are identified then initially a review is made of its AA screening, or AA, and if the Competent Authority for the plan or project has made a final determination of no effect on the integrity of any European site, either alone or in-combination, this determination is used in this assessment. Where there is not a full AA, or the findings are unclear or out of date, the plan or project documentation is checked for credible evidence of real (not hypothetical) risk to a European site. Where these are identified then a detailed assessment is carried out. A summary of the approach is presented in Figure 1-2.

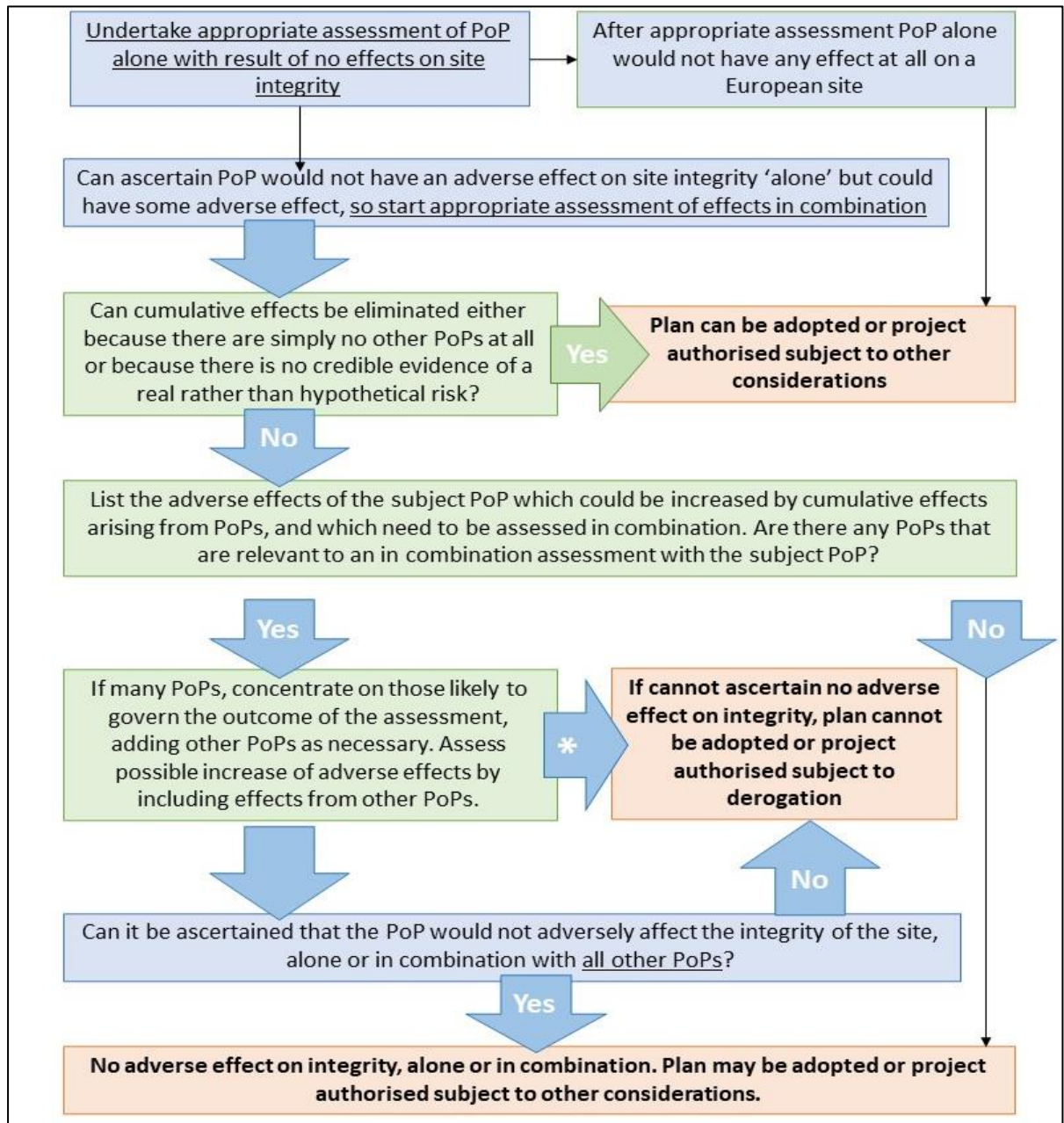


Figure 1-2: Flow diagram of process for in-combination assessment (modified from Tyldesley and Chapman, 2013)

Potential sources of cumulative impacts were identified based on the ecology of valued ecological features only for features where this is a residual or non-significant impact. Potential sources of cumulative impacts were sought within an area where there is the potential for a significant impact on relevant Natura sites identified in Section 4.

1.5 Limitations and constraints

The screening assessment necessarily relies on some assumptions, and it was inevitably subject to some limitations. These would not affect the conclusion, but the following points are recorded in order to ensure the basis of the assessment is clear:

- Information on the works and conditions on site are based on current knowledge at the time of writing. Changes to the site since this report was drafted cannot be accounted for. However, significant changes to the site are unlikely in the time between the site visit on the 8th of February 2023 and likely start date of the proposed project.

- This assessment is based on the methodology for proposed works as described in this report. Where changes to methodology occur, an ecologist will need to be consulted to determine if the changes are likely to alter the ecological impacts and would therefore need reassessment.

2 Project Description

2.1 The 'Project'

The proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any Natura 2000 site and may have potential adverse impacts upon the Natura 2000 sites identified in Section 0. Therefore, the proposed project is subject to the requirements of the AA process.

2.2 Site location

The site of the development is located to the south of Kinnegad town, Co. Westmeath. The site is located between the Athlone Road R161 and the Mullingar Rd (the Old N4) and is located approximately 300m north of the M4. There are no watercourses within the site boundary, and the closest riverine waterbody is the Kinnegad River (Kinnegad_020) which is located approximately 240m south-east of the site (Figure 2-1).



Figure 2-1: Site location and boundary of work (Source: ESRI, 2023; OSM, 2023)

2.3 Proposed project

The proposed development will include the following:

- Redevelopment of the site of the former community hall and surrounding lands to provide a new town park incorporating skate park, children's play areas, adult exercise areas, walkways and street furniture
- Upgrade of established entrance to the former community hall building on the Athlone Road (R161)
- New entrance at the North corner of the site to the Mullingar Road (former N4) via the existing lane to the Kinnegad water reservoir
- New entrance from the Easternmost corner of the site to the adjacent car park at Mullingar Road (former N4)
- Demolition of former community hall building

- Public lighting, Boundary treatment works, hard and soft landscaping, signage and all associated ancillary works.

The site is flat, and localised excavations are not anticipated to exceed 1.5m deep. Discharged surface water is intended to connect through gullies and channels towards the Mullingar Road and will be designed according with the BRE Digest 365. These works are intended to begin in Q1 of 2024, and to be complete in Q3 of 2024 (Approximately 6 months).

The Site Layout Plan can be viewed in Appendix A.

2.3.1 Zone of Influence

The project will primarily affect the site only, but a wider area of influence is used for impacts relating to noise disturbance (1km), air (2km), groundwater pollution (5km), surface water (5km), and an additional hydrological buffer from connecting transitional waters to coastal areas; and any supporting habitat for SAC/SPA species within the vicinity of the site (15km).

3 Existing Environment

3.1 Baseline conditions

The proposed demolition of the current community hall, and development of the new community centre's amenities occurs within the south area of Kinnegad town. A habitat survey and a bat roost potential survey was carried out on the grassland and the building designated for demolition by JBA Ecologists, Mark Desmond, Dominic Tilley and Michael Coyle on the 8th February 2023.

3.2 Habitats

The site contained a

Habitats recorded are listed in Table 3-1 and an overview of habitats found on site is shown in Figure 3-1 (overleaf).

Table 3-1: List of habitats recorded on site

Habitat	Fossitt Code
Flower beds and borders	BC4
Stone walls and other stonework	BL1
Buildings and artificial surfaces	BL3
Spoil and bare ground	ED2
Recolonising bare ground	ED3
Dry meadows and grassy verges	GS2
Hedgerows	WL1
Treelines	WL2
Scrub	WS1



Figure 3-1:Habitat map of the site (Satellite: ESRI (2023))

3.2.1 Flower beds and borders (BC4)

In front of the old community centre building (in the south-east of the site), is are the remnants of two old flower beds. Many of the ornamental species within these flower beds are deceased from a lack of maintenance, however there were large stands of dried out Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, and some Rosemary *Salvia rosmarinus*.

3.2.2 Stone walls and other stonework (BL1)

There is a short extent of stone wall along the northern boundary of the area of recolonising bare ground and Dry meadow habitat. This wall has light patches of Moss *Sphagnum* spp. and Dandelion *Taraxacum* spp. growing along it, with a dense Ivy *Hedera helix* cover at the point where this stone wall meets the western site boundary.



Figure 3-2: Stone wall extending from the site boundary

3.2.3 Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)

The main building of the old community centre present on site, along with a patch of concrete slightly east of the building contribute to this habitat. This area of concrete had a very light covering of mosses fringing from the edges, but there was no substantial cover. In the east of the site, is the local car park.

Within the old community centre building there was a large number of deceased pigeons, a deceased blackbird, and a derelict bird's nest, while there was also indirect evidence of bat feeding present in the form of discarded Tortoiseshell Butterfly *Nymphalis* spp. wings.



Figure 3-3: Discarded Tortoiseshell wings within the old community centre.

3.2.4 Buildings and artificial surfaces / Scrub (BL3/WS1)

There is also a concrete wall that runs along the northern boundary of the Recolonising bare ground area. This wall has a light layer of mosses and Ivy *Hedera helix* growing on it; at the base of this wall is a scrubby area of Bramble, Hogweed, one Birch *Betula pubescens* and one Alder *Alnus glutinosa*.

3.2.5 Recolonising bare ground (ED3)

The area immediately west of the community centre is a disturbed area of gravel and concrete that has since been recolonised by a widespread, but thin layer of moss (Figure 3-4) with occasional sprouting White Clover *Trifolium repens* and occasional patches of dried grass, while closer to the building is a strip of Winter Heliotrope *Petasites fragrans*.

In the north-east of the site is a small laneway that connects the main road to the site. This laneway is a loose rocky area similar to the area adjacent to the old community centre. There are tyre tracks in this area showing frequent use, and there is a low cover of moss vegetation.



Figure 3-4: Recolonising bare ground with widespread moss and some Winter Heliotrope in the background

3.2.6 Amenity Grassland (GA1)

There is a small section of amenity grassland located in the south-west of the site. The area was species poor, containing Perennial Ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, Dandelion *Taraxacum* spp. and Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*. There were two planted Poplar *Populus* spp. trees within this area.

3.2.7 Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2)

The large, central portion of the site is covered with Dry meadow habitat, which undergoes mowing maintenance to a short sward height (Figure 3-5). The species within this meadow include Cock's Foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Couch Grass *Elytrigia repens*, Cleavers *Gallium aparine*, Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Plantain *Plantago major* and Hemlock *Conium maculatum*. Areas around the fringes of the site that don't undergo mowing contain taller growth of Cock's Foot and False-oat Grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*.

In the southeast section of the meadow, are two large Silver Birch *Betula pendula* trees that are lone standing, while closer to the building is an isolated Goat Willow *Salix caprea*.



Figure 3-5: Central dry meadow grass cover

3.2.8 Hedgerow (WL1)

There are two distinct hedgerow areas present within the site boundary. The hedge in the southwest of the site, is a border of Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*.

There is a second area of hedgerow present along the northern boundary of the site. This hedge consists mainly of Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. and large stands of dead Dock *Rumex* spp. while also having Spear Thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, Irish Ivy *Hedera hibernica*, Cow Parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, Hemlock and a patch of the garden escapee variant of Yellow Archangel *Lamium galeobdolon* ssp. *argentatum*. This hedgerow contains trees that have been cut to the stump, which includes Elder *Sambucus nigra* and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*.

3.2.9 Treeline (WL2)

There are two treelines on opposing corners of the dry meadow grassland, one in the south-west and one on the north-east of the grassland. These treelines contain the mature tree species, Birch *Betula pendula*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Sycamore and Elder, each with dense ivy coverage. Ground flora includes Bramble, Cleaver and Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*.



Figure 3-6: The treeline present on site in the foreground of the photo, with the hedgerow present on site in the left background of the photo.

3.2.10 Scrub (WS1)

There is a small patch of scrub in the east of the site. This patch is dominated by dense, overgrown Bramble, a ground covering of Ivy, and a network of stunted and immature Birch *Betula pubescens* present.

3.3 Protected Flora

There were no floral species listed under the Flora (Protection) Order 2022 recorded by the Ecologist during the ecological walkover survey.

3.4 Protected Fauna

There were no direct evidence of faunal species listed under the Wildlife Act 1976 and its amendments recorded by the Ecologists during the walkover survey.

Within the old community centre building there was a large number of deceased pigeons, a blackbird, and a bird's nest, while there was also indirect evidence of bat feeding present in the form of discarded tortoiseshell butterfly wings.

3.5 Invasive Non-native Species

There were three identified non-native invasive species recorded by JBA Ecologists within the site, these species include Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* and Winter Heliotrope *Petasites fragrans*. Cherry Laurel is a high-impact non-native invasive species, Sycamore is a medium impact non-native invasive species, and Winter Heliotrope is a low impact non-native invasive species, however none of these are species listed under the third schedule of the EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 S.I. No. 477/2011.

3.6 Waterbodies within the Vicinity of the Proposed Site

The entirety of the proposed scheme is located within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Boyne catchment, and within the Boyne_SC_030 sub-catchment (EPA, 2023). There are no watercourses located within the area of the project, however the site is in close proximity to the Kinnegad_010, Kinnegad_020, Kinnegad_030 and Kinnegad_040 WFD river waterbodies.

All of these waterbodies, along with their 2016-2021 WFD status and current risk are listed in Table 3-2, and are depicted in Figure 3-6 (overleaf). There are no WFD Transitional or Coastal waterbodies within the vicinity of the site.

Table 3-2: WFD status (2016-2021) and risk of local watercourses.

WFD Watercourse	WFD Status	WFD Risk	Approximate distance to site
Kinnegad_010	Poor	At Risk	3.8km
Kinnegad_020	Poor	Review	0.2km
Kinnegad_030	Moderate	At Risk	0.6km
Boyne_040	Moderate	At Risk	1.3km

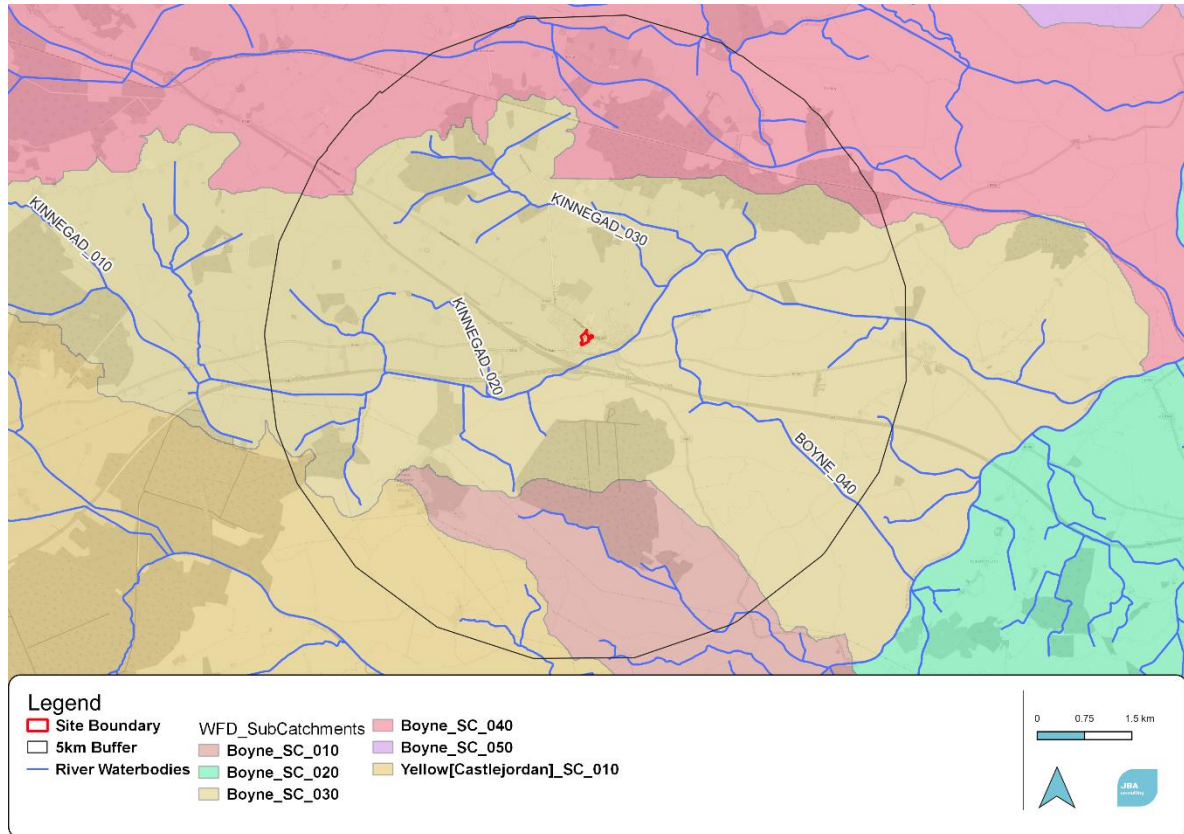


Figure 3-7: River waterbodies in the vicinity of the proposed site (OSM, 2023)

3.7 Groundwater

The site is located within the Athboy (IE_EA_G_001) groundwater body (Figure 3-8). The Athboy groundwater body currently holds a 'Good' WFD status (2016-2021); and is currently 'At Risk' (EPA, 2023).

The bedrock underlying the proposed site is dominated by dark limestone and shale of the Lucan Formation. The bedrock in this formation is of a thickness of between 300m - 800m. The ground in this is a mixture of Made Ground, and Till derived chiefly from limestone. The area of the site has a low recharge coefficient at 20% is entirely classified as having moderate permeability and is also entirely in an area of high vulnerability (Figure 3-9 overleaf).

The moderate permeability and high vulnerability can be attributed to the site being located within a Locally Important Aquifer which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones, which results in a limited and poor connection between fractures, fissures, and joints. (GSI, 2023) This kind of aquifer results in a large and rapid discharge rate to local streams and rivers, restricting pollutants from reaching the site through a groundwater pathway. In the context of this site, the vulnerability, permeability and recharge of the groundwater body contributes to a moderate chance of pollutants entering the groundwater body, but any pollutants are likely to discharge to the local rivers instead of being transported through the groundwater system.

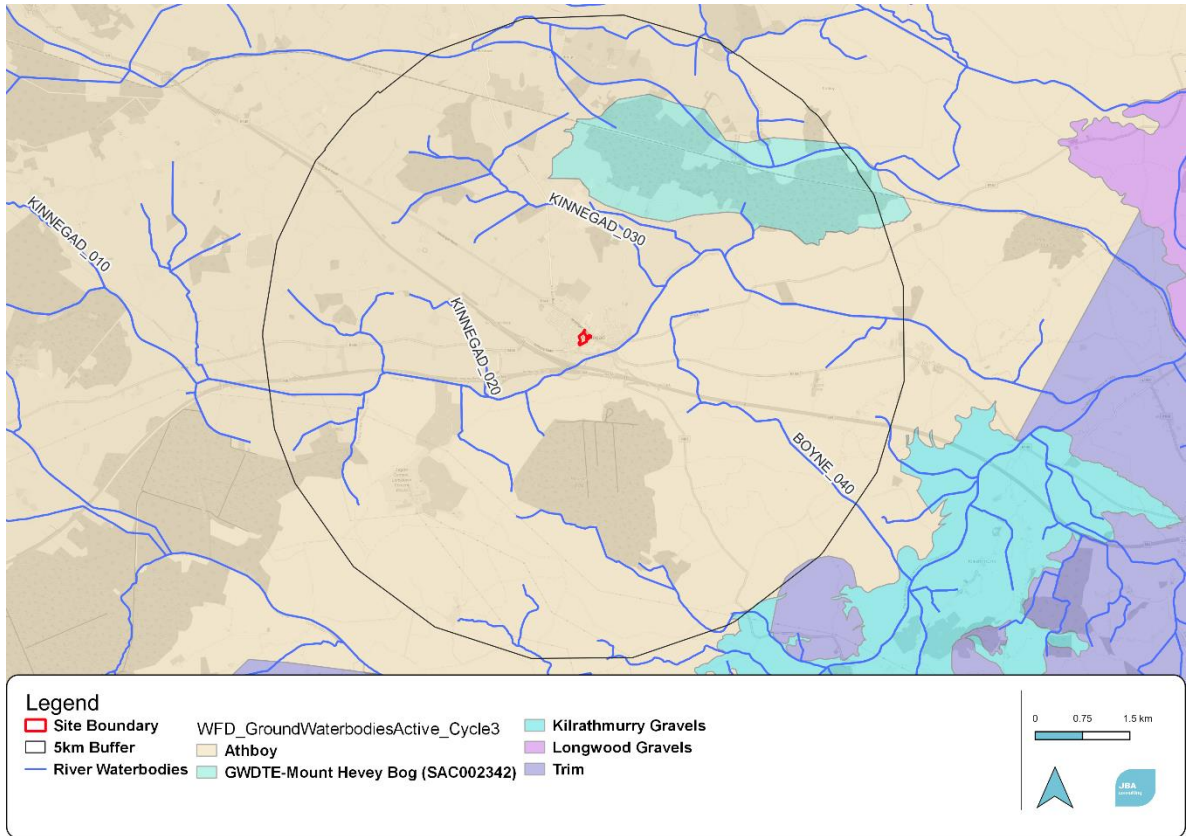


Figure 3-8: Groundwater bodies around the proposed site (OSM, 2023)

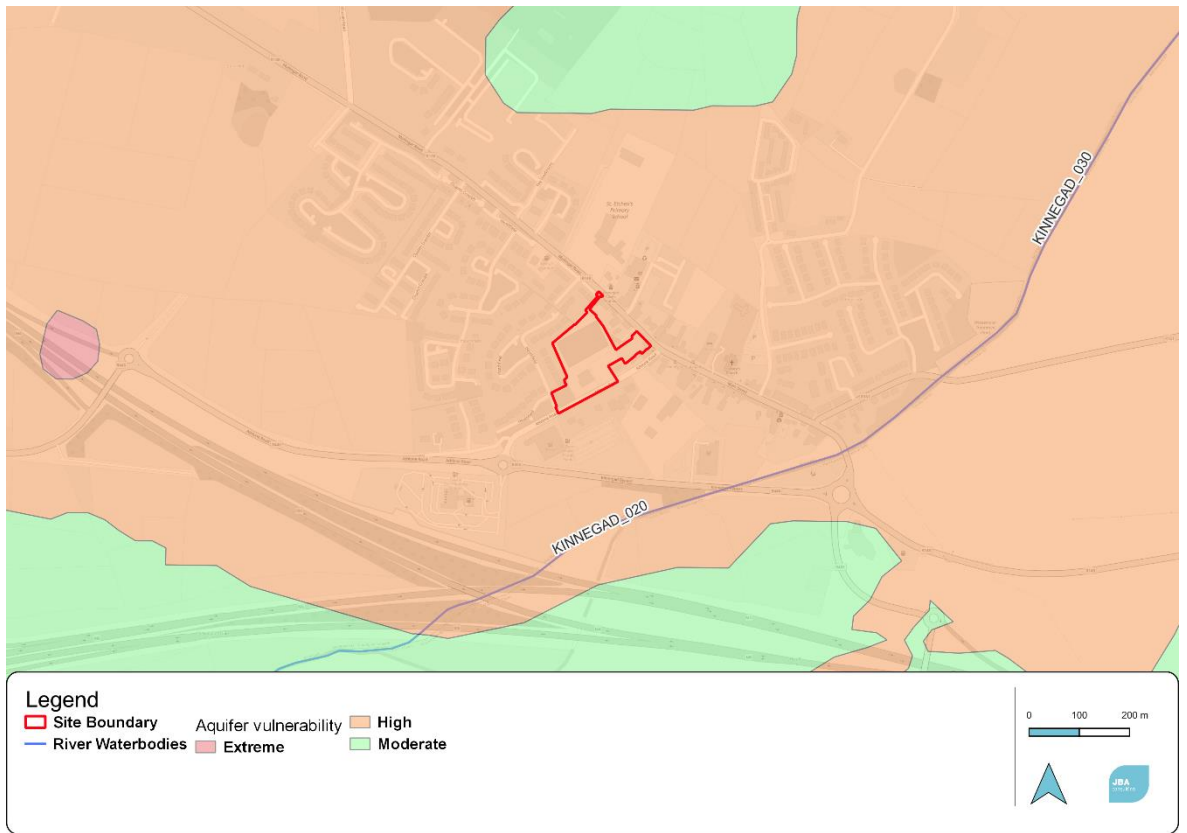


Figure 3-9: Aquifer vulnerability of the site (OSM, 2023)

4 Natura 2000 Sites

The DEHLG (2009) guidance identifies that Screening for Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project should consider the following Natura 2000 sites:

- Any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the plan or project area.
- Any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the plan or project. This is dependent on the nature and scale of the plan, with 15km generally recommended for plans, but potentially much less for projects.
- Any Natura 2000 sites that are more than 15km from the plan or project area, but may potentially be impacted upon, for example, through a hydrological connection.

As the scale of proposed works are considered of 'Project' status, Natura 2000 sites within a 5km range of the proposed development were examined, and within a 15km range for those with a hydrological connection on the basis that there were no source-pathway-receptors identified outside these ranges. The Natura 2000 sites within the range are listed in Table 4-1 below and their locations are shown in Figure 4-1 (overleaf). There were two Natura 2000 site within the 5km range, and there were no additional Natura 2000 sites within the extended 15km hydrological connection. Site descriptions, QIs and threats/pressura for the below Natura 2000 sites are provided in Table 4-2 (overleaf)

Table 4-1: Natura 2000 sites located within the Zone of Influence (Zol) of the proposed development.

Natura 2000 site	Site Code	Approximate Distance from Site	Hydrological Distance from Site
Mount Hevey Bog SAC	002342	2.3km	n/a
River Boyne and Blackwater SAC	002299	4.9km	11.5km (Indirect)
River Boyne and Blackwater SPA	002342	4.9km	11.5km (Indirect)

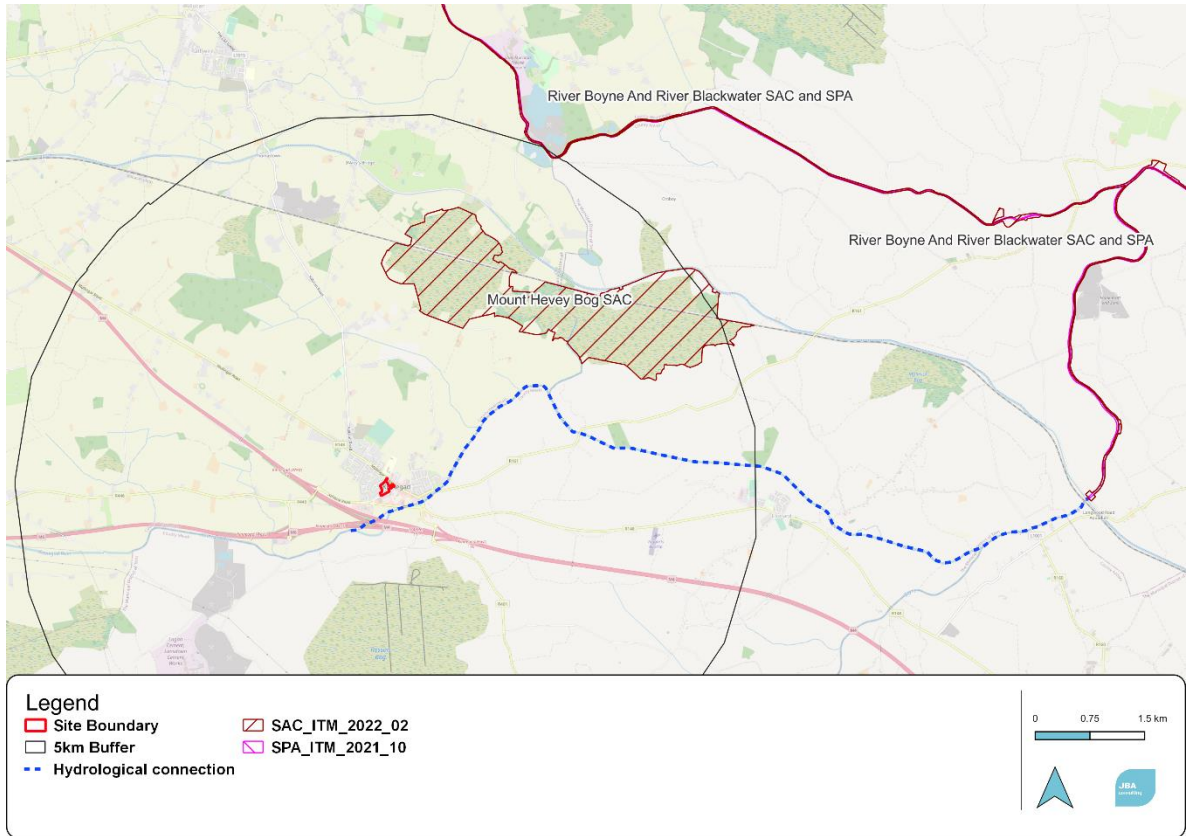


Figure 4-1: Natura 2000 sites within the 5km ZoI, plus the extended 15km hydrological connection (OSM, 2023)

Table 4-2: Site briefs; Qualifying Interests; and project-relevant threats /pressures and their impacts and sources in relation to the Natura 2000 sites within the 5km ZoI (including hydrological connectivity extension).

Site Name	Brief	Qualifying Interests	Project-relevant Pressures: Impact (Source)	Threats /
Mount Hevey Bog SAC	This site is located approximately 4km north-east of Kinnegad, along the Meath-Westmeath County boundary. Active wet bogs area actively peat forming wet boglands with a high cover of mosses <i>Sphagnum</i> spp, and the following features: Hummocks, pools, wet flats, moss lawns, flushes and soaks. The site is a long, narrow bog consisting of four sub-sections with forestry occurring on the easterly section, hummock/hollows in the north-west and south-west lobes (NPWS, 2014a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active raised bogs [7110] - Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] - Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] (NPWS, 2016) 	No relevant threats/pressures (EEA, 2018)	
River Boyne and Blackwater SAC	The River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC is a freshwater area of the Boyne encompassing the Boyne aquaduct and the Boyne's tributaries, and the area of the Blackwater as far as Lough Ramor. Altogether these stretches drain land of counties Cavan, Meath, and Westmeath. There is mainly an underlying Carboniferous Limestone geology, with areas of Upper, Lower and Middle also present (NPWS 2014b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alkaline fens [7230] - Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0] - River Lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> [1099] - Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> [1106] - Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> [1355] (NPWS, 2021) 	No relevant threats/pressures (EEA, 2019)	
River Boyne and Blackwater SPA	The River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA stretches along the River Boyne, its tributaries, and is present in Counties Cavan, Louth Meath and Westmeath. Most of the site is Carboniferous limestone with the area near Kells being Silurian quartzite, and the area near Trim is Carboniferous shale and sandstones. (NPWS, 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i> [A229] (NPWS, 2022) 	Urbanised areas, human habitation (High, outside) (EEA, 2020)	

* = priority Annex I habitat

= indirect threat via the increase in the local populace and recreational activities as a result of the development.

5 Other Relevant Plans and Projects

5.1 Cumulative Effects

As part of the Screening for an Appropriate Assessment, in addition to the proposed works, other relevant projects and plans in the region that may induce cumulative impacts must also be considered at this stage.

5.2 Plans

- Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027
- Third Cycle River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027
- Planning Applications (retrieved from Data.gov.ie - Planning Application Sites, February 2023)

5.2.1 Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (WCC)

Chapter 12 of the Westmeath County Development plan directly outlines the county's plan for biodiversity through Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure through the protection of designated Natura 2000 sites and flora and fauna of conservation interest and the implementation of the Westmeath Biodiversity Action Plan. The objectives of the Natural Heritage Policy include targets that can be summarised as: the protection of designated sites, support the national biodiversity action plans, mitigate any developments that would have adverse impacts on these natural heritage sites and consult bodies such as NPWS regarding any further developments that would adversely impact areas of natural heritage (WCC, 2021a)

An AA Screening has been prepared for this county development plan (WCC, 2021b). Within this AA Screening, it has been concluded that the WCC Development plan is not anticipated to negatively impact any Natura 2000 sites.

Therefore, the Westmeath County Development Plan is not anticipated to contribute to cumulative or in-combination impacts.

5.2.2 River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 / 2022-2027

The 2nd cycle River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2018-2021 sets out the actions that Ireland will take to improve water quality and achieve 'good' ecological status in water bodies (rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters) by 2021 (DoHPLG, 2018a). Changes from previous River Basin Management Plans is that all River Basin Districts are merged as one national River Basin District. The Plan provides a more coordinated framework for improving the quality of our waters — to protect public health, the environment, water amenities and to sustain water-intensive industries, including agri-food and tourism, particularly in rural Ireland.

The first cycle of River Basin Management Plans included the Eastern River Basin District - River Basin Management Plan 2009 – 2015 (WFD, 2010). The plans summarised the waterbodies that may not meet the environmental objectives of the WFD by 2015 and identified which pressures are contributing to the environmental objectives not being achieved. The plans described the classification results and identified measures that can be introduced in order to safeguard waters and meet the environmental objectives of the WFD;

- Prevent deterioration of water body status.
- Restore good status to water bodies.
- Achieve protected areas objectives.
- Reduce chemical pollution of water bodies

The River Basin Management Plan for Ireland (2018-2021) outlines the new approach that Ireland will take to protect our waters over the period to 2021. It builds on lessons learned from the first planning cycle in a number of areas:

- stronger and more effective delivery structures have been put in place to build the foundations and momentum for long-term improvements to water quality

- a new governance structure, which brings the policy, technical and implementation actors together with public and representative organisations. This will ensure the effective and coordinated delivery of measures.

Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 was out for public consultation until March 31st 2022. The 3rd cycle draft Catchment Reports were published in August 2021. The draft Catchment Reports provides a summary of the water quality assessment outcomes for respective catchments, including status and risk categories, significant threats and pressures, details on protected areas and a comparison between cycle 2 and cycle 3.

The third cycle draft Catchment Report for Boyne Catchment (EPA, 2021) outlines the current status of waterbodies within the catchment in comparison to the second cycle. This includes one waterbody which achieves a High Status, which has been reduced from two, 64 waterbodies that achieve a Good Status by four waterbodies, 50 Moderate Status waterbodies which is an increase of six, 29 waterbodies that achieve a Poor Status, which is an increase by two and there are currently zero Bad Status waterbodies, which is a reduction by three.

The River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 / 2022-2027 is not anticipated to contribute to cumulative or on-combination effects.

5.3 Other Projects

Other projects dated back three years are included overleaf (Table 5-1), which are not retention applications, home extensions and/or internal alterations, have been granted planning permission in the locality of the proposed site.

Table 5-1: Projects granted planning permission since 2019 in locality of the proposed site

Planning Reference	Address	Application Status	Decision date	Summary of development
21697	Manorfield, Kinnegad, Co Westmeath	Granted (Conditional)	25/2/2022	Construction of one number prefabricated steel framed single storey sports unit with open gym, activity area and toilet facility and all associated site works
2189	Killucan Road, Kinnegad, Co Westmeath	Granted (Conditional)	24/11/2021	Permission to construct a prefabricated steel framed unit to be used as dressing room, install a proprietary wastewater treatment system and all associated site development works
Part 8 Planning Application	Kinnegad National School, Main Street, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath, N91 DP22	Granted (Conditional)	Contract awarded February 2023	The proposed development will include the following: Restoration and adaption of the former National School into a Community Library and Education and Training Centre, including a two-storey rear extension and glazed links to the front and rear; Alterations to the boundary walls and public footpath; Provision of hard and soft landscaping including a new civic space adjoining the site; Installation of all associated services above and below ground to connect to the existing systems; The provision of signage; The provision of cycle stands and Ancillary Works.

5.4 Summary

The developments permitted above have the potential to have overlapping construction and short-term residual impact phases with the proposed development and therefore, in the absence of mitigation measures, these developments may result in potential in-combination or cumulative impacts given their proximity to the local Natura 2000 sites.

The County and Local Development Plan; River Basin Management Plan and projects within the locality of the proposed project are considered in combination with the currently proposed project in the Screening Assessment section below

6 Screening Assessment

6.1 Introduction

This screening exercise will focus on assessing the likely adverse effects of the project on the Natura 2000 sites identified in Section 0 above, and listed below:

- Mount Hevey Bog SAC [002342]
- River Boyne and Blackwater SAC [002299]
- River Boyne and Blackwater SPA [002342]

This section identifies the potential impacts which may arise as result of the proposed project. It then goes on to identify how these impacts could potentially impact on Natura 2000 sites listed in Table 4-1. The significance of potential impacts is also assessed, with any potential in-combination effects also identified.

6.2 Assessment Criteria

6.2.1 Description of the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 sites

Potential adverse impacts that could cause a significant effect on the qualifying interests of the Natura 2000 sites, during the construction and operational phases of the project, will impact on the sites via surface water pathways, groundwater pathways and land and air pathways. Surface water pathways can impact on surface water quality and surface water dependent habitat quality. Groundwater pathways can impact on groundwater quality and quality of groundwater dependent habitats. Land and air pathways can impact by release or discharges of sediment or chemicals to surface or groundwater.

The proposed project is not anticipated to impact on the qualifying interests of the five Natura 2000 sites. The rationale for excluding impacts via the main pathways is given in more detail in the following sub-section.

6.2.2 Surface Water Pathways

The proposed scheme is located within the WFD Boyne catchment, and the Boyne_SC_030 sub-catchment. (Figure 6-1, overleaf). The site shares its sub-catchment with Mount Hevey Bog SAC however there is no connection between the site and Mount Hevey Bog SAC, as it does not lie downstream of the site. **Therefore, due to the lack of connection to the site, adverse impacts from surface water-based pollution are not anticipated for Mount Hevey Bog SAC.**

While the site does not share its sub catchment with either River Boyne and Blackwater SAC or SPA, they are both indirectly connected to the site downstream of the local river waterbody River Kinnegad. There is no direct connection between the project site and the River Kinnegad, and any pollutants that enter the River Kinnegad would then need to travel an additional 11.5km before reaching these Natura 2000. **Therefore, given the lack of connection to the site, hydrological distance and the high degree of dilution from the River Kinnegad, adverse impacts from surface water-based pollution, during the construction phase, are not anticipated for the River Boyne and Blackwater Natura 2000 sites.**

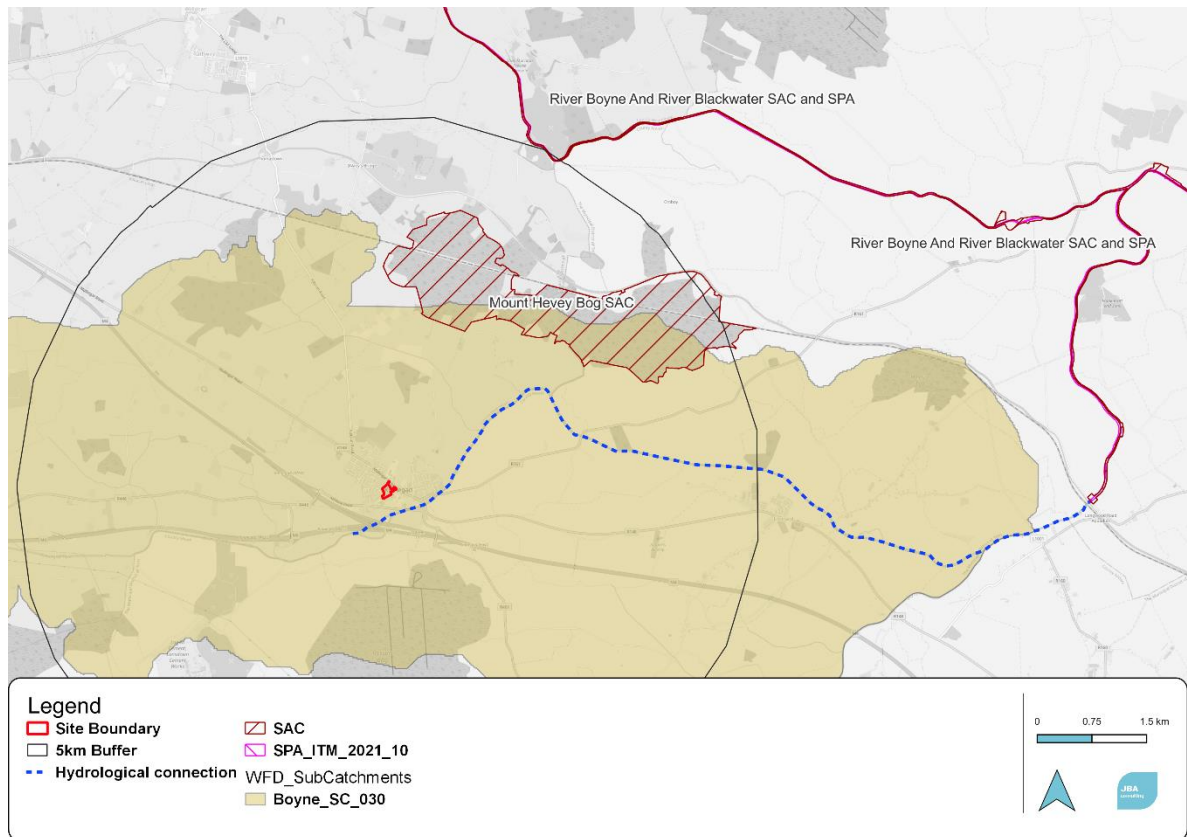


Figure 6-1: Site location, Nature 2000 sites, and their respective surface water sub-catchments (OSM, 2023)

Operational Phase

The development of the community centre is not expected to have any detrimental alterations to the surface water runoff for the stretch of land of the project and existing drainage will continue to be used. **Therefore, adverse impacts via surface water pollution events during the operational phase are not anticipated for the Natura 2000 sites; and their respective QIs.**

6.2.3 Groundwater

The whole site is encompassed by the Athboy (IE_EA_G_001) groundwater body and all Natura 2000 sites are within this groundwater body (Figure 3-8 overleaf).

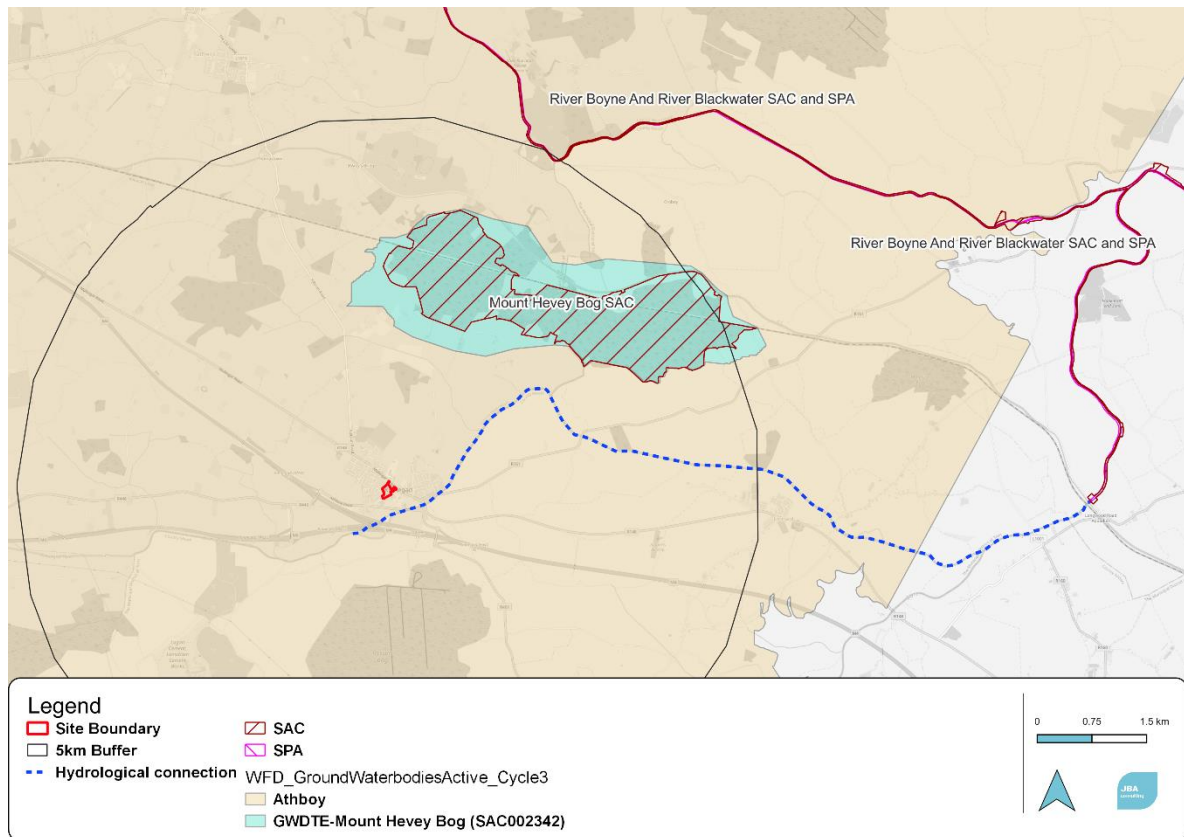


Figure 6-2: Groundwater bodies around the proposed site in respect to Natura 2000 sites (OSM, 2023)

Given the low retention, permeability, and vulnerability of the geology of the area, the high rate of discharge to local waterbodies, the distance needed to travel to Natura 2000 sites and scale of the proposed project, adverse impacts via the groundwater and ground-to-surface water pathways are not anticipated for any of the Natura 2000 sites identified within the Zol.

6.2.4 Land and Air

The loss or degradation of supporting habitats outside the identified Natura 2000 sites via land- and air-based impacts could have potential adverse impacts on a number of the QIs associated with these Natura 2000 sites. Land and air pathways are assessed separately below.

Land (physical on-site and noise disturbance)

The construction works will temporarily increase the noise level and disturbance locally. Direct physical impacts and indirect impacts, such as visual and noise impacts, do not have the potential to physically disturb habitats as well as the floral and faunal species within them due to the distance from the proposed site to any of the Natura 2000 sites within the Zol.

As the proposed development will not result in any physical land-take from the Natura 2000 sites within the Zol, therefore, physical land-take impacts are not anticipated for the Natura 2000 sites, and their respective QIs.

The proposed site is not considered to provide suitable ex-situ foraging habitat for any QIs of the Natura 2000 sites due to its location in the centre of a town and the lack of suitable resources. The site is in an urban area surrounded by roads and buildings. Disturbance-based impacts, in terms of potential ex-situ supporting habitats in adjacent lands, are not anticipated for any of the Natura 2000 sites.

Therefore, disturbance-based impacts are not anticipated during the construction and operational phases for the Natura 2000 sites, and their respective QIs.

Air Pollution

Excavations at the site will be shallow, anticipated to be no more than 1.5m deep for the tree planting, public lighting roots, drainage soakaways and foundations for play / exercise equipment. This will produce loose top and sub soil, and emissions may arise from working machinery. Dust release and vehicle emissions can travel considerable distances and could potentially impact the QIs of Natura 2000 sites. The recommended buffer for dust and air pollution is 2km as a baseline (NRA, 2011), however, the distance and direction of travel is also influenced by wind speed and direction.

The prevailing wind in the area is south-south-west (based on measurements carried out between 2010-2022 at Mullingar (Windfinder.com, 2023)). Therefore, any dust that is generated on-site will most likely be transported in a north-east direction towards the Natura 2000 sites, however these sites are outside the recommended 2km buffer. The urban setting of the proposed development also provides barriers, such as treelines, which will prevent further dispersal of particles.

There will be an increase in local traffic attending the site during construction, resulting in an increase in NOx emissions, however vehicular emissions and dust emissions are not anticipated to significantly impact the QIs of the any Natura 2000 sites due to the relatively small size and temporary nature of proposed works, and the prevailing wind direction.

Therefore, due to the relatively small scale of the project and distance , potential adverse impacts via the air pathway are not anticipated during the construction phase for the Natura 2000 sites and their respective QIs.

Air pollution-based impacts from dust / emissions are not anticipated during the operational phase of the proposed development.

6.2.5 Cumulative Impact

In assessing the plans and projects outlined in Section 5, the respective AA Screenings were consulted to assess the potential of any cumulative impacts due to their proximity of the site. All of these projects were concluded to not pose any threat to Natura 2000 sites.

As the proposed project is not anticipated to have any significant impact on QIs or conservation objectives on any Natura 2000 site and based on the screening statements of the above plans and planning applications, there is no potential for other plans or projects to act in combination with it to result in likely significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites.

6.2.6 Summary

Due to the location of the proposed site, the temporary nature of the works and its distance to the Natura 2000 sites within the Zol, the proposed project is not anticipated to have a significant impact via surface water, groundwater, groundwater to surface water, and land and air pathways to any Natura 2000 site.

6.2.7 Description of likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 sites

Project Elements	Comment
Size and scale	Demolition of existing community centre, additional vehicular and pedestrian links and public amenities including a skate park, circular stone-stepped amphitheatre and children's play area. Local hard and soft landscape with all associated ancillary works.
Land-take	There will be no direct land take from any of Natura 2000 sites.
Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mount Hevey Bog SAC• River Boyne and Blackwater SAC• River Boyne and Blackwater SPA <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2.3km• 4.9km• 4.9km
Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.)	There will be no water abstraction requirement.

Project Elements	Comment
Emissions (disposal to land, water or air)	<p>Construction Phase:</p> <p>Water The proposed development will use existing surface water drainage diverted towards the Mullingar Road. The increase in hard standing surface will result in an increase in surface water runoff. Any impact on water quality will be negligible. During operation, the site is not expected to directly impact any of the Natura 2000 sites, due to their distance and small-scale operation. Therefore, there will be no permanent impacts on any Natura 2000 site.</p> <p>Air Excavations at the site will produce loose top and sub soil, and emissions may arise from working machinery, however, the proposed site has a south-west prevailing wind year-round, therefore, any dust generated on-site will most likely be transported away from the Natura 2000 sites within the dust settlement zone. Impactful operational air emissions are not anticipated for the proposed development.</p> <p>Operation phase: During operation, the proposed operations of the project (and its related emissions) are not expected to directly impact any of the Natura 2000 sites, due to their distance and small-scale operation. Therefore, there will be no permanent impacts on any Natura 2000 site.</p>
Excavation requirements	Excavation rooting depth for the lighting and landscape vegetation is anticipated to be 1.5m at most.
Transportation requirements	<p>Temporary Impacts: Levels of traffic to the site during the construction phase will increase traffic to the area but will be temporary in nature. All access to the site will be on pre-existing roads and transportation requirements will not affect Natura sites.</p> <p>Permanent Impacts: Given the size, scale and location of the proposed project, transportation requirements will not affect Natura 2000 sites.</p>
Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc.	The construction is expected to last for approximately six months.
Other	None

6.2.8 Description of likely changes to the Natura 2000 sites

Potential Impact	Comments
Reduction of habitat area	There will be no reduction in habitat area for any of the Natura 2000 sites.
Disturbance to key species	<p>Temporary Impacts: The construction works will temporarily increase the noise level and disturbance locally. However, no significant impacts are anticipated to key species given scale and temporary nature of the construction phase and distance from the Natura 2000 sites.</p>

Potential Impact	Comments
	Permanent Impacts: Disturbance to key species is not anticipated during operation of the project.
Habitat or species fragmentation	There will be no temporary or permanent habitat or species fragmentation within any of the Natura 2000 sites.
Reduction in species density	There will be no temporary or permanent reduction in species density within any of the Natura 2000 sites, or any QIs of these sites.
Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.)	There will be no temporary or permanent changes in key indicators of conservation value (surface water, groundwater and air quality).
Climate change	N/A
Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site	There will be no interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the sites.
Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site	There will be no interference with the key relationships that define the function of the sites.
Loss (Estimated percentage of lost area of habitat)	No Natura 2000 sites will experience a direct loss in habitat area.
Fragmentation	Fragmentation of habitat and/or species is not anticipated.
Disruption & disturbance	Disruption and/ or disturbance is not anticipated.
Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.)	Potential temporary changes to key elements (i.e. water quality) of the site are not anticipated.

6.2.9 Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is unknown

Based upon best scientific judgement, significant impacts are not expected from the elements mentioned above, and there are no elements where the scale or magnitude of impacts is unknown.

6.3 Concluding Statement

In carrying out this AA screening, mitigation measures have not been taken into account. Standard best practice construction measures which could have the effect of mitigating any effects on any European Sites have similarly not been taken into account.

On the basis of the screening exercise carried out above, it can be concluded that the possibility of any significant adverse impacts on the Natura 2000 sites within the ZOI, whether arising from the project itself or in combination with other plans and projects, can be excluded beyond a reasonable scientific doubt on the basis of the best scientific knowledge available.

Appendices

A Site Layout Plan



B Habitat Map



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