



Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Footpath Scheme: Fore Co. Westmeath

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For: Westmeath County Council
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1. Introduction

This report comprises information in support of screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in line with the requirements of Article 6[3] of the EU Habitats Directive (EC 92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora; the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010; and the European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended.

This screening exercise aims to determine whether the proposed works associated with the creation of a new footpath and all associated works in Fore Co. Westmeath have the potential to significantly impact upon the conservation objectives and overall integrity of any Natura 2000 sites. This assessment is based on a desk study and fieldwork carried out by suitably qualified ecologists. Also included is a general assessment of the ecological status of the site and the potential impacts of the proposed works on the ecology of the surrounding area, including Designated Sites.

The Competent Authority is obliged to examine the likely significant effects individually or in combination, of the proposed development on European Designated Sites in light of their specific qualifying interests and conservation objectives. If AA screening determines that there is likely to be significant effects on one of these sites, then full AA must be carried out for the proposed works, including the compilation of a Natura Impact Statement to inform the decision-making.

Section 4 of the report comprises the AA Screening that specifically focuses on the potential for impacts on Natura 2000 sites deemed to be at risk from the proposed development.

2. Background to Screening for Appropriate Assessment

2.1. European Designated Sites

Sites designated for the conservation of nature in Ireland include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs);
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs);
- Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), and;
- proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)

SPAs and SACs form the Natura 2000 network of sites. It is these sites that are of relevance to the screening process for this Appropriate Assessment Screening. SPAs and SACs are prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. SPAs and SACs are designated under EU Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), as amended.

Natural Heritage Area (NHA) is the basic designation for wildlife in Ireland. These are areas considered important for their habitats or species of plants and animals whose habitat requires protection and are protected by the Wildlife (Amendment) Act of 2000.

pNHA sites were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995 but have not since been statutorily proposed or designated. These sites were identified as being of significance for particular habitat types or species. While not afforded the same legislative protection as the other designations mentioned here, they are protected by the following mechanisms:

- Agri-environmental farm planning schemes such as GLAS;
- Forest Service requirement for Department approval before afforestation grants are paid out on pNHA lands, and;
- Recognition of the ecological value of pNHAs by Planning and Licensing authorities.

All European Designated Sites (henceforth simply referred to as “Designated Sites”) that are connected to the proposed works were considered during the desktop study in order to assess the potential for significant effects upon their Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives. Where no connection was identifiable, the nearest site(s) were considered. This stage of the process is used to determine whether any of the Designated Sites (specifically SACs and SPAs) may be ‘screened out’. That is, whether they can be regarded as not being relevant to the process of Appropriate Assessment of the project, having no potential to be significantly impacted.

2.2. Legislative Context

The methodology for this screening statement is clearly set out in a document prepared for the Environment DG of the European Commission entitled ‘Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6 paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC’ (Oxford Brookes University, 2001). This report and contributory fieldwork were carried out in accordance with guidelines given by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009, amended February 2010).

The assessment process is given in Articles 6[3] and 6[4] of the Habitats Directive and is commonly referred to as “Appropriate Assessment” or AA. Article 6 of the Habitats Directive sets out provisions which govern the conservation and management of Natura 2000 sites. Article 6[3] and 6[4] of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6[3] establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the

site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implication 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] continues:

"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 social or economic nature, the Member State 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.

It is the responsibility of the proponent of the plan or project to provide the relevant information (ecological surveys, research, analysis etc.) for submission to the 'competent national authority'. If satisfied that the information is complete and objective, the competent authority will use this information to screen the project, i.e. to determine if an AA is required and to carry out the AA, if one is deemed necessary. The competent authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned."

The appropriate assessment process has four stages. Each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. If, for example, the conclusions at the end of Stage One are that there will be no significant impacts on the Natura 2000 site, there is no requirement to proceed further. The four stages are:

1. screening to determine if an appropriate assessment is required;
2. appropriate assessment;
3. consideration of alternative solutions, and;
4. imperative reasons of overriding public interest/derogation.

Stage 1: Screening for AA

The aim of screening is to assess firstly if the plan or project is directly connected with or necessary to the management of Designated Site(s); or in view of best scientific knowledge, if the plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on a Designated Site. This is done by examining the proposed plan or project and the conservation objectives of any Designated Sites that might potentially be affected. If screening determines that there is potential

for significant effects or there is uncertainty regarding the significance of effects then it will be recommended that the plan or project is brought forward to the next stage of the AA process.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

The aim of stage 2 of the AA process is to identify any adverse impacts that the plan or project might have on the integrity of relevant Designated Sites. As part of the assessment, a key consideration is 'in combination' effects with other plans or projects. Where adverse impacts are identified, mitigation measures can be proposed that would avoid, reduce or remedy any such negative impacts and the plan or project should then be amended accordingly, thereby avoiding the need to progress to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

If it is not possible during Stage 2 of the AA process to conclude that there will be no adverse effects on site integrity, Stage 3 of the process must be undertaken which is to objectively assess whether alternative solutions exist by which the objectives of the plan or project can be achieved. Explicitly, this means alternative solutions that do not have adverse impacts on the integrity of a Designated Site. It should also be noted that EU guidance on this stage of the process states that, 'other assessment criteria, such as economic criteria, cannot be seen as overruling ecological criteria' (EC, 2002). In other words, if alternative solutions exist that do not have adverse impacts on Designated Sites; they should be adopted regardless of economic considerations. This stage of the AA process should result in the identification of the least damaging options for the plan or project.

Stage 4: Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)/Derogation

This stage of the AA process is undertaken when it has been determined that a plan or project will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Designated Site, but that no alternatives exist. At this stage of the AA process, it is the characteristics of the plan or project itself that will determine whether or not the competent authority can allow it to progress. This is the determination of 'overriding public interest'. It is important to note that in the case of Designated Sites that include in their qualifying features 'priority' habitats or species, as defined in Annex I and II of the Directive, the demonstration of 'overriding public interest' is not sufficient and it must be demonstrated that the plan or project is necessary for 'human health or safety considerations'. Where plans or projects meet these criteria, they can be allowed, provided adequate compensatory measures are proposed. Stage 4 of the process defines and describes these compensation measures.

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

This report provides stage one: screening for appropriate assessment. It aims to establish whether a plan or project is likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites. The study is based on a preliminary impact assessment using both publicly available data and data collected during site visits and ecological surveys. This is followed by a determination of whether there is a risk that the effects identified could significantly impact any Natura 2000 sites, and if so an AA is required. The need to apply the precautionary principle in making any key decisions in relation to the tests of AA has been confirmed by

European Court of Justice case law. Therefore, where significant effects are likely, possible or uncertain at the screening stage, AA will be required.

3. Methodology

3.1. Desk Study

A desktop study was carried out as part of this screening process. This included a review of available literature on the site and its immediate environs. Sources of information included the National Parks and Wildlife Service databases on protected sites and species data, and from the Environmental Protection Agency on watercourses.

3.2. Data Used To Carry Out The Assessment

The following sources of data were employed:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Appropriate Assessment Tool
- EPA Maps (to identify watercourses, hydrology and Natura 2000 site boundaries)
- NPWS protected species database and online mapping
- National Biodiversity Data Centre
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- An Bord Pleanála's online database

3.3. SPR Model

This assessment was carried out with regard to the source-pathway-receptor (SPR) approach, a standard tool in environmental assessment. The SPR concept in ecological impact assessment relates to the idea that for the risk of an impact to occur, a source is needed (a development site); an environmental receptor is present (a lake); and finally, there must a pathway between the source and the receptor (a watercourse linking the development site to the lake). Even though there might be a risk of an impact occurring, that does not necessarily mean that it will occur, and even if it does occur, it may not be significant. Identification of a risk means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the risk and the characteristics of the receptor.

In this instance, the most relevant receptors are any relevant Natura 2000 sites with the connectivity of the proposed works. These were considered during the desktop study stage of this screening assessment in order to assess the potential for significant effects upon their Qualifying Interests (QIs), Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) and Conservation Objectives (COs). This stage of the process is used to determine whether any of the Natura sites may be 'screened out'. That is, that they can be regarded as not being relevant to the process, having no potential to be significantly affected or impacted upon.

3.4. Field Survey

The field survey was carried out on the 29th of May 2023. Baseline ecological conditions were assessed. Habitats were classified according to Fossitt (2000). Where applicable, the habitat types and species usage were recorded (Smith et al. 2011; Scannell and Synnott, 1987; Wyse Jackson et al. 2016). Habitats were classified and dominant plant species were noted according to the guidelines given by the JNCC (2010) with reference to Smith et al. (2011) & Scannell and Synnott (1987).

4. Screening of Designated Sites

4.1. Site Location

The proposed works area is located in the village of Fore Co. Westmeath. Works will require the upgrade to the existing footpath infrastructure in the village covering an area of 1080m linear. Works are found along the L5637 and the L1163. In addition to an upgrade of the site footpaths the project also includes the installation of lighting and the restoration of a historic stone wall. The scheme extends from the Fore Abbey Car Park at the scheme's southern and eastern extent on the L1633 and extends north along the L5637 where it terminates at the start of the Nancy and Nellie Walkway. A site location map which has been supplied by Westmeath County Council is provided in Figure 1.

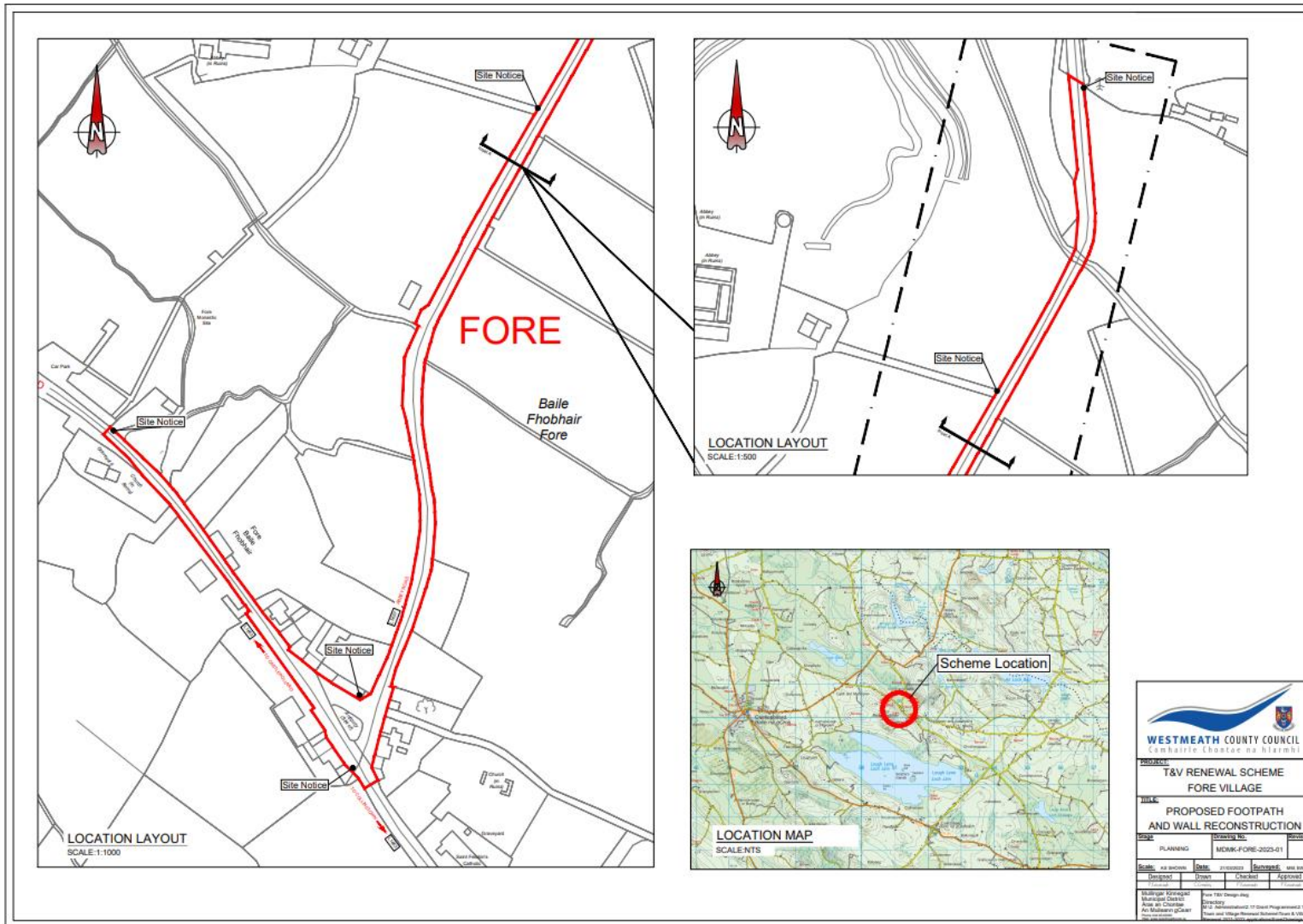


Figure 1: Overview of the works area, local water courses and the sites local context

4.2. Receiving Environment

The proposed works lie entirely within and adjacent to existing roadways which conform to **Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)**. Hedgerows bound almost the entire route area. Semi-natural hedgerows usually contained Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Gooseberry (*Ribes uva-crispa*) and Hazel (*Ulmus spp.*). Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) were abundant throughout. Amenity hedgerows around houses were dominated by Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). **Grassy verges (GS2)** make up the majority of the works area along the L5637. These were dominated by coarse grasses including Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), Bents (*Agrostis spp.*), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*). The herb layer likely contains mainly tall growing or climbing herbs including common Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*), Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium*), Common Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), Thistles (*Cirsium arvense*, *C. vulgare*) and Docks (*Rumex spp.*). A large stand of Butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*) was also found along the L5637. An old historic **Stone Wall (BL1)** bounds the route along the L1163, rebuilt as part of this project. The existing section of the wall was extensively covered in Ivy with occasional Maidenhair Spleenwort (*Asplenium Trichomanes*).

4.2.1. Water Courses and Groundwater

The Glore Stream is crossed along the L5637. This small watercourse is crossed by a newly restored bridge. The watercourse was less than 1m wide and less than 50cm in depth. The Glore has connectivity to the Inny River 12km downstream from the site of works. The Inny has connectivity to a number of European sites including Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA and Lough Derravarragh SPA a further 10km downstream in the Inny River. Groundwater vulnerability¹ under the works area is low to moderate. Given the lack of Natura 2000 sites locally, any potential impacts to groundwater are not likely to lead to significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites.

4.2.2. Birds

A dedicated bird survey was not carried out, all birds seen and heard were typical countryside species. No bird nesting or roosting habitat will be disturbed as a result of the proposed works.

4.2.4. Mammal Activity

No mammal activity, such as holes, trails, burrows or scatt, was found during this survey, though it is possible that mammals use this area for navigation and occasionally foraging. A survey of the Glore 150m upstream and downstream of the crossing point did not identify any evidence of Otter.

4.2.5. Invasive Species

The Wildlife Acts, 1976 and 2000, contain a number of provisions relating to Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS), covering several sections and subsections of the Acts. It is prohibited, without a licence, to plant

¹ <https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=7e8a202301594687ab14629a10b748ef>

or otherwise cause to grow in a wild state, in any place in the State, any species of flora, or the flowers, roots, seeds or spores of invasive flora listed on the Third Schedule. Articles 49 and 50 of the aforementioned Acts set out the legal implications associated with alien invasive species and Schedule 3 (the Third Schedule) of the regulations lists non-native species subject to the restrictions of Articles 49 and 50, which make it an offence to plant, disperse, allow dispersal or cause the spread of invasive species.

No third schedule invasive species were found during this survey within the project area or adjacent to it.

4.3. Proposed Works

Westmeath County Council propose to create a high-quality paved community space in the heart of the village of Fore, completion of the missing section of the heritage stone wall and provision of public lighting along the footpath trail along the L5637. As currently proposed works will generally consist of the following:

- excavation of soils and subsoils not expected to exceed 450mm
- disposal of surplus soil off-site to an authorised waste facility
- importation, placement, and compaction of hardcore (crushed stone)
- Install of high-quality paving.
- noise and general construction disturbance during daytime hours
- The duration of works is expected to be approximately 3 months.
- The erection of street lighting along the side road (Civil works already complete).
- The completion of the missing section of the heritage stone wall

4.4 Zones of Influence and Potential Impacts or Effects

The proposed works have the potential to result in a number of direct and indirect effects. These are set out in Table 3.1, which identifies the “zones of influence” for each effect (i.e. the area over which effects may occur).

Table 1: Potential impacts, effects and their zone of influence

Potential Impact and Effect	Description	Zone of Influence
Land-take resulting in habitat loss or degradation.	The permanent loss of the habitat present in the footprint of the works and access routes.	Lands within the proposed footprint of works and access routes. This also includes supporting habitat types and areas.

Changes in water quality and quantity/distribution resulting in habitat loss or degradation.	Reduction in the quality of retained habitat or loss of habitat from surrounding areas as a result of surface water pollution.	Changes in surface water quality, as a result of works, associated with the proposed development within local water bodies, wetlands or supporting habitat areas.
Noise or vibration resulting in disturbance.	Direct impact on feature species reducing their ability to forage or breed.	Generally assessed within 500m of the proposed works (e.g. for wintering birds), but can be significantly lower (e.g. 150m for otter underground sites).

4.5. Nearby Designated Sites

All other local designated sites with 15km or with possible hydrological connectivity to the proposed development are discussed in Table 2.

Table 2: Designated Sites near the proposed project.

Site Code	Site Name	Distance	Qualifying Interests (* denotes a priority habitat)	Likely Zone of Impact Determination
2120	Lough Bane And Lough Glass SAC	1.2km	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140] Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]	The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effect.
2121	Lough Lene SAC	1.5km	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140] Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]	The potential for indirect effect can be ruled out due to the lack of hydrological connectivity between the scheme and this designated site, the nature of the sites' conservation objectives and the limited size and scale of the proposed scheme.
1810	White Lough, Ben Loughs and Lough Doo SAC	1.7km	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140] Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]	The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effect.
2299	River Boyne And River Blackwater SAC	10.8km	Alkaline fens [7230] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099] Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]	The potential for indirect effect can be ruled out due to the lack of hydrological connectivity between the scheme and this designated site, the nature of the sites' conservation objectives and the limited size and scale of the proposed scheme.

			Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]	
2340	Moneybeg And Clareisland Bogs SAC	11.2km	Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]	
4065	Lough Sheelin SPA	12.7km	Great Crested Grebe (Podiceps cristatus) [A005] Pochard (Aythya ferina) [A059] Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula) [A061] Goldeneye (Bucephala clangula) [A067] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	<p>The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SPA and there is no potential for direct effects.</p> <p>The potential for indirect effects on the terrestrial QIs (Wetlands) can be ruled out due to the terrestrial nature of the habitat and the lack of hydrological connectivity between the development site and the SPA.</p> <p>Noise and disturbance impacts will not exceed the typical anthropogenic noise levels in the area. As such no noise or disturbance-related impacts will occur.</p> <p>Works occur within a built environment with high levels of anthropogenic disturbance (a roadway). This area could not support and provide any significant foraging, roosting and nesting habitat ex-situ for any of the QI species of this SPA.</p>
679	Garriskil Bog SAC	14.2km	Active raised bogs [7110]	

			Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]	The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effect.
2201	Derragh Bog SAC	14.4km	Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	
692	Scragh Bog SAC	14.6km	Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140] Alkaline fens [7230] Hamatocaulis vernicosus (Slender Green Feather-moss) [6216]	The potential for indirect effect can be ruled out due to the lack of hydrological connectivity between the scheme and this designated site, the nature of the sites' conservation objectives and the limited size and scale of the proposed scheme.
4047	Lough Owel SPA	15km	Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SPA and there is no potential for direct effects.
4061	Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA	15km	Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>) [A059] Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	The potential for indirect effects on the terrestrial QIs (Wetlands) can be ruled out due to the terrestrial nature of the habitat and the lack of hydrological connectivity between the development site and the SPA.
4232	River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA	15km	Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>) [A229]	Noise and disturbance impacts will not exceed the typical anthropogenic noise levels in the area. As such no noise or disturbance-related impacts will occur.

				Works occur within a built environment with high levels of anthropogenic disturbance (a roadway). This area could not support and provide any significant foraging, roosting and nesting habitat ex-situ for any of the QI species of this SPA.
688	Lough Owel SAC	15km	<p>Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140]</p> <p>Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]</p> <p>Alkaline fens [7230]</p> <p>Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]</p>	<p>The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effect.</p> <p>The potential for indirect effect can be ruled out due to the lack of hydrological connectivity between the scheme and this designated site, the nature of the sites' conservation objectives and the limited size and scale of the proposed scheme.</p>
4043	Lough Derravaragh SPA	22.9km via Glore and Inny	<p>Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038]</p> <p>Pochard (Aythya ferina) [A059]</p> <p>Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula) [A061]</p> <p>Coot (Fulica atra) [A125]</p> <p>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	<p>The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SPA and there is no potential for direct effects.</p> <p>The potential for indirect effects on the terrestrial QIs (Wetlands) can be ruled out due to the terrestrial nature of the habitat and the intervening distance of over 22km via the Glore and Inny Rivers and this SPA.</p> <p>Noise and disturbance impacts will not exceed the typical anthropogenic noise levels in the area. As such no noise or disturbance-related impacts will occur.</p>

				Works occur within a built environment with high levels of anthropogenic disturbance (a roadway). This area could not support and provide any significant foraging, roosting and nesting habitat ex-situ for any of the QI species of this SPA.
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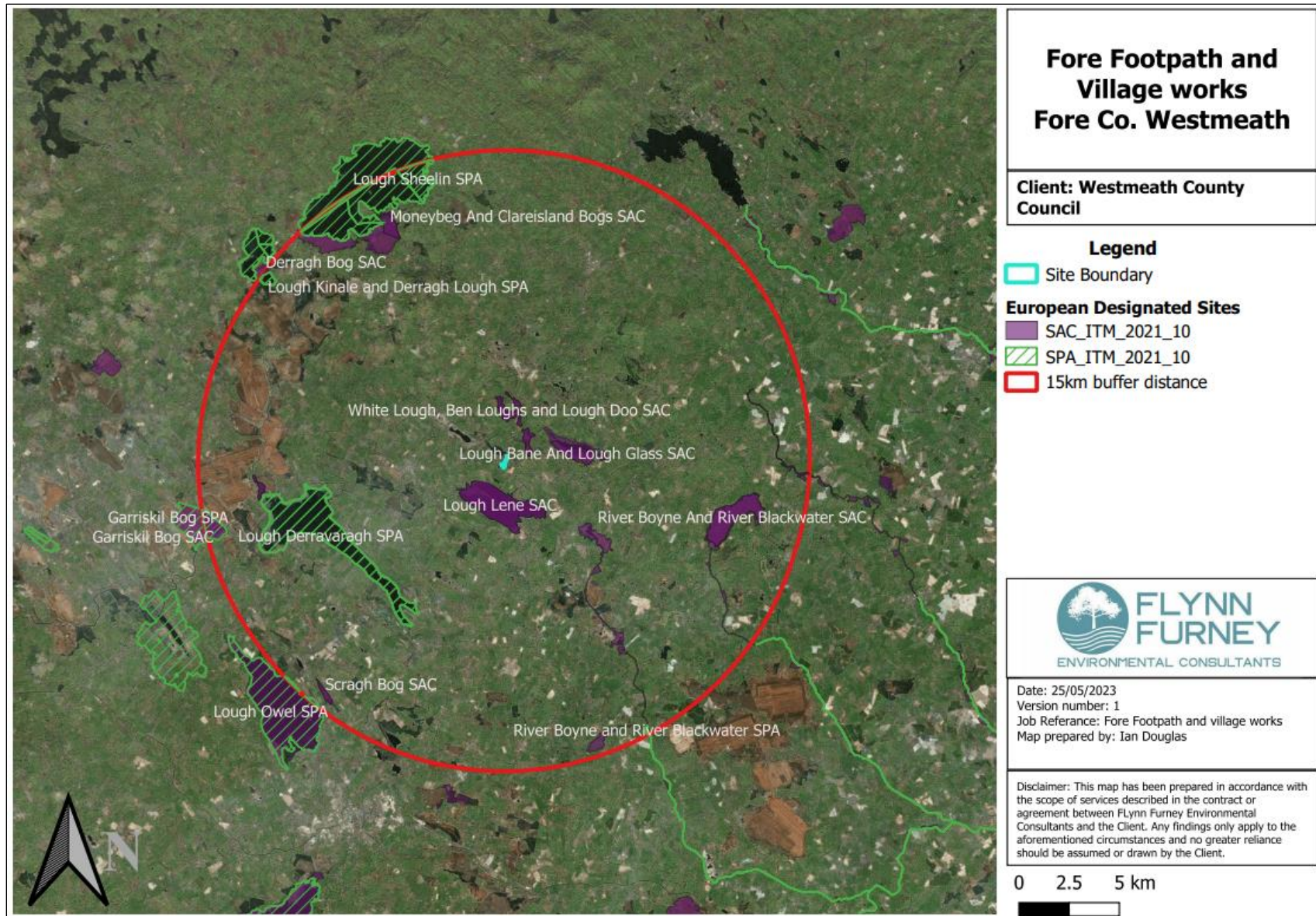


Figure 3: Designated Sites within 15km of the proposed works in Fore Co. Westmeath

5. Assessment Criteria

5.1. Is The Project Necessary To The Management Of The Designated Site(s)?

The proposed project is not necessary to or connected with the management of any Designated Sites.

5.2. Direct, Indirect Or Secondary Impacts

Applying the concept of the source-pathway-receptor model, there are no identifiable direct impacts on nearby Designated sites. The following sources and pathways were considered and are discussed further below.

- Land take
- Surface water
- Noise or vibration resulting in the disturbance.

5.2.1. Land Take

Works are entirely outside any European designated site. No supporting habitat areas to any designated site will be impacted by the proposed works.

5.2.2 Water Quality and Pollution Control

The works area will not interact with any watercourses. The Glore Stream is crossed along the L5637. The Glore has connectivity to the Inny River 12km downstream from the site of works. The Inny has connectivity to a number of European sites including Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA and Lough Derravarragh SPA a further 10km downstream in the Inny River. Works are unlikely to impact water quality within the Glore. Furthermore given the buffer distance between the works and the nearest designated site connected to the Glore no possible impacts can occur.

5.2.4. Noise or Vibration Resulting in Disturbance.

Works will occur in a built environment. No sensitive receptors to noise or disturbance associated with any designated sites were recorded or are known to occur locally.

5.3. Cumulative And In Combination Impacts

A number of local planning applications were reviewed. Most are associated with the alteration to or construction of residential or commercial buildings. As no impacts or effects have been identified as a result of the proposed works upon any Designated Site. No cumulative or in combination impacts can therefore exist.

6. Screening Conclusions

The findings of this Screening Assessment are presented following the European Commission's Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018) as well as the Department of the Environment's Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010).

6.1. Data Collected to Carry Out Assessment

In preparation of this report, the following sources were used to gather information:

- Review of NPWS Site Synopses, Conservation Objectives and Map for the European Sites reviewed
- Review of OS maps and aerial photographs of the site of the proposed project.
- Review of the project description and an assessment of its likely effects on local ecology including European sites and;
- No.1 site visit conducted by Ian Douglas (B.Sc., MSc.) in May 2023.

6.2. Overall Conclusions

In our professional opinion and view of the best scientific knowledge and view of the conservation objectives of the European sites reviewed in the screening exercise, the proposed development individually/in combination with other plans and projects (either directly or indirectly) is not likely to have any significant effects on European designated site. **Therefore, progression to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.**

References

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Wyse Jackson, M., FitzPatrick, Ú., Cole, E., Jebb, M., McFerran, D., Sheehy Skeffington, M. & Wright, M. (2016) Ireland Red List No. 10: Vascular Plants. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Dublin, Ireland.

Appendix I: Photos

Figure no.	Description	Image
1	The centre of Fore Village	 A photograph showing a street in the center of Fore Village. On the left, there is a stone wall and a building with a corrugated metal roof. The street is paved and leads towards a row of traditional stone buildings with dark roofs. A tall, thin tower is visible in the background. The sky is blue with some white clouds.

2	Ivy covered stone wall in Fore village	
3	A large stand of Butterbur and other verge habitat along the L5637	

<p>The Glore River where its crossed by the L5637</p>	
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