

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report



Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment for Donegal County Council for the demolition of 1no. existing single storey dwelling and 1no. existing shed and the construction of 2no. 2-bedroom two storey dwellings, apartment block containing 2no. 2-bedroom apartments and including all related site works at Main Street, Laghy, Co. Donegal.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Greentrack Consultants have been instructed by Donegal County Council to undertake this Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive, examining the proposal for the demolition of 1no. existing single storey dwelling and 1no. existing shed and the construction of 2no. 2-bedroom two storey dwellings, apartment block containing 2no. 2-bedroom apartments and including all related site works at Main Street, Laghey, Co. Donegal.

This Screening Report has been prepared by Greentrack Consultants with all reasonable care, due diligence, professional application, and best scientific knowledge available to Greentrack at the time of writing. Information contained within this report is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted by Greentrack in good faith. Greentrack accept no responsibility to any third party to whom this report is made known or available. Any such third parties rely on the findings of this report at their own risk. The aim of this screening report is to aid the Competent Authority in determining whether or not an "Appropriate Assessment" is required for the proposed works. This report will assess any likely significant effects or impacts (if any) caused by the proposed development on any Natura 2000 sites within the zone of influence of this proposed development, both independently and in conjunction with other plans and projects.

1.2 Legislative Context

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as "*The Habitats Directive*", provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. These are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/ECC) as codified by Directive 2009/147/EC.

Articles 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 (AA):

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 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 implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

Article 6(4) states:

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

1.3 Stages of the Appropriate Assessment Process

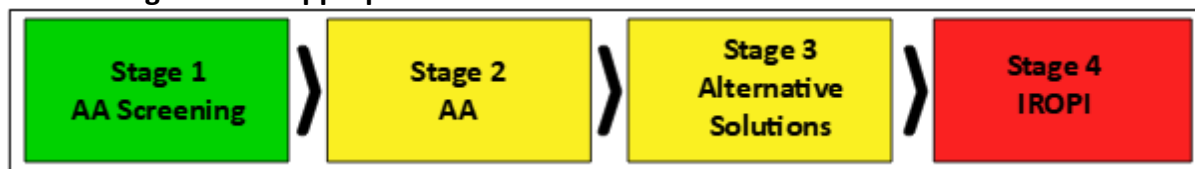


Figure 1.1: Stages of Screening

Stage 1 - Screening for any likely significant impacts. Screening involves an initial assessment of the project or plan's effect on a Natura 2000 site(s). If it cannot be concluded that there will be no significant effect upon a Natura 2000 site, an Appropriate Assessment is required. The process addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3):

- I. whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site, and
- II. whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives.

If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overly complicated, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 (AA). Screening should be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation. The greatest level of evidence and justification will be needed in circumstances when the process ends at screening stage on grounds of no impact. This report provides the information necessary to enable the appropriate authority to screen the proposed development for the requirement to prepare an Appropriate Assessment.

Stage 2 - Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement or NIS): The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site(s) from the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts.

Stage 3 – Assessment of alternative solutions: The process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site. The process must return to Stage 2, as alternatives will require appropriate assessment in order to proceed. Demonstrating that all reasonable alternatives have been considered and assessed, and that the least damaging option has been selected, is necessary to progress to Stage 4.

Stage 4 – Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain: Stage 4 is the main derogation process of Article 6(4), which examines whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project that will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site to proceed in cases where it has been established that no less damaging alternative solution exists. Compensatory measures must be proposed and assessed. The Commission must be informed of the compensatory measures. Compensatory measures must be practical, implementable, likely to succeed, proportionate and enforceable, and they must be approved by the Minister. Each listed stage determines whether a further stage in the process is necessary. If, for example, the conclusions at the end of Stage One are that there will be no significant impacts on the Natura 2000 site(s), there is no requirement to proceed further.

Following on from Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive the objective of this report is to screen for “Any Likely Significant Effects” and to conclude whether or not an Appropriate Assessment is necessary for the proposed development. This report will screen the proposed development against the qualifying interests of Natura 2000 sites within its zone of influence and will examine any likely significant effects that the proposed activity may have on these sites.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Approach

The methodology used for this screening report is undertaken in the following stages:

- Define the project and determine whether it is necessary for the conservation management of Natura 2000 sites.
- Identify Natura 2000 sites likely to be influenced by this development.
- Review the project to determine if it has the potential to affect the Natura 2000 sites and determine whether the Natura 2000 sites are vulnerable to the effect.
- Identify other plans or project that, in combination with this project, have the potential to affect Natura 2000 sites.
- If potential significant effects on Natura 2000 sites cannot be excluded at this stage, Stage 2 appropriate assessment is required.
- If potential significant effects on Natura 2000 sites can be excluded at this stage, Stage 2 appropriate assessment is not required.

2.2 Guidance Documents

This report was carried out in accordance with relevant guidance, in particular:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010.
- European Commission. Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2018.
- 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, 2002.
- Guidance Document on Article 6 (4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC. Clarification of the Concepts of Alternative Solutions, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence. Opinion of the European Commission. European Commission, 2007 / 2012.
- Habitats Directive and environmental assessment of plans and projects. García Ureta, A. Journal for European Environmental and Planning Law 2, 8496, 2007.
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10.
- Compliance Conditions in respect of Developments requiring (1) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); or (2) having potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites. Circular letter PD 2/07, NPWS 1/07.
- Compliance of Existing Land Use Plans with the EU Habitats Directive. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2011) Circular Letter PSSP 5/2011.
- Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle (European Commission, 2000)
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, 2019).
- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 Sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC Brussels, 28.9.2021 C (European Commission, 2021); and,
- Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, OPR Practice Note PN01, Office of the Planning Regulator March 2021

2.3 Statement of Authority

This report has been compiled by Shannen McEwen, Ecologist with Greentrack. Shannen holds a B.Sc. (Hons) Environmental Science with a Diploma in Professional Practice from the University of Ulster. She has been involved in all aspects of Appropriate Assessment, Natura Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Assessment preparation since 2017. Shannen is an Associate Member of the Institution of Environmental Sciences.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

3.1 Project Description

The proposal is for the demolition of 1no. existing single storey dwelling and 1no. existing shed and the construction of 2no. 2-bedroom two storey dwellings, apartment block containing 2no. 2-bedroom apartments and including all related site works at Main Street, Laghey, Co. Donegal. The project can be considered in three distinct stages:

- **Demolition Stage**
 - Site clearance to accommodate demolition and construction
 - Demolition of existing dwelling and shed

- **Construction Stage**
 - Construction of the new accommodation units.
 - Connection to existing services
 - Landscaping of the site.

- **Operational Stage**
 - Standard day to day use of the accommodation units.

The proposed site layout is shown below in Figure 3.1.

Figure 4.1: Site Location



CYAL50244901 © Ordnance Survey Ireland/Government of Ireland

4.2 Site Description and Biodiversity

Greentrack conducted a site walkover on 06/12/2022. A phase 1 habitat survey was conducted during the initial site walkover using guidelines produced by the JNCC¹ in conjunction with Fossitt's Guide to Habitats in Ireland². The subject site has lain derelict for some time and some scrub species and planted material have started to recolonise the site. The site was originally a terraced single storey townhouse with elongated back garden. The site is currently a mosaic of buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3), non-native mixed conifer and broadleaf woodland (WD2), scrub (WS1) and overgrown amenity grassland (GA2).

Some Leyland Cypress (*Cupressus × leylandii*) and Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) trees were planted near the rear of the house some years ago, possibly as a screening hedge, and have subsequently been left unmanaged to develop into mature and semi-mature trees. There are also some semi-mature Sycamore trees in the eastern half of the subject site. The western portion of the subject site that would have comprised the original grassed garden is now overgrown and comprises of grass species with Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.). Other species noted include Sedges (*Carex* spp.), Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), Dove's-foot crane's-bill (*Geranium mole*) and Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*). There are occasional scrub species as saplings through the site, species are predominantly Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Willow (*Salix* spp.) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*).

¹ JNCC. (2010) Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – a Technique for Environmental Audit. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

² J. Fossitt. (2000) A Guide to Habitats in Ireland. The Heritage Council, Dublin

There are areas of Harts tongue fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*) and ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) in the shadier parts of the site near the rear of the house underneath the taller tree cover. Towards the western edge of the subject site there are patches of Blackthorn with young trees of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) interspersed. There was no sighting of any invasive species such as Rhododendron (*Rhododendron Pentium*) or Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) in or around the subject site. Photographs 4.1- 4.2 illustrate the subject site.

Photograph 4.1: Semi-mature trees near rear of derelict building



Photograph 4.2: Typical grassland habitat in central portion of site

Habitat classification data was used to produce the habitat map presented as Figure 4.2. Guidelines from the Heritage Council³ were used to form the basis of the mapping exercise. A survey area was delineated in the immediate vicinity of the subject site with a view to representing adjacent or proximal habitats. Data gathered was used to produce a thematic habitat map (Figure 4.2) illustrating the relative position and scale of habitats in the study area. However, position and scale of habitats shown are approximate only and should be considered only as a broad representation of the study area. No invasive species were observed during site investigations.

³ Smith, G. F., O'Donoghue, P., O'Hara, K., Delaney, E (2011) Best Practice and Guidance for Habitat Surveying and Mapping. Heritage Council

Figure 4.2: Habitats on Site

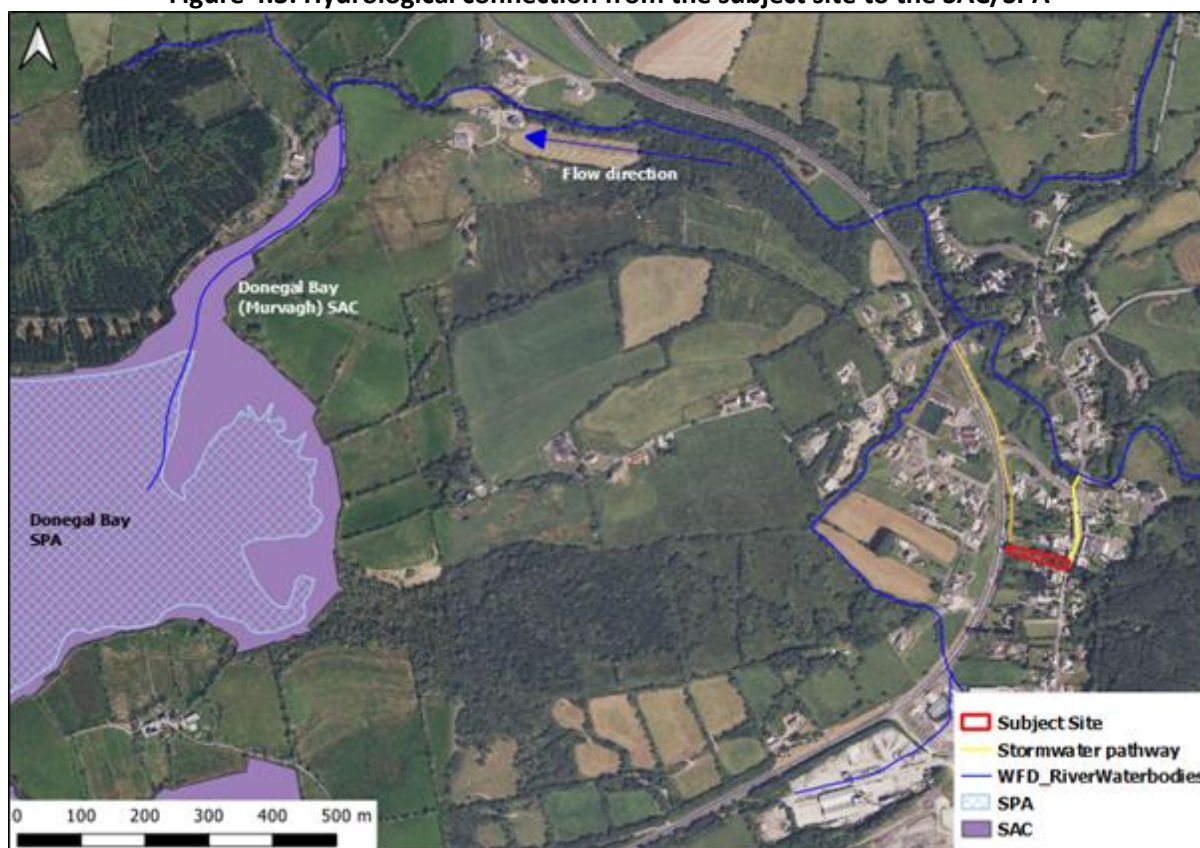
(Created using QGIS software)

4.3 Hydrology

The subject site is located within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Catchment 37 Donegal Bay North and falls within Eske_SC_010 WFD sub-catchment. The subject site lies within the Laghey Stream WFD River Sub Basin. The nearest watercourse is the Laghey Stream (IE_NW_37L020600) which flows west to empty into Donegal Bay approximately 1.5 km west of Laghey village. At its nearest point the Laghey Stream is approximately 120 m north of the subject site. There is no direct hydrological connection between the subject site and the Laghey Stream apart from clean roof water from the eastern portion of the derelict building which is discharged unregulated to the footpath on Main St, Laghey and onwards to the public stormwater system.

On the site there are no obvious drainage channels or routes. The site itself is relatively flat and the ground appears well drained. Roof water from the eastern half of the derelict dwelling is discharged unregulated to the public footpath and public stormwater system. Roof water from the western half of the derelict dwelling is discharged to ground on site.

There is a dedicated stormwater system proposed for the development designed with SuDS principles. Stormwater flow from the accommodation units 1 & 2 and surrounding areas in the east of the site is to the existing public stormwater system on Laghey Main Street which will discharge to the Laghey Stream. Stormwater flow from the accommodation units 3 & 4 and surrounding areas in the west of the site is to be connected to the existing public stormwater system on the N15 which will discharge to the Laghey Stream. Only clean water is to be discharged to the stormwater system. Foul water is proposed to be connected to the public sewer system. Foul water from the accommodation units 1 & 2 in the east of the site is to the existing public sewer system on Laghey Main Street. Foul water from the accommodation units 3 & 4 in the west of the site is to be connected to the existing public sewer system on the N15. The demolition proposed will take place before the proposed stormwater system is constructed and will have no negative effect on surface water quality. Any surface water discharges from the site during demolition and construction will be to ground.

Figure 4.3: Hydrological connection from the subject site to the SAC/SPA

(Created using QGIS software and data available from EPA.ie)

5 NATURA 2000 SITES

5.1 Identification of Natura 2000 Sites

In terms of the identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites, the zone of impact (also known as the area of influence) is determined based on their potential connectivity (*source-pathway-receptor* model) to the proposed project in terms of, for example:

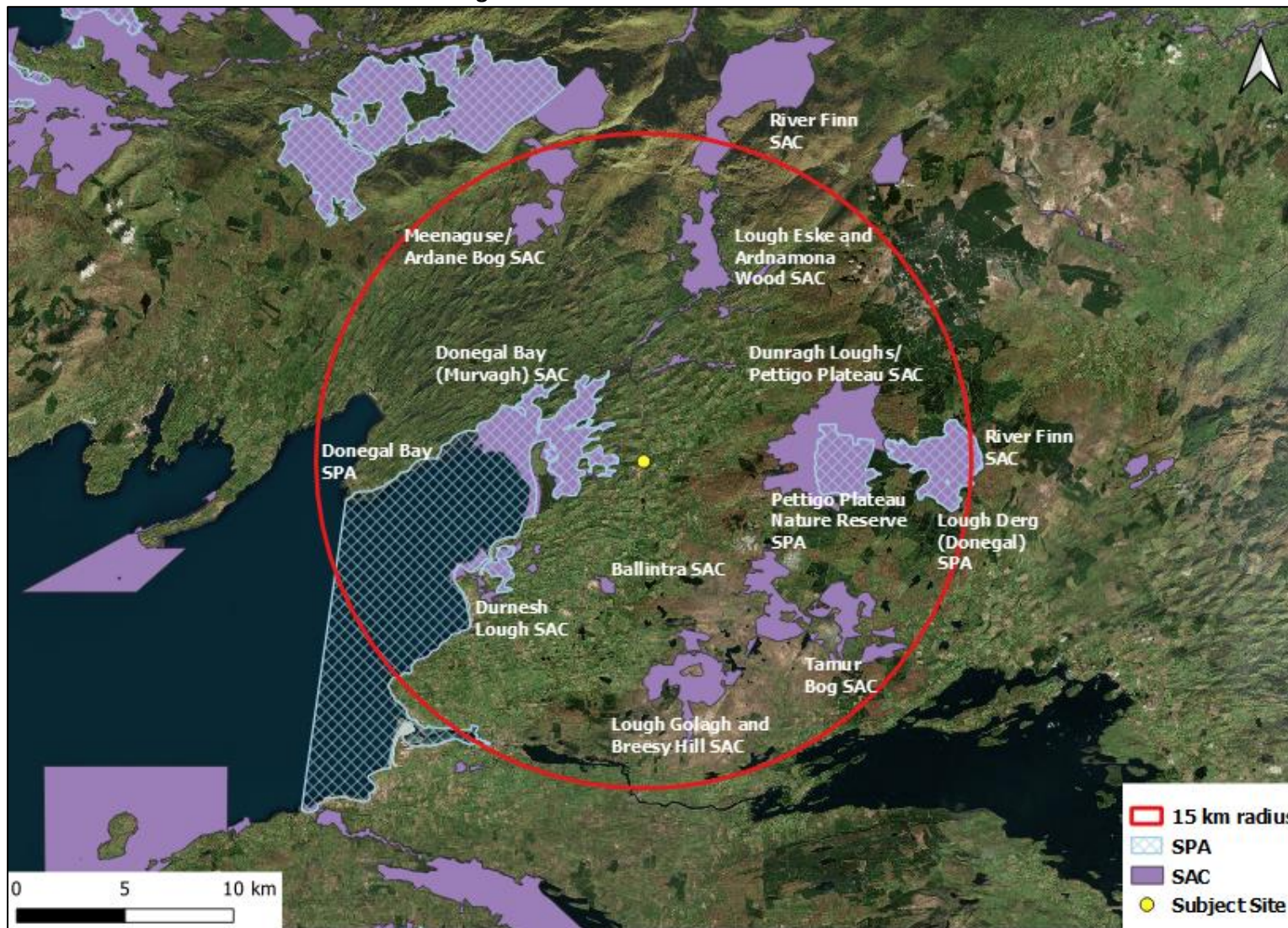
- Nature, scale, timing, and duration of works and possible impacts.
- Distance and nature of pathways (dilution and dispersion; intervening ‘buffer’ lands, roads *etc.*); and
- Sensitivity and location of ecological features.

The ‘zone of influence’ (Zoi) is essentially the effect area over which alterations may have potential ecological impact. The Zoi over which the proposed development may impact upon Natura 2000 Sites and their Qualifying Interests will vary for different ecological receptors, depending on the pathway for potential impacts, as well as the specific nature of the habitats/species (e.g., some species have ability to move/disperse, and some habitats have better ability than others to absorb impacts). Having considered the potential ecological impacts through source-receptor-pathway connectivity (e.g., hydrological link) and given the nature of the proposed project, it was deemed that the zone of influence for such projects would be limited to a radius of 15 km as recommended by NPWS. The Natura 2000 sites occurring within 15 Km of the subject site are listed in Table 5.1 and are screened for possible threats from the proposed development. Figure 5.1 indicates the relative locations of all listed Natura 2000 sites in relation to the subject site.

Table 5.1: Screening of Natura 2000 Sites within Zone of Influence

Site Name	Site Code	Distance from Subject Site	Avenue of Connectivity to Subject Site	Further Screening Required (Y/N)
Donegal Bay (Murvagh) SAC	000133	1.08 km W	Through surface water run-off during the construction and operational phase, potential for indirect effects. Hydrological distance via Laghey Main St is 1.76 km and hydrological distance via N15 is 1.69 km.	Y
Lough Eske and Ardnamona Wood SAC	000163	3.52 km N	There are no hydrological pathways from the subject site to the SAC. No avenue for effect, no suitable ex-situ habitat for qualifying species.	N
Durnesh Lough SAC	000138	6.06 km SW	No avenue for effect, no suitable ex-situ habitat for qualifying species	N
Ballintra SAC	000115	5.54 km S	No avenue for effect, no suitable ex-situ habitat for qualifying species	N
Dunragh Loughs/Pettigo Plateau SAC	001125	5.55 km E	No avenue for effect, no suitable ex-situ habitat for qualifying species	N
Meenaguse/Ardbane Bog SAC	000172	11.20 km NW	No avenue for effect, no suitable ex-situ habitat for qualifying species	N
Tamur Bog SAC	001992	6.71 km SE	No avenue for effect, no suitable ex-situ habitat for qualifying species.	N
Lough Golagh and Breesy Hill SAC	002164	7.89 km S	No avenue for effect, no suitable ex-situ habitat for qualifying species	N
River Finn SAC	002301	13.55 km N	No avenue for effect, no suitable ex-situ habitat for qualifying species	N
Donegal Bay SPA	004151	1.08 km W	Through surface water run-off during the construction and operational phase, potential for indirect effects. Hydrological distance via Laghey Main St is 2.21 km and hydrological distance via N15 is 2.14 km. Potential disturbances to SCI's from dust/noise as a result of proposal.	Y
Durnesh Lough SPA	004145	7.15 km SW	No avenue for effect, no suitable ex-situ habitat for qualifying species	N
Pettigo Plateau Nature Reserve SPA	004099	7.90 km E	No avenue for effect, no suitable ex-situ habitat for qualifying species	N
Lough Derg (Donegal) SPA	04057	11.26 km E	No avenue for effect, no suitable ex-situ habitat for qualifying species	N

Figure 5.1: Proximal Natura 2000 sites



(Created using QGIS software and data available from NPWS.ie)

Table 5.1 has identified potential source-pathway-receptor links to the following Natura 2000 sites:

- Donegal Bay (Murvagh) SAC
- Donegal Bay SPA

5.2 Conservation Status

The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favorable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as the Natura 2000 network. European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network at favourable conservation condition. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites. The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

The favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing,
- and the ecological factors that are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future,
- and the conservation status of its typical species is favorable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself,
- and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced or likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future,
- and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

6 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

The criteria adopted for this assessment are based on a detailed field and desk assessment of the influence the development may have on the Natura 2000 sites within the zone of influence and what, if any, impact this development will have on the Natura 2000 network. Table 6.1 further examines possible impacts to the Natura 2000 sites identified in Table 5.1. The impact determination is informed by the characteristics of the proposed development and the likelihood of deleterious effects on the Natura 2000 network through identified pathways for pollution/ habitat degradation / habitat removal/ species disruption/ species loss.

Table 6.1: Impact Determination of Proposed Development on Natura 2000 sites.

Natura 2000 site	Qualifying Interests for which the site was selected/ Special Conservation Interest	Conservation Objectives (Accessed via NPWS website January 2023)	Impact determination
Special Areas of Conservation			
Donegal Bay (Murvagh) SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● [1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ● [2130] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) ● [2170] Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) ● [2190] Humid dune slacks ● [1365] Harbour Seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) 	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected for. ⁴	<p>A source-receptor pathway exists to this SAC in the form of surface water runoff entering the existing public stormwater system flowing into the Laghey Stream and onwards emptying into Donegal Bay (Figure 4.2). The total hydrological distance from the subject site to the SAC is 1.76 km via the Laghey Main St pathway and 1.69 km via the N15 stormwater pathway. This represents a pathway for indirect effects on water resource quality within the SAC. No suitable ex-situ habitat is located on site.</p> <p>Demolition and construction works will discharge to ground on site and there is no expected negative effect on surface water quality.</p> <p>During the operational phase, clean water will be discharged via the stormwater system and the pathway to the SAC is distant.</p> <p>Due to the small-scale nature of development, SuDS principles employed, significant hydrological pathway distance and low risk of contaminants being present in stormwater leaving the subject site, potential impacts arising from the proposed development are not expected to induce effects of significance to this Natura 2000 site. This potential effect is screened out from further assessment.</p>

⁴ NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Donegal Bay (Murvagh) SAC 000133. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Natura 2000 site	Qualifying Interests for which the site was selected/ Special Conservation Interest	Conservation Objectives (Accessed via NPWS website January 2023)	Impact determination
Special Protection Areas			
Donegal Bay SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [A003] Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) • [A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) • [A065] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) • [A144] Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) • [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds 	<p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.⁵</p> <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat in Donegal Bay SPA as a resource for the regularly occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.⁷</p>	<p>A source-receptor pathway exists to this SPA in the form of surface water runoff entering the existing public stormwater system flowing into the Laghey Stream and onwards emptying into Donegal Bay (Figure 4.2). The total hydrological distance from the subject site to the SAC is 2.21 km via the Laghey Main St pathway and 2.14 km via the N15 stormwater pathway. This represents a pathway for indirect effects on water resource quality within the SPA.</p> <p>No suitable ex-situ habitat is located on site.</p> <p>Demolition and construction works will discharge to ground on site and there is no expected negative effect on surface water quality.</p> <p>During the operational phase, clean water will be discharged via the stormwater system and the pathway to the SPA is distant.</p> <p>Due to the small-scale nature of development, SuDS principles employed, significant hydrological pathway distance and low risk of contaminants being present in stormwater leaving the subject site, potential impacts arising from the proposed development are not expected to induce effects of significance to this Natura 2000 site. This potential effect is screened out from further assessment.</p>

⁵ NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Donegal Bay SPA 004151. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Natura 2000 site	Qualifying Interests for which the site was selected/ Special Conservation Interest	Conservation Objectives (Accessed via NPWS website January 2023)	Impact determination
			Potential impacts from dust & noise, particularly from demolition & construction activities, are not expected to have significant disturbance effects due to the distance to the SPA and that a busy National route (N15) lies in between the subject site and the SPA. Disturbance as a potential effect is screened out from further assessment.

Having established the assessment criteria, the impacts associated with the proposed development and associated works on the identified Natura 2000 sites, the development has been assessed with regard to all the qualifying interests/Special Conservation Interest. The impact determination table found significant effects can be excluded at this stage.

6.1 Cumulative Effects

Recent planning applications within the vicinity of the subject site and The Donegal County Development Plan 2018 -2024 were reviewed to cumulatively assess any impact on European Sites in combination with the proposed development.

6.1.1 Recent Planning Applications

The following planning permissions were noted:

- Planning Ref 22/51268: Located 90 m north-east of subject site.

David Huss on behalf of Laghey Parish Church. Development of (1) one no. all weather pitch (2) one no. combination tennis/basketball court (3) one no. playground area (4) community garden area (5) floodlighting to the all-weather pitch and tennis/basketball court (6) pedestrian walkway for access and all associated site works. Permission was granted on 24/11/22.

No Appropriate assessment information was publicly available for this permission. However, the planning authority conditioned that site preparation and construction should adhere to best practice and shall conform to the Inland Fisheries Ireland Requirements for the Protection of Fisheries Habitat during Construction and Development Works at River Sites, to ensure the integrity and preservation of designated EU habitats and their qualifying interests.

- Planning Ref 21/51620: Located 20 m north of subject site.

Michael and Ann Gallagher. Construction of 2 two storey terraced houses, connection into the public services and all associated site development works. Permission was granted on 13/12/2020. No Appropriate assessment information was publicly available for this permission.

- Planning Ref 20/51139: Located 30 m north-east of subject site.

Kalita business Management Ltd. Retention permission for erection of an extension to the smoking area. Permission for (i) an extension at ground level consisting of a lift and stairway (ii) change of use of restaurant, kitchen, storage and toilets to 7 no. ensuite bedrooms (iii) erection of an extension at first floor level to include 9 no. bedrooms, lift and stairway and all associated site works. Permission was granted on 31/03/2022. The planning authority having regard to the minor nature and scale of the proposed development and its location removed from any sensitive locations or features, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.

6.1.2 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects in combination with other plans or projects can be excluded at this stage.

7 CONCLUSION AND SCREENING STATEMENT

Following the assessment as detailed in this AA Screening Report, it is concluded that significant effects on the Natura 2000 network arising from the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, can be excluded at this stage. Therefore Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

This conclusion was reached based on objective information and in view of best scientific knowledge.

Date: 18/05/2023