

**Kinnegad Economic Enterprise Hub:
Screening for Appropriate Assessment**



Report for: Westmeath County Council
February 2024



The former schoolmaster's house, Kinnegad

Statement of Authority

This Appropriate Assessment Screening has been carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced professional of Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants. This was Billy Flynn BSc, MSc, MCIEEM, CEnv.

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1 Introduction

Flynn Furney has been commissioned by Westmeath County Council to carry out a Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report of proposed works at a former schoolmaster's residence in Kinnegad. It is proposed that this building be converted to a new Kinnegad Economic & Enterprise Hub.

This screening exercise aims to determine whether the proposed project may have the potential to impact the conservation objectives and overall integrity of any Natura 2000 sites significantly or indeterminately. This assessment is based upon desk research and fieldwork carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist.

This report has also been completed to provide the information necessary to allow the competent authority to conduct an Article 6[3] Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening of the proposed project. The legislation and methodology for this are detailed in the following sections.

1.1 Relevant Legislation and Overall Screening Methodology

The methodology for this screening statement is set out in a document prepared for the Environment DG of the European Commission entitled 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC' (European Commission, 2019). This report and any contributory fieldwork were carried out in accordance with guidelines given by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009, amended 2010).

The process is given in Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive and is commonly referred to as 'Appropriate Assessments' (which in fact refers to Stage 2 in the sequence under the Habitats Directive Article 6 assessment). 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 (Natura2000) site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or 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) of the same directive 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 social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of the 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’. Having satisfied itself 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
4. Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest/Derogation

Stage 1: Screening

This is to determine if an appropriate assessment is required. Screening is the technique applied to determine whether a particular plan or project would be likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site and would thus warrant an Appropriate Assessment. The key indicator that will determine if an

Appropriate Assessment is required is the determination of whether the development/plan is likely to have significant environmental effects on a Natura 2000 site or not.

Stage 2. Appropriate Assessment

This step is required if the screening report indicates that the development/plan is likely to have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site. Stage 2 assesses the impact of a plan or project on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, with respect to the site's structure, function and conservation objectives. Where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of these impacts is also required.

Stage 3. Assessment of Alternative Solutions

If it is concluded that, subsequent to the implementation of measures, a plan or project will have an adverse impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, it must be objectively concluded that no alternative solutions exist before the plan or project can proceed.

Stage 4. Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest/Derogation

Where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain but imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist for the implementation of a plan or project, an assessment of compensatory measures that will effectively offset the damage to the Natura 2000 site will be necessary.

1.2 Case Law

The European Court of Justice has made a number of relevant rulings in relation to when an Appropriate Assessment is required and its purpose: *“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site is to be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on that site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects”* and that the plan or project may only be authorised *“where no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects”*.

A list of relevant rulings is provided below:

Table 1: Case law relevant to the AA Screening for the Proposed Project

Case	Ruling
People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-323/17)	The ruling of the CJEU in this case requires that any conclusion of ‘no Likely Significant Effect’ on a European site must be made prior to any consideration of measures to avoid or reduce harm to the European site. The determination of Likely Significant Effects should not, in the opinion of the CJEU, constitute an attempt at detailed technical analyses. This should be conducted as part of the AA.
Waddenzee (C-127/02)	The ruling in this case clarified that AA must be conducted using best scientific knowledge, and that there must be no reasonable scientific doubt in the conclusions drawn. The Waddenzee ruling also provided clarity on the definition of ‘significant effect’, which would be any effect from a plan or project which is likely to undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
Holohan and Others v An Bord Pleanála (C-461/17)	The conclusions of the Court in this case was that consideration must be given during AA to: effects on qualifying habitats and/or species of a SAC or SPA, even when occurring outside of the boundary of a European site, if these are relevant to the site meeting its conservation objectives; and, effects on non-qualifying habitats and/or species on which the qualifying habitats and/or species depend and which could result in adverse effects on the integrity of the European site.
T.C Briels and Others v Minister van Infrastructuur en Milieu (C-521/12)	The ruling of the CJEU in this case determined that compensatory measures cannot be used to support a conclusion of no adverse effect on site integrity.

1.3 Guidance Documents

This report has been prepared with regard to the following guidance documents on Appropriate Assessment, where relevant:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision);
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- 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 (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001 and updates April 2015 and September 2021). The guidance within this document provides a non-mandatory methodology for carrying out assessments required under Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive;
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2018); and
- Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle. European Commission (2000). · OPR (2021) Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. Practice Note PN01. Office of the Planning Regulator. March 2021.

1.4 Statement of Authority

Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants have over 20 years of experience in ecological surveying and management. We have detailed knowledge on the principles and implementation of both Irish and European environmental legislation. We have worked closely with statutory bodies including the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Waterways Ireland on habitat management and protection projects. Other expertise includes Ecological Impact Assessment, Habitat and Floral Surveys, Bird Surveying, Bat Surveying, Fish and Waterways surveys.

1.5 The Proposed Project

A new Economic & Enterprise Hub is proposed for the town of Kinnegad. The Kinnegad Economic Enterprise Hub will occupy the site of the former master's House adjacent to the new Kinnegad Library at the Old School House, Main St Kinnegad.

1.6 Details of Proposed Development

The project under assessment is the proposed Kinnegad Economic & Enterprise Hub. The proposed works include the following:

- Refurbishment of the Existing Master's House building
- Refurbishment of associated outhouses
- Removal of an oil tank from existing outhouses
- Construction of a new single storey extension to the rear of the Masters House (c. 260m²) – to be used as reception, office space and meeting rooms.
- Associated external works and landscaping.
- Alterations to existing entrance ramp.

Further details of the proposed development are given in Appendix B.

1.7 Methodologies

This screening report was informed by a desk study of the site, other relevant plans and projects and all relevant environmental information and also included a review of recent planning files. The screening then incorporated the following steps (broadly based on EC [2000]) to:

- Determine if the proposed project is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site;
- Describe the proposed project;
- Describe the baseline environment;
- List 'Relevant' European sites which are those sites potentially connected to the proposed project by source-pathway-receptor linkages; and
- Conclude if linkages to 'Relevant' sites have the potential to give rise to Likely Significant Effects (LSE).

1.8 The Source-Pathway-Receptor Model

The standard 'source-pathway-receptor' conceptual model is a standard tool in environmental assessment. In order for an effect to occur, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism means there is no likelihood for the effect to occur. An example of this model is provided below:

- Source (s); – e.g. Piling;
- Pathway (s); e.g. Vibration; and
- Receptor (s); e.g. Underground otter resting site at risk of collapse

The model evaluates the receptors as the qualifying interests (QIs) for which individual European sites are designated, with reference to the latest conservation objectives from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) website, or substitute detailed objectives from other European sites where only generic objectives are available.

European sites are at risk of significant effects as a result of the proposed works where a source-pathway-receptor link exists between any elements of the proposed works and the European site. In order for an impact to occur there must be a risk enabled by having a 'source' (e.g. proposed works), a 'receptor' (e.g. a SAC/SPA or their QI habitats/species), and a pathway between the source and the receptor (e.g. a watercourse which connects the impact source at a site of proposed works to a SAC/SPA). The risk of the impact does not automatically mean it will occur, nor that it will be significant. However, identification of the risk does mean that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental impact occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the risk, and the characteristics of the receptor.

1.9 The Precautionary Principle

The Precautionary Principle has been defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2005) as: "When human activities may lead to morally unacceptable harm [to the environment] that is scientifically plausible but uncertain, actions shall be taken to avoid or diminish that harm. The judgement of plausibility should be grounded in scientific analysis". Reasoned application of the 'Precautionary Principle' is fundamental to the Screening Stage (and AA). The precautionary principle is referenced in Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). It relates to an approach to risk management whereby if there is the possibility that a given policy or action might cause harm to the public or the environment and if there is still no scientific consensus on the issue, the policy or action in question should not be pursued.

The precautionary principle prevails where ‘reasonable scientific doubt’ cannot be ruled out. Known threats to QIs of relevant sites are analysed to avoid overlooking subtle or far-field effect pathways. The duration of potential effects is a key consideration, in particular because the European Court of Justice has recently ruled—albeit in specific reference to priority habitats—those effects to site integrity must be “lasting”.

1.10 Zones of Influence and Potential Impacts or Effects

Projects and plans may have the potential to result in a number of direct and indirect effects. These are set out in Table 2, which identifies the “zones of influence” for each effect (i.e. the area over which effects may occur).

Table 2: 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 plan/development and access routes.	Lands within the proposed footprint of works and access routes.
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 plan/development within water courses, water bodies and or wetlands adjacent to or hydrologically connected with the of the proposed development site.
Noise & vibration resulting in disturbance to species during construction and operation of the project.	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. 150 m for Otter underground sites, or further).

1.11 Stakeholders and Consultation

Table 3: Summary of Consultations

Stakeholder	Nature of Consultation	Outcome
Cooney Architects	Telecommunications and email with project architects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope of Screening Assessment agreed • This present report produced.
National Parks and Wildlife Service	Present screening assessment to be forwarded to Development Applications Unit if required	Pending. Present reporting to be updated on receipt of response.

2 Designated Sites Assessment

2.1 Desktop Study

A desktop study was carried out as part of the 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 and National Biodiversity Data Centre databases on protected sites and species.

2.2 Designated Sites

Sites designated for the conservation of nature in Ireland include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Natural Heritage Areas (NHA); and
- proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA).

SPAs and SACs form the Natura 2000 network of sites. It is these sites that are of relevance to the screening process for Appropriate Assessment.

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.

All Natura 2000 designated sites relevant to the proposed project were considered during the desktop study stage of this screening assessment in order to assess the potential for significant effects upon their Qualifying Interests / Special Conservation Interests and Conservation Objectives. This stage of the process is used to determine whether any of the designated 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.

2.3 Relevant Natura Designated Sites

Natura 2000 sites nearest the proposed project and that may potentially be impacted upon by the proposed works were reviewed. These are listed in the table below.

Table 2. Designated Sites nearest to or relevant to project. See also graphic in Appendix A

Site Code	Site Name	Distance To (km)	Qualifying Interests *Denotes Habitats Directive Priority Habitat
	Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)		
002342	Mount Hevey Bog	2.3	Active Raised Bog*, Degraded Raised Bog, Rhynchosporion Vegetation.
002299	River Boyne & River Blackwater	4.9	Alkaline Fens, Alluvial Forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> *, River Lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>), Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>), Otter.
002205	Wooddown Bog	13	Degraded Raised Bog.
	Special Protection Areas (SPAs)		Special Conservation Interests *Denotes Birds Directive Priority Species
004232	River Boyne & River Blackwater	4.9	Kingfisher* (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>)

There is no direct connection either hydrological or otherwise between the proposed site of works and the above designated sites. See also graphic in Appendix B. None of the Qualifying Interests of the above SACs or Special Conservation Interests of the above SPA occur within the area of the project under assessment or within its zone of influence. The assessment of significance of the project on the above Natura 2000 sites is given in the following table.

Table 3. Table Assessment of Significance of Natura 2000 sites

Site Code	Site Name	Distance To (km)	Screening Criteria
	Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)		
002342	Mount Hevey Bog	2.3	No potential pathways for impacts. No hydrological connections exist between the Natura 2000 site and the proposed work location. Distance between site and proposed work location contribute to the lack of likely impact.
002299	River Boyne & River Blackwater	4.9	No potential pathways for impacts. No hydrological connections exist between the Natura 2000 site and the proposed work location. Distance between site and proposed work location contribute to the lack of likely impact.
002205	Wooddown Bog	13	No potential pathways for impacts. No hydrological connections exist between the Natura 2000 site and the proposed work location. The considerable distance between site and proposed work location contribute to the lack of likely impact
	Special Protection Areas (SPAs)		
004232	River Boyne & River Blackwater	4.9	No potential pathways for impacts. No hydrological connections exist between the Natura 2000 site and the proposed work location. Distance between site and proposed work location contribute to the lack of likely impact.

2.1.3 Other Natura Sites

It is not predicted that the development will have potential to impact upon any of the other designated sites within 13km of the proposed works. This is considered to be so given the distance of these sites and the very small scale of the development under assessment. These sites are therefore not considered further in this document.

2.1.4 Designated Sites Outside 13km of the Proposed Works

No potential impacts on sites outside 13km of the proposed works were considered likely to be of significance in terms of potential impacts. Therefore, these sites are not considered further in this assessment.

The following section (Section 3) forms the Appropriate Assessment Screening of the project.

2.2 Field Surveys

Field surveys were carried out at the site on 23 August 2023 and 17 January 2024. Surveys were carried out as per guidelines given by The Heritage Council (Smith et al., 2011) and the JNCC (2010). Habitats were classified as per Fossitt (2000).

The site under survey is very limited in surface area, being less than 0.07 hectares in total. Only two habitat types occur within the area under survey. These are ***Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3)*** and ***Recolonising Bare Ground (ED3)***. Both of these are relatively species-poor habitat types. None of the habitats occurring within the site are of high sensitivity, all being essentially human-made areas with low species diversity. There is no Annex I habitat occurring within the area proposed for works. No habitat suitable for the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of any of the above-listed SACs or SPAs occurs here.

No rare, threatened or protected species of plants as per Nelson et al (2019) were found. No species listed in the Flora Protection Order (2022) were found to be growing within the site. No such species were recorded within the area of works.

No habitats or species occurring within the site are therefore relevant to the screening of these Natura 2000 sites.

3 Article 6(3) Screening Assessment

This section of the report focuses solely on the potential for the proposed project to impact on any Natura 2000 sites and their conservation objectives. The potential for effects to these Natura 2000 sites is considered further below.

3.1 Article 6(3) Assessment Criteria

Description of the individual elements of the project likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site.

None of the individual elements of the proposed project are likely to give rise to significant impacts on any Natura 2000 site, given: the nature of the elements of the proposed project.

Description of any Likely Direct, Indirect or Secondary Impacts of the Project on the Natura 2000 Site.

Any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the proposed project, both alone and in combination with other plans or projects, on any Natura 2000 sites by virtue of the following criteria: size and scale, land take, distance from the Natura 2000 site or key feature thereof, resource requirements, emissions, excavation requirements, transportation requirements and duration of construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the works are detailed in the table below.

Table 4: Assessment of Likely Impacts

ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY IMPACTS	
Size and scale	The proposed works site will occupy a very small area (c.0.07 hectares). There will be no impact on the Natura 2000 sites owing to size or scale of the proposed works.
Land-take	No works will take place within the boundary of any Natura 2000 site. As such land-take is nil.
Distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site;	Site is c. 2.3km from the nearest Natura 2000 site (Mount Heavey Bog SAC). However, there is no hydrological connection to the designated site from the proposed development. No direct impacts on this SAC may be predicted from the development as planned.
Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.);	No materials for construction will be sourced from within the Natura 2000 Site. No water will be abstracted from the site during the construction or operation of the site. Therefore, there will be no impact on the Natura site as a result of resource requirements.

Emissions (disposal to land, water or air);	There will be no additional emissions of water from the site. No emissions are predicted that will impact upon the receiving site or SACs/SPA. Noise will not be significant. There will be no discharges to surface water.
Excavation requirements;	No excavation or extraction requirement exists within the boundary of any designated site or in areas with hydrological connectivity to any designated site.
Transportation requirements;	Site has existing access via regional road. No access to any areas of any Natura 2000 site will be required during any phase of the project.
Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.;	Duration of works is not known at time of writing. However, these works are expected to be completed within 12-18 months.
Timing of works	Timing of works is not known at time of writing. No disturbance to native species is predicted.
Cumulative or In-combination Impacts with other Projects and Plans	A desktop planning application search, using publicly available data from Westmeath County Council's ePlan database and MyPlan.ie's National Planning Application database was undertaken. No relevant planning applications were found within the last 5 years. This includes the adjacent Kinnegad Library which is under construction. This project was screened for Appropriate Assessment in 2020. No significant or indeterminate impacts on any Natura 2000 sites were considered likely. This project may therefore be screened out of consideration for cumulative or in-combination impacts. No projects that could have cumulative or in combination impacts with the proposed project at Westmeath were found. A review of other statutory plans did not reveal any plans that could have any cumulative or in combination impacts with the project under review.

3.2 Description of any Likely Changes to the Natura 2000 Sites

Any likely changes to the Natura 2000 site are described in the table below with reference to the following criteria: reduction of habitat area, disturbance to key species, habitat or species fragmentation, reduction in species density, changes in key indicators of conservation value and climate change.

Table 5: Likely changes to the Nature 2000 site

Likely Changes to the Natura 2000 Site	
Reduction of habitat area	No works will take place within the boundary of any Natura 2000 sites. There will be no loss of habitat within any Natura 2000 site as a result of the proposed works.
Disturbance to key species	All works associated with the proposed development will take place outside the boundaries of the Natura 2000 sites. None of the qualifying interests of the Natura 2000 sites occur here. No loss of or impacts upon habitats of the qualifying interests is predicted. No significant impacts on any key species have therefore been considered likely.
Habitat or species fragmentation	There will be no works within any Natura 2000 site. No impacts on any qualifying species are predicted. Therefore, there will be no impact upon any Natura 2000 site with regard to habitat or species fragmentation.
Reduction in species density	No reduction in species density is considered likely within any SAC or SPA as a result of the proposed works.
Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.);	Habitat integrity is the most relevant key indicator of conservation value with regard to the nearest SACs. As stated above, there will be no loss or reduction in habitat areas or quality within the designated sites. No suitable habitat for key species occurs within the lands proposed for development. No impacts on water quality are predicted.
Climate change	No negative effects to any sites as a result of or in combination with climate change are predicted as a consequence of the proposed project.

3.2.1 Likelihood of Interference with the key relationships that define the structure and function of the Natura 2000 Site as a whole:

It is considered that there will be no impacts of any scale, significance or duration arising from this project or from the operation of this project, upon the key relationships that define the structure and function of any Natura 2000 site.

3.2.2 Indicators of Significance as a Result of the Identification of Effects

Indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects as set out below in terms of loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance and changes to the key elements of the sites.

Table 6: Indicators of significance

Indicators of Significance	
Loss	None predicted
Fragmentation	No habitat fragmentation to any Natura 2000 site is predicted.
Disruption	No significant risk of disruption to any Natura 2000 site is predicted
Disturbance	The project does not have the potential to cause disturbance to any Natura 2000 site.
Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.)	No changes to any key elements of any Natura 2000 site are predicted.

Description of any Likely Significant Impacts or Indeterminate Impacts of the Project on the Natura 2000 Site

Based on a consideration of the likely impacts arising from the proposed project as described above, no likely significant or indeterminate impacts or effects have been identified to any Natura 2000 site as a result of the proposed project.

3.3 Findings of Article 6(3) Screening Assessment

Name of project or plan: Proposed Kinnegad Economic & Enterprise Hub

Name and location of Natura 2000 Site: Works will occur at Main Street, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath. There are 4 no. Natura 2000 sites within 13km of this location. The proposed works are within c. 2.3km of the Mount Hevey Bog SAC (Site Code 002342).

Description of project or plan: The Kinnegad Economic Enterprise Hub will occupy the site of the former master's House adjacent to the new Kinnegad Library at the Old School House, Main St Kinnegad.

Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?: The project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any Natura 2000 site.

Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)? On the basis that the proposed project will have no impacts on any Natura 2000 sites and that no other project or plan that could have significant effects has been identified, no cumulative or in-combination impacts are predicted.

3.3.1 Assessment of Significance of Effects

Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site:

The proposed project will not significantly affect any Natura 2000 sites for the reasons outlined below:

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.

There will be no direct significant impacts upon the Natura 2000 sites as:

- No works will take place within any Natura 2000 Site.
- No resources of any Natura 2000 site will be affected by works.

There will be no indirect impacts upon the Natura 2000 Sites as:

- The project is very small in scale and limited in duration.
- There is no hydrological connectivity between the Natura 2000 site and the proposed development.

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.

- As there is no complete source-pathway-receptor chain, no significant changes in the chemical or physical composition of any Natura 2000 site are likely as a result of the adoption or operation of the proposed project.

Cumulative or in-combination impacts

As no direct or indirect impacts have been identified, no cumulative or in-combination impacts are therefore possible.

Consultation with Agencies

- As detailed previously in report

3.4 Data collected to carry out the assessment.

The following sources of data were employed:

- Environmental Protection Agency mapping databases
- Historical OSI Maps
- NPWS protected species database and online mapping
- Westmeath County Council Planning Database (ePlan)

Level of assessment completed.

- Site Survey
- Habitat Assessment to Fossitt (level 3)
- Desk Study

Overall Conclusions

In view of the best and objective scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European sites reviewed in the screening exercise, the proposed project as described here, individually/in combination with other plans and projects (either directly or indirectly) is not likely to have any significant effects on any of the European sites. Therefore, it is recommended to Westmeath County Council that Appropriate Assessment is not required.

4 References and Guidance Documents

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Appendix A Site Drawings



Fig. 1. Proposed Kinnegad Economic & Enterprise Hub shown in olive green

Appendix B Site and Natura 2000 sites

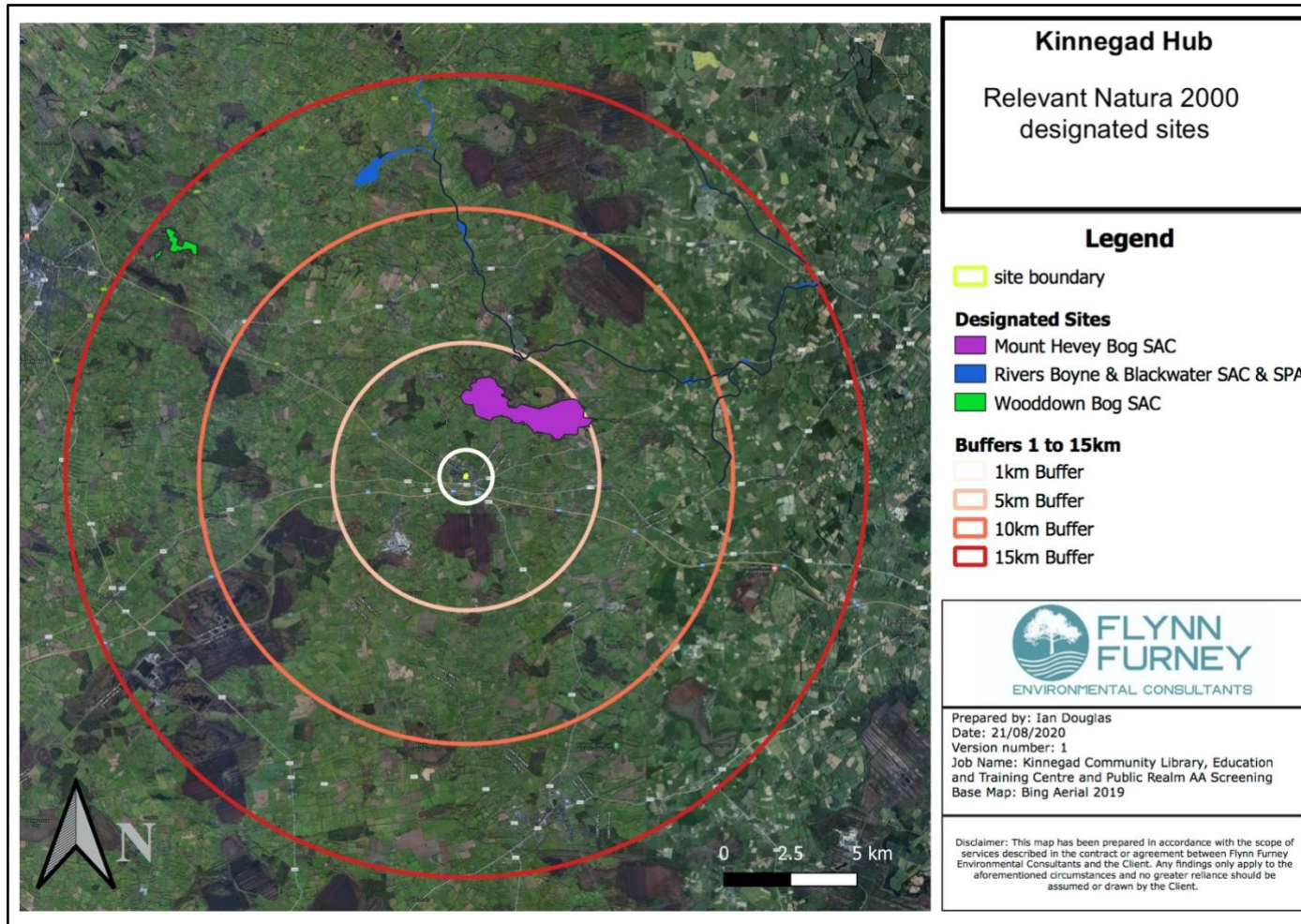


Fig. 1. Relevant Natura 2000 sites