

## Ecology and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

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Development of a new Kinnegad Community Library and Education and Training Centre,  
Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath



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**Ecology and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report:** Development of a new Kinnegad Community Library and Education and Training Centre

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Proposed works at Kinnegad

Works are proposed at Main Street, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath. It is proposed that a former school building is converted for the development of a community library, education and training centre. Further details are given in Section 1.4 (below).

The following report has been completed to provide information regarding the ecological status of the proposed site of works. The report includes a general ecological assessment of the site and the surrounding area, including designated sites. This report has 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 development. The legislation and methodology for which is detailed in the following sections below.

### 1.2 Relevant Legislation and Overall Screening Methodology

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 Natura2000 sites: methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC' (Oxford Brooks University, 2001). 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 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 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 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.

Flynn, Furney Environmental Consultants Ltd has been appointed by Westmeath County Council to undertake the first stage of the above process: a screening exercise to determine whether the proposed development has the potential to have any significant or indeterminate impacts on the conservation objectives and overall integrity of any Natura 2000 sites. This assessment is based upon desk study and fieldwork carried out by suitably qualified ecologists. This document includes a detailed description of the development in Section 1.4. The sites within 15km of the proposed development are then reviewed for potential impacts or pathways for impacts. Sections 4 and 5 of

the report comprise the AA Screening that specifically focus on the potential for impacts on Natura 2000 sites and their conservation objectives.

### 1.3 The site at Kinnegad

The site of the proposed development in the townland of Kinnegad, Kinnegad, on the town's Main Street.



**Fig. 1.** Project Location. Location of proposed development is indicated by red outline.

The total area of the site in which the building proposed for development is located is approximately 2,700m<sup>2</sup> (0.27 hectares) in surface area.

## **1.4 Description of the Proposed Development at Kinnegad**

### **1.4.1 Introduction**

The development comprises the conversion of existing structures – a former school repurposing for a community library, education and training centre.

### **1.4.2 Description of the Works**

It is proposed that the former school and house are redeveloped for a library project. The following is proposed:

- Renovations and alterations to the former School which is a Protected Structure (RPS Ref 15316004);
- The facility will provide accommodation for a Public Library, a Longford Westmeath Adult Education and Training Board Facility and a shared space to facilitate the provision of other public and community services;
- The development of the curtilage of the above buildings with both hard and soft landscaping to allow public (universal) access to this area. A sensory garden has been proposed here; and
- Bicycle parking will be included in the hard landscaping component of the above.

### **1.4.3 Access to Site**

The site proposed for works is served an existing road (the R148). This will be adequate to allow access for all necessary plant and other vehicles. No other access will be required within these lands or surrounding lands.

## 1.5 Stakeholders and Consultation

The consultations carried out to date are summarised below:

**Table 1. Summary of Consultations**

Stakeholder	Nature of Consultation	Outcome
National Parks and Wildlife Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Email Correspondence on Site.</li> <li>• Present report to be forwarded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present report (and any other relevant data or requests for same) will be sent to Development Applications Unit if required.</li> </ul>
Cooney Architects and Keys & Monaghan Architects (the client)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining scope of survey.</li> <li>• Site visits &amp; Survey</li> <li>• Reviews of data and reporting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for this assessment agreed.</li> <li>• Site assessments completed.</li> <li>• Desktop survey carried out</li> <li>• Present assessment to be supplied to client.</li> </ul>

## 2. ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT WORKS

### 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 databases on protected sites and species and the database of the National Biodiversity Data Centre. Additionally, a number of databases on individual protected species and non-native invasive species were consulted.

#### 2.1.1 Designated Sites

Sites designated for the conservation of nature include Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) which are designated for the protection of species, habitats and geological interests that are of national importance. Sites designated for protection by the EU are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). These form the *Natura 2000* network of sites. It is these sites that are of relevance to the screening process for Appropriate Assessment.

All designated sites within 15km of the proposed works were considered during the desktop study stage of the 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. This may be due to: a) the distance of the designated sites from the site of proposed works, b) the lack of connectivity such as watercourse or habitat area between the designated sites and the site of the proposed works or c) the nature of the qualifying interests of the designated sites.

### 2.1.2 Designated Sites Within 15km of the Proposed Works

There are 4 no. Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed works. There are 3 no. SACs and one SPA. There are also several proposed NHAs (pNHAs) within 15km of the site. pNHAs are not European sites and thus not statutorily protected under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. pNHA sites were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995, but have not since been statutorily proposed or designated. These sites are designated as being of significance for species and habitats. While not afforded the same protection as sites protected under the Habitats Directive, they are subject to protection through the following mechanisms:

- Agri-environmental farm planning schemes such as GLAS (Formally the Rural Environment Protection Scheme)
- Forest Service requirement for NPWS approval before they will pay afforestation grants on pNHA lands
- Recognition of the ecological value of pNHAs by Planning and Licencing Authorities.

**Table 2.** Designated Sites within 15km. See also graphic in Appendix A.

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. However, the proximity of this SAC to the site of proposed works requires further consideration in this process.
	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 15km 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. While a number of Natural Heritage Areas occur within 15km of the site proposed for works, these are not considered within the screening process methodology.

### **2.1.4 Designated Sites Outside 15km of the Proposed Works**

No potential impacts on sites outside 15km of the proposed works were considered likely. Therefore, these sites are not considered further in this assessment.

## 2.2 Field Surveys

Field survey was carried out in August 2020 and established baseline ecological conditions within the constraints of the time of year. Habitats were identified, mapped and classified and dominant plant species noted were conducted according to the guidelines given by the JNCC (2010). Any signs of mammals seen were recorded as part of these surveys. Any bird species observed were noted and recorded. Any presence of or suitable habitat for amphibian and reptile species were recorded. Habitat classification followed Fossitt (2000) and the floral nomenclature used followed Parnell and Curtis (2012) and Scannell and Synnott (1987).

### 2.2.1 Outline Site Description

The study site is located in the townland of Kinnegad, in the Main Street of the town of the same name. The site is within a built-up urban area of a small rural town.



**Fig. 2.** Aerial showing location of site (within dotted line) and surrounding lands (base orthophotography from [www.maps.apple.com](http://www.maps.apple.com))

### 2.2.2 Detailed Description of Habitat Areas

A detailed description of habitat areas recorded within or adjacent to the survey area is given below. Please refer to figures in Appendix A. Habitat surveys took place during daylight hours in August 2020. Habitats occurring within the survey area are detailed below:

**Table 3. Habitats occurring at Site**

Habitat Type	Code (after Fossitt, 2000)
Buildings and Artificial Surfaces	BL3
Recolonising Bare Ground	ED3

The findings of the habitat survey are detailed below.

### **BL3 Buildings/Artificial Surfaces**

The school building and the School Master's house would fall into this category. There are no established plant communities on these buildings. An exception to this is Ivy (*Hedera helix*) which is locally abundant on the southern elevation of the former residence and on the outbuildings. The buildings themselves offer habitat for both bird and bat species (see Section 2.3, below).

### **ED3 Recolonising Bare Ground**

Some limited areas of the former play area would be described as this habitat type where recolonising plants have become established. These include Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*), Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.) and Willow-herbs (*Epilobium* spp.). These plants are widespread and common in such built-up habitat types.

### **2.2.3 Significance of Habitats**

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 rare, threatened or protected species of plants as per the Red Data Book (Curtis and McGough, 1988) were found. No species listed in the Flora Protection Order (2015) were found to be growing within the site. No such species were recorded within the area of works.

## 2.3 Fauna

### 2.3.1 Mammal Activity

However, no evidence of presence or activity of any protected terrestrial mammal species was noted within the site. The NBDC database has 3 no. protected mammals recorded within this this 2km<sup>2</sup> (N54X). These are Badger (*Meles meles*), Pine Marten (*Martes martes*) and Hedgehog (*Erinaceous europaeus*). There is no evidence of these protected species within the site under survey.

### 2.3.2 Bats

A dedicated search of the buildings was carried out to determine whether bat roosts occur here. Bat droppings were found within both buildings. Further surveys will be required to determine location of roosts in both buildings. The NBDC database has several records of bats within this this 2km Square (N54X). 5 no. species are listed, being Soprano pipistrelle

5 no. species are listed. These are: Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Brown Long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*) and Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*).

### 2.3.3 Breeding Birds

A search for bird nesting habitat was carried out as part of the survey work completed here. Nests of the Barn Swallow were found in the sheds adjacent the School Master's House. While Swift nesting had been completed at time of survey, it was noted that there is ample space for Swift nest sites in both of the buildings under survey. The NBDC lists numerous birds recorded within this 2km Square, including 3 no. 'red-listed' species. However, no suitable habitat for these exists on the site under survey.

### 2.3.4 Other Fauna

No other species of fauna were found during this survey.

### 2.3.5 Significance of Fauna

It is confirmed that bat species utilise both buildings. Further survey work will be required in order to determine the status of roosts here. That is, whether these are permanent, temporary or winter roost sites. This may be carried out in Autumn. The consideration of bats will be a priority in terms of

planning any structural work on these buildings. An experienced and licensed bat surveyor must be engaged to carry out the necessary assessments. The project offers opportunities to allow roost spaces to be maintained (e.g. using 'bat-bricks' that allow entry and egress for bats) and also to create artificial roosting habitat (e.g. with 'bat boxes' that will be added to the renovated structure if deemed appropriate in specialist assessment).

It is confirmed that Barn Swallows utilise the derelict outbuildings to the rear of the School Master's House. Consideration must be given to the nesting season (April-September) of this species when scheduling any works on these structures. It would be possible to create 'artificial' Swallow nest sites within the renovated structures by building ledges in suitable locations. Alternatively, maintaining the sheds so as to allow nesting to continue here should also be considered.

While no Common Swift was recorded during survey, this is to be expected as the breeding season for this migrant species is significantly shorter and had been completed by time of survey. However, Birdwatch Ireland have previously recorded 9 no. Swift nest sites in the former school building (Westmeath Swift Survey, 2018). The present survey also identified potential for Swift nest sites on the former School Master's house. It may be assumed as likely that both buildings offer high potential for nest sites of this species. This should be a primary consideration when planning any structural works on both of the buildings. Swifts are faithful to nesting sites and it is likely that these buildings will be utilised by this species in future seasons. Therefore, designs must either allow for existing spaces to be maintained or for artificial nesting sites to be created. 'Swift boxes' are an option that have been successful in several other projects (e.g. Westport Town Hall and Castlebar Swimming Pool)<sup>1</sup>. Extensive advice on this has been drawn up by Birdwatch Ireland (2019).

## **2.4 Invasive Species**

No invasive alien plant species as listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) occurs within the site under survey. No invasive species of fauna were found within the site under study.

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.swiftconservation.ie](http://www.swiftconservation.ie).

### 3. ARTICLE 6(3) SCREENING ASSESSMENT

This section of the report focuses solely on the potential for the proposed works to impact upon Natura 2000 sites. Section 2.1.2 of this report excluded the potential for any direct impacts or pathways for impacts on all Natura Sites within 15km. Therefore, it was considered that no further assessment was necessary in relation to these sites. This was based primarily upon the nature and scale of the proposed works and the distance from and lack of connectivity to the designated sites. This is described in more detail in the sections below.

#### 3.1 Article 6(3) Assessment Criteria

##### 3.1.1 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 development as planned are likely to give rise to significant impacts on the Natura 2000 sites, given the very limited scale of the works and the nature of the works as planned.

##### 3.1.2 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 development, both alone and in combination with other plans or projects, on the designated sites by virtue of the following criteria: size and scale, land take, distance from the Natura 2000 sites 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. Likely Impacts of the Project on the Natura 2000 Site**

Assessment of Likely Impacts	
Size and scale	The proposed works site will occupy a very small area. There will be no impact on the Natura 2000 sites owing to size or scale of the proposed works.
Landtake	As there are no works proposed within any Natura 2000 Site, there will be no land-take for the purposes of the project within any designated sites.
Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site	Site is c. 2.3km from the nearest Natura 2000 site (Lough 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	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	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 excavations will take place within or directly adjacent to the Natura 2000 Site. Therefore, no impacts are predicted.
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	Duration of works is not known at time of writing. However, these works are expected to be completed within 12 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	<p>A number of other projects have been considered as part of the screening process. A search of the planning website of Westmeath County Council was carried out as part of the desktop study. Several other planning applications were found within the vicinity of the proposed development in recent years. These include the development of a new medical centre (Ref No. 196023) and several change of use applications for commercial premises (e.g. for funeral home and bookmakers premises). Older planning applications were similarly of small scale. No significant projects that could give rise to cumulative or in combination impacts are known at time of writing.</p> <p>No cumulative or in-combination impacts are therefore predicted.</p>

### 3.1.3 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 Natura 2000 Site**

<b>Assessment of Likely Changes</b>	
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 of 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 the Natura 2000 site. No impacts on any qualifying species are predicted. Therefore, there will be no impact within the Natura 2000 site with regard to habitat or species fragmentation.
Reduction in species density	No reduction in species density is considered likely within the SAC as a result of the proposed works.
Changes in key indicators of conservation value	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 damage to the Natura 2000 site as a result of or in combination with enhanced climate change is predicted as a result of the proposed development.

### **3.1.4 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 significant impacts from the proposed works. The proposed works will therefore not interfere with key relationships that define the structure and function of any Natura 2000 site.

### **3.1.5 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 above in terms of loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance and changes to the key elements of site are detailed in the table below.

**Table 6. Indicators of Significance**

<b>Indicators of Significance</b>	
Loss	There will be no loss of habitat within the Natura 2000 Sites as a result of the proposed works.  It is not anticipated that the loss of any species of conservation interest will occur as a result of the proposed works due to injury or mortality.
Fragmentation	No habitat fragmentation to the SACs is predicted. No habitats of high ecological significance within or outside the nearest Natura 2000 sites will be impacted upon as part of the proposed works.
Disruption	No impacts on the Natura 2000 Sites are identified as a result of the disruption of any processes.
Disturbance	There will be no disturbance to species of conservation interest or their habitat within the Natura 2000 Site as a result of the proposed works.
Change to key elements of site (e.g. water quality etc.)	There will be no impacts on water quality given the nature and location of works.

### **3.1.6 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 works and a review of their significance in terms of the conservation interests and objectives of the Natura 2000 Site screened, no significant impacts have been identified on the Natura 2000 site as a result of the proposed development.

#### 4. FINDINGS OF ARTICLE 6(3) SCREENING ASSESSMENT

**Name of project or plan:** Development of a new Kinnegad Community Library and Education and Training Centre

**Name and location of Natura 2000 Site:** Works will occur at Main Street, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath. There are 4 no. Natura 2000 sites within 15km of this location. The proposed works are within c. 2.3km of the Hevey Bog SAC (Site Code 002342).

**Description of project or plan:** The proposed works will see the renovation of a former school building repurposing as a library, education and training centre.

**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 the 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 the Natura 2000 site and there being no other significant projects predicted as having potential impacts, no cumulative or in-combination impacts are predicted.

##### 4.1 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 the Natura 2000 Sites.

**Explain why these effects are not considered significant**

There will be no direct impacts upon the Natura 2000 Site 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.

##### 4.1.2 Consultation with Agencies

- Agencies consulted were: National Parks and Wildlife Service, Westmeath County Council

Response to consultation:

- NPWS: Response Pending
- Westmeath County Council (as stated).

#### **4.1.3 Data collected to carry out the assessment**

The following sources of data were employed:

- Environmental Protection Agency *Envision* Database.
- Westmeath County Council Planning Database ([www.eplanning.ie](http://www.eplanning.ie)).
- NPWS protected species database and online mapping.
- National Biodiversity Data Centre Database
- National Roads Authority (2009). *Environmental Impact Assessment for National Road Schemes – A Practical Guide*. NRA, Dublin.
- Birdwatch Ireland Website

#### **Level of assessment completed**

- Desk Study
- Site visit and survey in August 2020
- JNCC Phase 1 Habitat Assessment
- Fossitt Level III Habitat Recording

#### **Full results of the assessment**

Full details including results of assessment in accompanying Report by present author: *Ecology and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report: Kinnegad Community Library, Education and Training Centre*

#### **4.2 Overall Conclusions**

In conclusion, no impacts are likely as a result of the proposed works on the conservation objectives or overall integrity of any Natura 2000 Site. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed project does not require Appropriate Assessment.

## 5. REFERENCES

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## Appendix A.

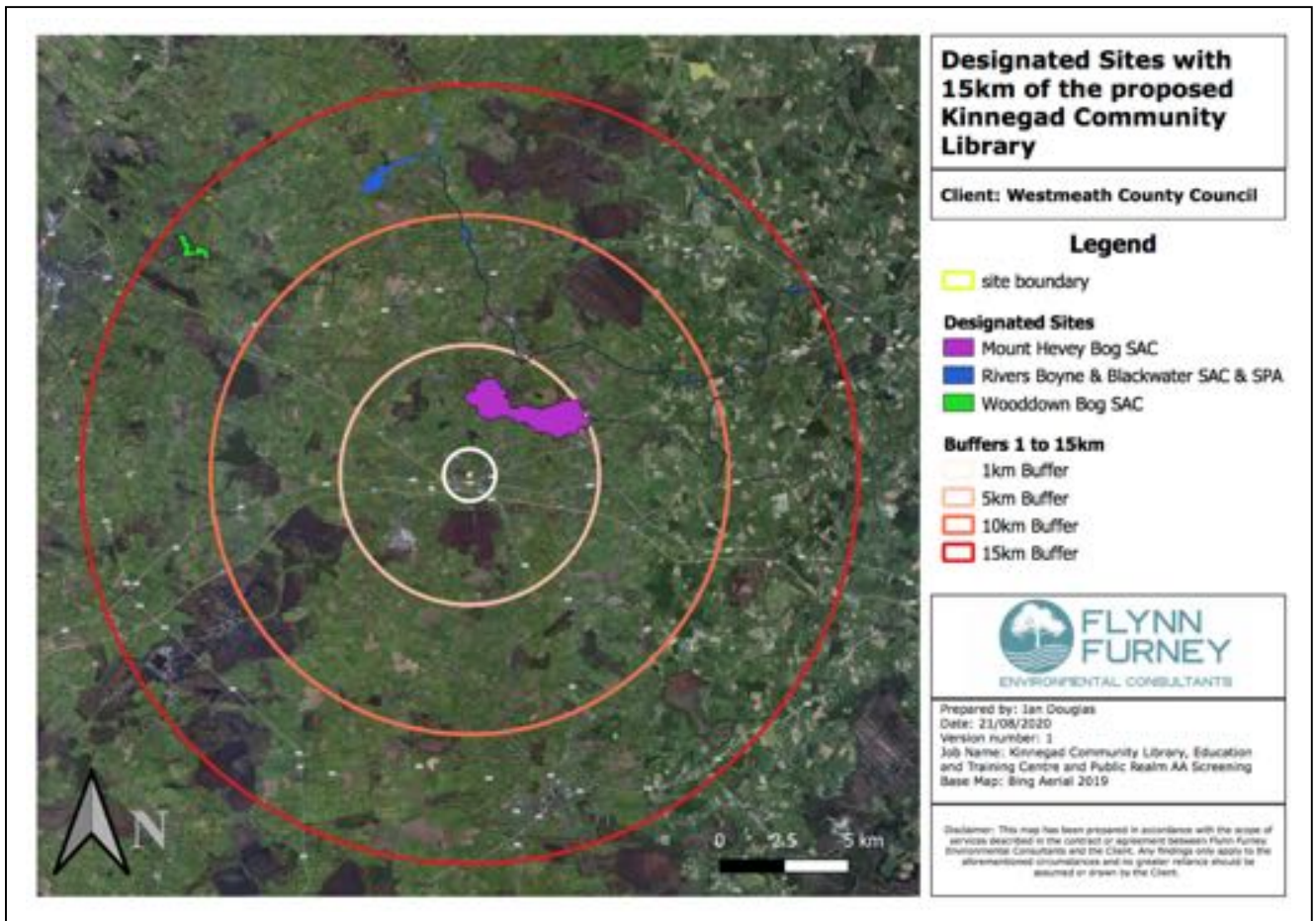
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**Fig 1. Site Location**



From: Westmeath County Council Drawing No. RRDF008001001-Red outline indicates location of proposed works.

Fig 2. Site in relation to Natura 2000 Sites within 15km.



**Appendix B. Site Photographs**

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Plate 1. View of the front of the school building, from the old N4. Windows are all boarded up. Photo facing north east.



Plate 2. View of the school building. Recolonising bare ground (former tarmac play area) Photo facing south east.



Plate 3. Front of the teacher's residence, located to the north of the school building, separated by the tarmac play area. Photo facing north .



Plate 5. Sheds to the rear of the Teacher's residence. Some bat roost potential and used by barn swallow.



Plate 6. Immature trees along the front of the school building.



Plate 7. Bat droppings in the attic of the teacher's residence