Donaghpatrick Housing Development

Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Prepared By:

Delichon Ecology

Prepared For:

Galway County Council

Donaghpatrick Housing Development Screening for Appropriate Assessment

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1. INTRODUCTION

Delichon Ecology have been commissioned by Galway County Council to carry out a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) report for a proposed housing dwelling development at Donaghpatrick, Caherlistrane, Co. Galway. The site location is presented in **Figure 1-1** while the site layout is presented in **Figure 1.2.**

This Screening for Appropriate Assessment report has been prepared to provide the competent authority, Galway County Council, with the relevant scientific information to conduct the Appropriate Assessment (AA). This information will allow Galway County Council to determine, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed project, individually or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect on a European site and, where necessary, to ascertain whether or not the proposed project would adversely affect the integrity of a European site.

1.1 Legislative Context for Appropriate Assessment

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.

Natura 2000 sites are defined under the Habitats Directive (Article 3) as a coherent European ecological network of special areas of conservation, composed of sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, shall enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. In Ireland, these sites are designated as European Sites and include Special Protection Areas (SPAs), established under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC, as codified by 2009/147/EC) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), established under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC for habitats and species.

The Habitats Directive has been transposed into Irish law by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 - 2015 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477/2011) as amended.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to adversely affect the integrity of European 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(3) of the Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish Law relevant to this project includes Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

Natura 2000 sites in Ireland (herein referred to as European sites) that form part of the Natura 2000 network of protected sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated due to their significant ecological importance for species and habitats protected under Annexes I and II respectively of the Habitats Directive, and Special Protected Areas (SPAs), designated for the protection of populations and habitats of bird species protected under the EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/409/EEC). Features for which SACs and SPAs are designated are termed Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests respectively. Collectively, Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests are herein referred to as Qualifying Features.

As the proposed project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European Site, Galway County Council as the competent authority, is obliged to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on European Sites.

The staged assessment process undertaken to meet Article 6(3) obligations is described in **Section 2** below.

1.2 Statement of Authority

Eamonn Delaney BSc, MSc, MCIEEM, CECOL prepared this Environmental Impact Assessment Screening report. Eamonn has eighteen years consultancy experience and has prepared Screening for Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Statements for various projects, including residential, amenity, renewable energy and transport developments in addition to strategic policy and planning proposals. Eamonn conducted a field visit to the project area in April 2026. Eamonn's initial years in ecological consultancy involved botanical and habitat surveys for the purposes of EIA, EcIA and large scale habitat surveys for local authorities. This included plant species identification and habitat classification in a wide range of rural, urban and peri-urban environments. Eamonn is a member of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) and regularly attends local and regional BSBI field meetings in addition to carrying out recording for the proposed BSBI 2020 Atlas, in north Co. Galway and south Co. Mayo.

Eamonn has extensive experience in the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) role for Flood Relief Schemes, roads and pipeline developments which requires weekly site visits, monitoring of mitigation measures, reviewing contactors method statements in addition to ongoing liaison with site operational staff and the design team. Eamonn has also been involved in the preparation and review of numerous Screening for Appropriate Assessment reports, Natura Impact Statements, Ecological Impact Assessments and Invasive Species Management Plans for a range of project types including roads, water infrastructure, solar farms, wind farms and peatland rehabilitation works. Through his involvement in all of these projects, Eamonn has honed his skills in field based assessments and the subsequent reporting and interpretation of information yielded from desk and field based resources.

Eamonn routinely drafts, reviews and completes AAs for numerous projects. As the project design is developed, Eamonn seeks to influence the project design and refine the AA process to avoid and reduce potential impacts to the habitats and species for which the potentially impacted European site

is designated. The outcome ensures that the finalised AA has been developed through an iterative process where the findings of the AA inform and are being informed by the project design throughout.

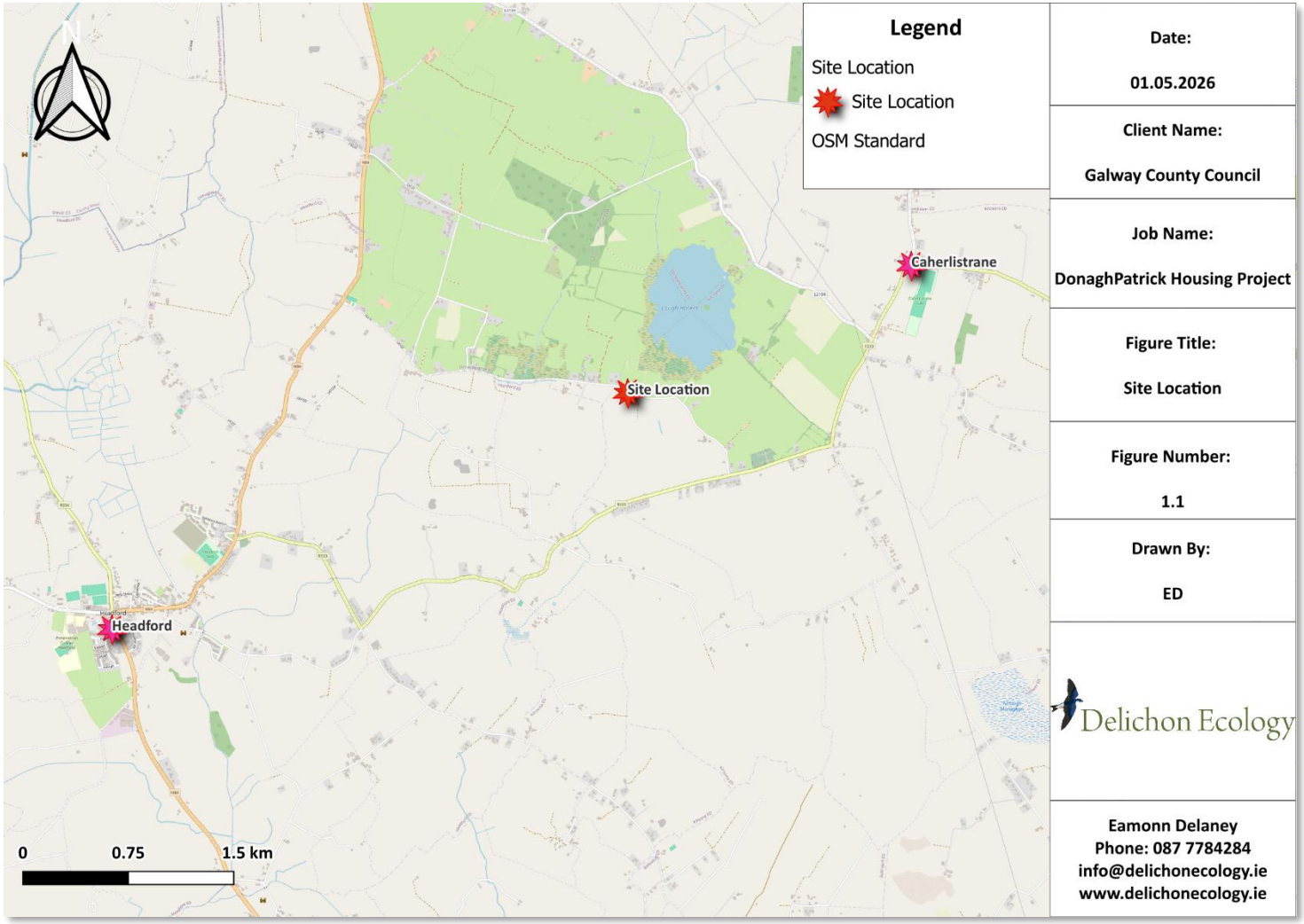

Figure 1-1: Site Location

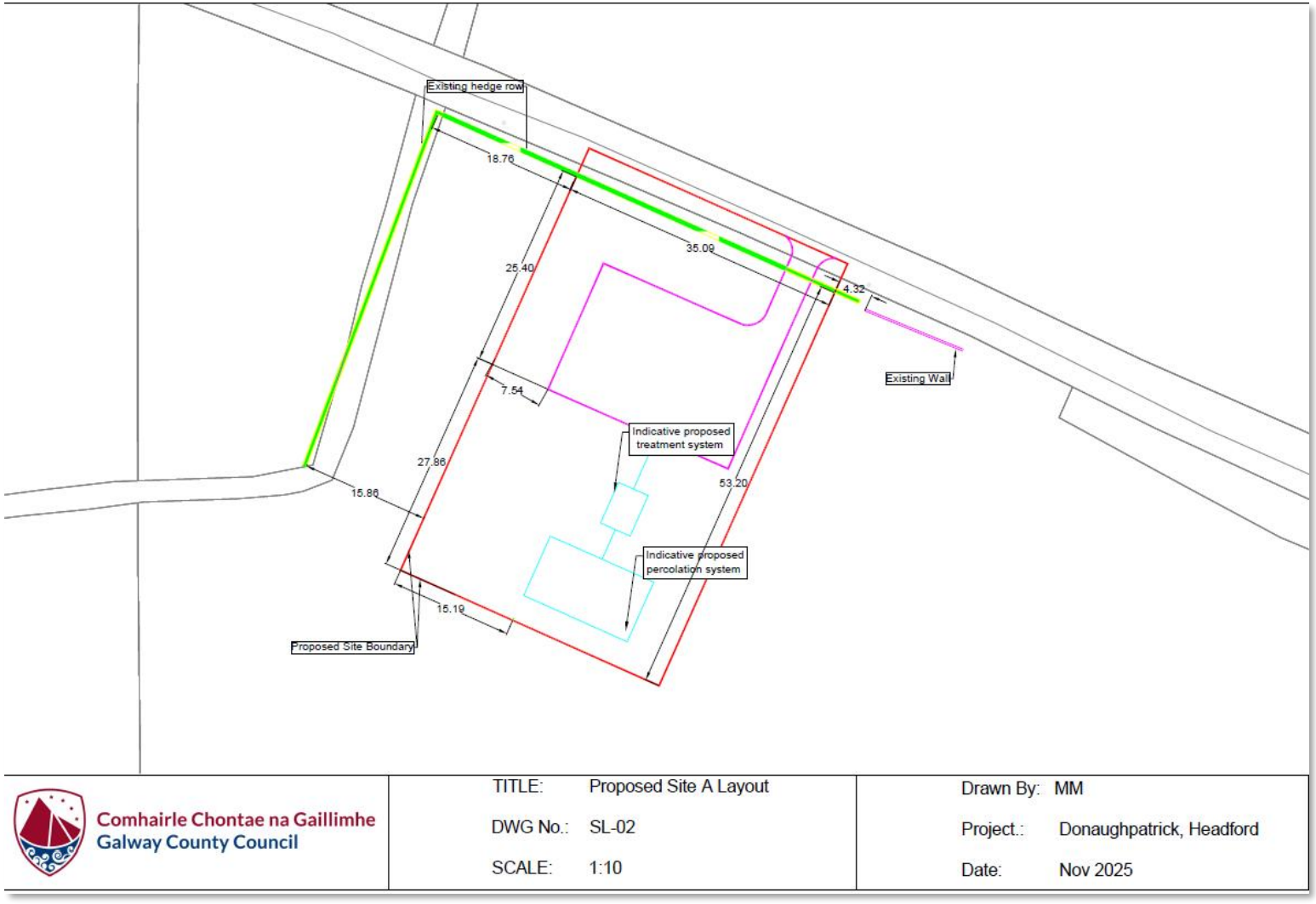

Figure 1-2: Site Layout & Boundary

2 METHODOLOGY

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines (DEHLG, 2009, rev. 2010) outlines the European Commission's methodological guidance (EC, 2021) promoting a four-stage process to complete the AA and outlines the issues and tests at each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required.

The four stages are summarised diagrammatically in **Figure 2-1**. Stages 1-2 deal with the main requirements for assessment under Article 6(3). Stage 3 may be part of the Article 6(3) Assessment or may be a necessary precursor to Stage 4. Stage 4 is the main derogation step of Article 6(4).

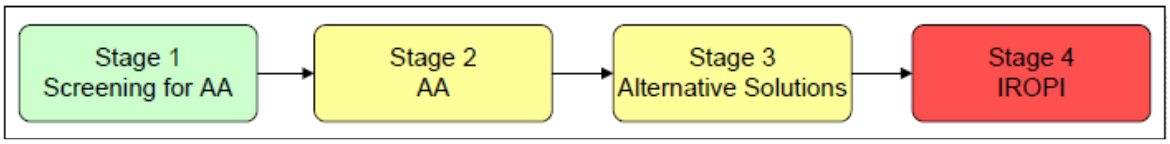

Figure 2-1: Four Stages of Appropriate Assessment

2.1.1 Stage 1 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Screening is the process that addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3):

Whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site, and whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European 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, unless potential impacts clearly can be avoided through the modification or redesign of the plan or project, in which case the screening process is repeated on the altered plan. The greatest level of evidence and justification will be needed in circumstances when the process ends at screening stage on grounds of no impact.

2.1.2 Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement)

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

This stage considers whether the plan or project, alone or in combination with other projects or plans, will have adverse effects on the integrity of a European site, and includes any mitigation measures necessary to avoid, reduce or offset negative effects. The proponent of the plan or project will be required to submit a Natura Impact Statement, i.e. the report of a targeted professional scientific examination of the plan or project and the relevant European sites, to identify and characterise any possible implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives, taking account of in-

combination effects. This should provide information to enable the public authority to carry out the AA.

The information required in a Natura Impact Statement, is outlined in Regulation 42(5) (a) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011) as amended, as follows:

A Natura Impact Statement shall, in addition to addressing the issues referred to in the interpretation contained in Regulation 2(1), include such information or data as the public authority considers necessary, and specifies in a notice given under paragraph (3), to enable it to ascertain if the plan or project will affect the integrity of the site.

Where appropriate, a Natura Impact Statement shall include, in addition—

i. the alternative solutions that have been considered and the reasons why they have not been adopted,

ii. the imperative reasons of overriding public interest that are being relied upon to indicate that the plan or project should proceed notwithstanding that it may adversely affect the integrity of a European site,

iii. the compensatory measures that are being proposed.

If the assessment is negative, i.e. adverse effects on the integrity of a site cannot be excluded, then the process must proceed to Stage 3, or the plan or project should be abandoned. The competent authority must make a determination to that effect before proceeding to the next stage.

2.1.3 Guidance

This Screening for AA and NIS report has been prepared with regard to the relevant provisions of the EU Council Directive 92/43/EEC and Ireland's EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

The methodology followed for this assessment has had regard to the following guidance and legislation:

- DoEHLG (2009, rev. 2010) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government;
- European Commission (EC) (2018), Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission;
- EC (2002) Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission;
- EC (2021) Assessment of Plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;

- EC (2007a) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission. European Commission;
- EC, (2007b), Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission;
- EC (2013) Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. European Commission;
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Version 1.1 (September 2019), Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland;
- NPWS (2019). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 2: Habitat Assessments. Unpublished NPWS report;
- NPWS (2019). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 3: Species Assessments. Unpublished NPWS report;
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021) Practice Note PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.
- The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended;
- The Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended;
- The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended; and
- Recent Irish and European case law on the Habitats Directive
    - High Court: Uí Mhuirnín v. MHPLG [2019] IEHC 824
    - Sweetman v ABP [2020] IEHC 39
    - Kelly v. An Bord Pleanála (Aldi Stores) [2019] IEHC 84
    - Heather Hill Management v. An Bord Pleanála and Burkeway Homes [2019] IEHC 186 and 450 Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU):
    - C-258/11 - Sweetman and Others v ABP (Galway Bypass)
    - C-258/11 - AG opinion, Sweetman and Others v ABP (Galway Bypass)
    - C-127/02 – Waddenzee
    - C-521/12 - T.C. Briels and Others v Minister van Infrastructuur en Milieu
    - C-323/17 - People Over Wind and Sweetman v. Coilte Teoranta.

2.1.4 Information Consulted for this Report

This assessment has been informed by the following sources of data:

- Information on the location, nature and design of the proposed project as provided by the client;
- Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (DHPCLG) online land-use mapping (www.myplan.ie/en/index.html);
- Office of Public Works (OPW) National Flood Hazard Mapping website (www.floodmaps.ie);
- Review of the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) webmapper https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Map
- Geological Survey of Ireland - National Draft Bedrock Aquifer map;
- Geological Survey of Ireland - Groundwater Database (www.gsi.ie);

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) geoportal mapping tool (https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/);
- National Parks and Wildlife Service protected site and species information and data (https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites);
- Spatial data in respect of Article 17 reporting, available online at https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data/habitat-and-species-data/article-17.
- Spatial data in respect of Article 12 reporting, available online at https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data/habitat-and-species-data/article-12-data.
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (www.biodiversityireland.ie);
- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028; and
- Ordnance Survey of Ireland mapping and aerial photography (www.osi.ie).

3 PROJECT DESCRIPTON AND EUROPEAN SITES

3.1 Proposed Housing Development

The proposed development consists of the construction of 1 no. 4 bedroomed; single-storey detached residential unit, wastewater treatment system and all associated site works.

The layout of the proposed housing development is presented in **Figure 1.2**.

3.2 European Sites

3.2.1 Source-Pathway-Receptor Model

The likely effects of the proposed works on European sites have been appraised using a source-pathway-receptor model, where:

- A 'source' is defined as the individual element of the proposed development that has the potential to impact on a European site, its qualifying features and its conservation objectives;
- A 'pathway' is defined as the means or route by which a source can affect the ecological receptor; and
- A 'receptor' is defined as the Special Conservation Interests of Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Qualifying Interests (QI) of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) for which Conservation Objectives have been set for the European sites being screened.

A source-pathway-receptor model is a standard tool used in environmental assessment. In order for an effect to be likely, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism results in no likelihood for the effect to occur. The source-pathway-receptor model was used to identify a list of European sites, and their QIs/SCIs, with potentially links to European site.

3.2.2 Likely Significant Effect

The threshold for a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) is treated in the screening exercise as being above a de minimis level . The opinion of the Advocate General in CJEU case C-258/11 outlines:

> "The requirement that the effect in question be 'significant' exists in order to lay down a de minimis threshold. Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on a European site are thereby excluded. If all plans or projects capable of having any effect whatsoever on the site were to be caught by Article 6(3), activities on or near the site would risk being impossible by reason of legislative overkill."

In this report, therefore, 'relevant' European sites are those within the potential ZoI of activities associated with the proposed works, where LSE pathways to European sites were identified through the source-pathway-receptor model.

3.3 European Sites within the Project Zone of Influence

This stage of the screening for AA process describes European Sites within the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the proposed project.

Section 3.2.3 of the Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010) states that the approach to Appropriate Assessment screening can be different for different plans and projects depending on the scale of the plan, project or programme and the likely associated effects. The overriding criteria determining whether a European Site will be impacted and potentially consequently effected by a proposal is the distance between proposal and a European Site and whether there are pathways for effect linking the proposal to European Sites.

Both UK (Scott Wilson et al., 2006) and Irish guidance (DoEHLG, 2010) outline that a distance of 15km may suffice as a likely Zone of Impact (ZoI) in the case of plans on European Sites and may be sufficient to cover the geographic extent over which significant ecological effects are likely to occur. However for certain projects, the DoEHLG (2010) guidance recognises that the likely ZoI could be 'much less than 15km, and in some cases less that 100m, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects'.

Recent guidance from Office of the Planning Regulator (2021) indicates that the zone of influence for a proposal is the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European Site. This guidance indicates that the zone of influence should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework. Using the Source » Pathway » Receptor approach and having regard for the location, the nature of the works, and the small size and scale of the works, it is considered for the purpose of this assessment that the likely ZoI on European Sites is the zone immediately around the proposed works, in addition to any sites with a hydrological or hydrogeological connection downstream or overlapping the project and/or with an ecological connection, where distance would be dependent on the qualifying interests of the site. To that end the following sites are potentially located within the Source» Pathway » Receptor zone of influence of the proposed works.

- Lough Corrib SAC (000297); and
- Lough Corrib SPA (004042).

The assessment of connectivity between the European Sites and the proposed works follows the potential source-pathway-receptor model, which identifies the source of likely significant impacts, if any, the pathway (land, air, hydrological, hydrogeological pathways, etc) along which those impacts may be transferred from the source to the receiving environmental receptors (i.e. European Sites and/ or features for which the sites are designated).

Where it is evident that there is no connectivity between the proposed work and receptors (i.e. European Sites and/ or features for which, the sites are designated), the receptors are excluded from the AA process. Similarly, where connectivity exists between the proposed work and receptors but is deemed not to result in likely significant effects to the receptor, the receptor can be screened out (i.e. likely significant effects to receptors excluded; receptor not considered further in AA process).

In contrast to the above, where it is not possible to exclude likely significant effects on the basis of best scientific knowledge, a more detailed scientific assessment of the proposed works is required which focuses on the European Sites likely to be affected and the relevant designated feature in question.

The integrity of a European Site (referred to in Article 6.3 of the EU Habitats Directive) is determined based on the Conservation Status of the features (habitats and/ or species) for which SACs and SPAs are designated. The Qualifying Interests (QI) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) for protected sites have been obtained through a review of the Conservation Objectives documents available from the NPWS website www.npws.ie.

Figure 3-1 shows the European Site within the zone of influence of the proposed dwelling site. **Table 3-1** provides details on the distance and connectivity of European Sites within the zone of influence of the proposed dwelling site.

Table 3-1: European Sites within the proposed development's Zone of Influence

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Features / Special Conservation Interest Species[1]	Distance from Study Area[2]	S-P-R Connectivity
000297	Lough Corrib SAC	1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera* 1092 White-clawed Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* 1095 Sea Lamprey *Petromyzon marinus* 1096 Brook Lamprey *Lampetra planeri* 1106 Salmon *Salmo salar* 1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* 1355 Otter *Lutra lutra* 1393 Slender Green Feather-moss *Drepanocladus vernicosus* 1833 Slender Naiad *Najas flexilis* 3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) 3130 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea 3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp.	4.5km west via the nearest straight line distance	The proposed housing development is not located within the bounds of a European Site. The proposed works do not support direct connectivity to European sites within the project ZoI. The proposed development site does not support direct connectivity with European Sites and is located >4km from the nearest Lough Corrib SAC. However, the proposed development supports indirect hydrological connectivity with Lough Hackett via a drainage channel located on the site's western boundary. This drainage channel drains towards Lough Hackett ca. 400m north. Lough Hackett is a lacustrine waterbody which drains the local area of Caherlistrane to the north. Analysis of aerial photography and data held by the EPA did not identify a hydrological feature draining Lough Hackett to the surrounding environment. Nonetheless, the proposed residential development and the receiving environment

[1]*Indicates priority Annex I habitats
[2]Indicates the nearest straight-line distance unless otherwise quoted.

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Features / Special Conservation Interest Species[1]	Distance from Study Area[2]	S-P-R Connectivity
		3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) 6410 *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) 7110 Active raised bogs* 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion 7210 Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) 7230 Alkaline fens 8240 Limestone pavements* 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with ,OH[and %OHFKQXP in the British Isles 91D0 Bog woodland*		are located within the Clare-Corrib groundwater body which also partially underlies and overlaps Lough Corrib waterbody located to the west. To that end, there may be the potential for remote tenuous connectivity to the Lough Corrib catchment and its constituent European Sites via groundwater vectors.
004042	Lough Corrib SPA	A051 Gadwall *Anas strepera* A056 Shoveler *Anas clypeata* A059 Pochard *Aythya ferina* A061 Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*	6.7km south-west via the nearest straight line distance	The proposed housing development is not located within the bounds of a European Site. The proposed works do not support direct

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Features / Special Conservation Interest Species[1]	Distance from Study Area[2]	S-P-R Connectivity
		A065 Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra* A082 Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* A125 Coot *Fulica atra* A140 Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* A179 Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* A182 Common Gull *Larus canus* A193 Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* A194 Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* A395 Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris* A999 Wetlands		connectivity to European sites within the project ZoI. The proposed development site does not support direct connectivity with European Sites and is located >6km from Lough Corrib SPA. However, the proposed development supports indirect hydrological connectivity with Lough Hackett via a drainage channel located on the site's western boundary. This drainage channel drains towards Lough Hackett ca. 400m north. Lough Hackett is a lacustrine waterbody which drains the local area of Caherlistrane to the north. Analysis of aerial photography and data held by the EPA did s not identify a hydrological feature draining Lough Hackett to the surrounding environment. Nonetheless, the proposed residential development and the receiving environment are located within the Clare-Corrib groundwater body which also partially underlies and overlaps Lough Corrib waterbody located to the west. To that end, there may be the potential for remote tenuous connectivity to the Lough Corrib catchment and its constituent European Sites via groundwater vectors.

3.3.1 Summary of Connectivity Analysis

The proposed development site does not support direct connectivity with European Sites and is located >4km from the nearest Lough Corrib SAC. However, the proposed development supports indirect hydrological connectivity with Lough Hackett via a drainage channel located on the site's western boundary. This drainage channel drains towards Lough Hackett ca. 400m north. Lough Hackett is a lacustrine waterbody which drains the local area of Caherlistrane to the north. Analysis of aerial photography and data held by the EPA did not identify a hydrological feature draining Lough Hackett to the surrounding environment. Nonetheless, the proposed residential development and the receiving environment are located within the Clare-Corrib groundwater body which also partially underlies and overlaps the Lough Corrib waterbody located to the west. To that end, there may be the potential for remote tenuous connectivity to the Lough Corrib catchment and its constituent European Sites via groundwater vectors.

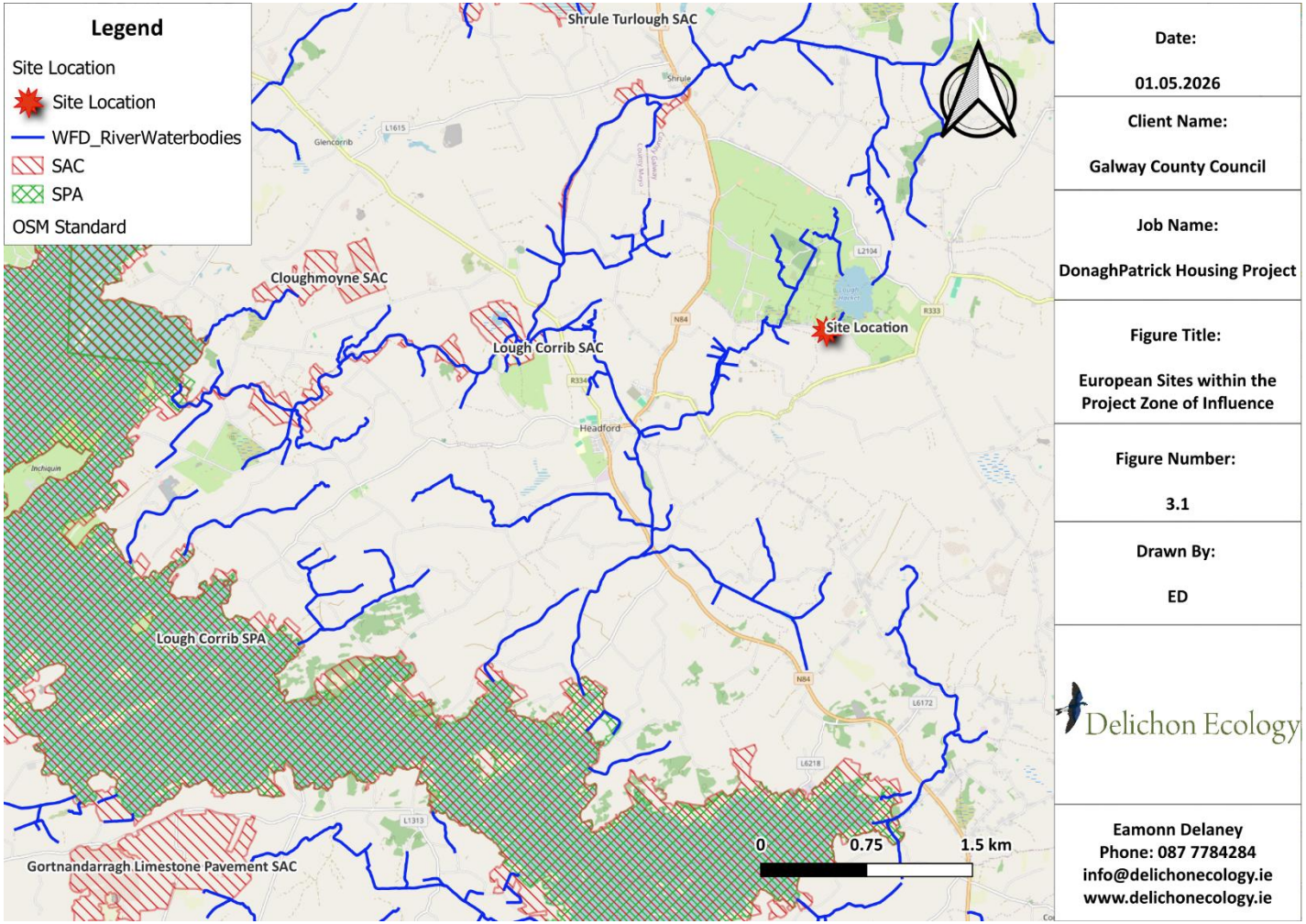

Figure 3-1: European Sites within the project Zone of Influence

3.3.2 European Site Descriptions

Site descriptions for European Sites within relative proximity are presented below.

Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code: 000297)

Lough Corrib is situated to the north of Galway city and is the second largest lake in Ireland, with an area of approximately 18,240 ha (the entire site is 20,556 ha). The lake can be divided into two parts: a relatively shallow basin, underlain by Carboniferous limestone, in the south, and a larger, deeper basin, underlain by more acidic granite, schists, shales and sandstones to the north. The surrounding lands to the south and east are mostly pastoral farmland, while bog and heath predominate to the west and north. A number of rivers are included within the cSAC as they are important for Atlantic Salmon. These rivers include the Clare, Grange, Abbert, Sinking, Dalgan and Black to the east, as well as the Cong, Bealanabrack, Failmore, Cornamona, Drimneen and Owenriff to the west. In addition to the rivers and lake basin, adjoining areas of conservation interest, including raised bog, woodland, grassland and limestone pavement, have been incorporated into the site. Lough Corrib is one the best examples of a large lacustrine catchment system in Ireland, with a range of habitats and species still well represented. These include 15 habitats which are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive, six of which are priority habitats, and nine species which are listed on Annex II. The lake is also internationally important for birds and is designated as a Special Protection Area. (NPWS, 2022)[3].

Lough Corrib SPA (Site Code: 004042)

Lough Corrib is the largest lake in the country and is located, for the most part, in County Galway, with a small section in the north extending into County Mayo. The lake can be divided into two parts: a relatively shallow basin in the south, which is underlain by Carboniferous limestone, and a larger, deeper basin to the north, which is underlain by more acidic granite, schists, shales and sandstones. The main inflowing rivers are the Black, Clare, Dooghta, Cregg, Owenriff and the channel from Lough Mask. The main outflowing river is the Corrib, which reaches the sea at Galway City. Lough Corrib SPA is an internationally important site which supports in excess of 20,000 wintering waterbirds, including a population of Pochard that is, itself, of international importance. A further six species of wintering waterfowl have populations of national importance. The site also contains a nationally important communal roost site for Hen Harrier. Lough Corrib is the most important site in the country for breeding Common Scoter. Its populations of breeding gulls and terns are also notable, with nationally important numbers of Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Common Tern and Arctic Tern occurring. It is of note that several species which regularly occur are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, i.e. Whooper Swan, Greenland White-fronted Goose, Hen Harrier, Golden Plover, Common Tern and Arctic Tern. Lough Corrib is a Ramsar Convention site. (NPWS, 2014)[4].

3.3.3 Conservation Objectives of European Sites

European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain at favourable conservation status areas designated as SAC and SPA. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites.

[3] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY000297.pdf
[4] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY004042.pdf

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing; and
- The specific structure and functions which 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 favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is 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.

The integrity of a European site (referred to in Article 6.3 of the EU Habitats Directive) is determined based on the conservation objectives and of the site. The Qualifying Interests (QI) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) are obtained through a review of the most recently published (web-published or otherwise) Conservation Objective supporting documents and Site-Specific Conservation Objectives documents (where available) for the European site.

3.3.3.1 Conservation Objectives of proximal European Sites

The features of Qualifying Interest for European Sites within the project Zone of Influence are listed in **Table 3-1**. Further details on Conservation Objectives for this European Site are provided below.

Lough Corrib SAC (000297)

The detailed conservation objectives for Lough Corrib SAC are provided in the Conservation Objectives document available on the NPWS website, as follows:

https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000297.pdf

Lough Corrib SPA (004042)

The generic conservation objectives for Lough Corrib SPA are provided in the Conservation Objectives document available on the NPWS website, as follows:

https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004042.pdf

4 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Ecological Receptors

A site walkover survey was completed on the morning of April 20th 2026 to inform this Screening for Appropriate Assessment report. The footprint of the proposed development site comprises open and expansive improved agricultural grassland (GA1) which supports grazing dairy cattle. The grassland sward is improved to support vigorous grasses and broadleaved agricultural herbs, including perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), broadleaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.) and occasional, localised common rush (*Juncus effusus*).

The northern boundary of the site supports a roadside hedgerow (WL1) which includes tall (4.0m) cut / maintained shrubs and young trees including hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.).

The western boundary of the development site is slightly lower lying and supports a narrow drainage channel which is adjoined by linear gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), grey willow (*Salix cinerea*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) scrub. The drainage channel is narrow and shallow (less than 1.5m wide, 0.5m wetted width and 0.5m deep) and supports negligible waterflow, and which supports instream and adjoining floating sweet grass (*Glyceria fluitans*), watercress (*Nasturtium officinale* agg.), brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*) and meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). This drainage channel moves water south to north and comprises the upper extent of the Headford_010 watercourse, which itself is a tributary of Lough Hacket, located ca 400m downstream.

Photos of the Study Area

Photographs of the proposed housing development and environs are presented below.

Image 4.1: View of the proposed dwelling site footprint looking east

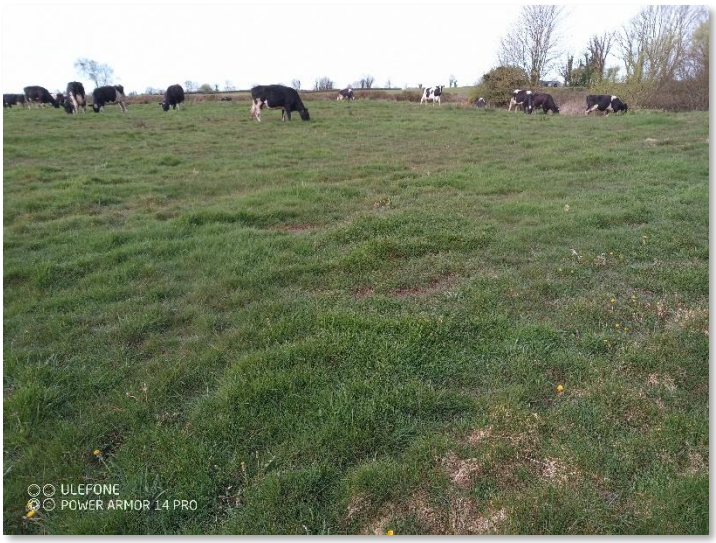

Image 4.2: View of the proposed dwelling site footprint looking south

	
Image 4.3: Channelised watercourse leading to Lough Hackett located to the north of the site	**Image 4.4: Local road located immediately north of the proposed dwelling site, with adjoining hedgerows**

4.2 Flooding

The Flood Info database (www.floodinfo.ie) was also consulted to identify Predictive Flood Risk Areas (PFRA) mapped as part of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme for the study area. OPW developed the Flood Hazard Mapping website floodmaps.ie in 2004-2006 which provided information about the location of known flood events in Ireland and showed supporting information in the form of reports, photos, and press articles about those floods. In late 2017 this data was migrated across to the newly developed website www.FloodInfo.ie. This website was consulted to find any instances of flooding in the proximity of the proposed works. The mapping shows zero instances of single past flood events nor recurring flood events within the proposed development boundary. Historic mapping from OSI indicate the site is greenfield with no indication of historical flooding within the site boundary.

4.3 Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) online database[5] was consulted for available edaphic, geological and hydrological information of the site and its environs. The underlying bedrock of the study site is part of the Ardnasillagh Formation which comprise Dark cherty limestone, thin shale. The groundwater vulnerability within the footprint of the study site is classified Groundwater Vulnerability as High 'H' with localised areas of Extreme 'Ex' located along drainage channels to the north linking to Lough Hackett. Bedrock aquifer maps published on the GSI website provide a detailed classification of bedrock aquifer types and indicate the bedrock aquifer beneath the site is classified as Rkc Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (conduit). There are six karst features (identified as enclosed depressions) located ca. 500m to the south / south-east of the proposed dwelling site within the proposed development area or its immediate environs.

The site is underlain by the Clare-Corrib Groundwater Body (IE_WE_G_0020). This GroundWater Body was classified as Good Status[6] and the Groundwater Waterbodies risk score is considered to be 'Not at Risk' of meeting its objectives under the Water Framework Directive. Groundwater and surfacewater interactions of this GroundWater Body is described as follows:

> 'The area is drained by the River Clare and its tributaries, however the present day drainage network has been changed significantly by arterial drainage that took place early in the nineteenth century. Figures 1 and 2 show the pre/post arterial drainage network. According to Coxon and Drew (1983), much of the current stream network is a storm runoff system that is inactive during summer months. Thus, prior to drainage, streams sank underground via the turloughs present in the GWB. Many of the streams have well defined losing stretches where they lose water to the underground system (Daly, 1985).
>
> There is a high degree of interconnection between groundwater and surface water in karstified limestone areas such as in this GWB. Even though large areas of peat and tills overlie the body, collapse features in these areas provide a direct connection between the surface and the groundwater systems. The close interaction between surface water and groundwater in karstified aquifers is reflected in their closely linked water quality. Any contamination of surface water is

[5] GSI Online database: https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/data-and-maps/Pages/default.aspx
[6] Ground Waterbody WFD Status 2019-2024 https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/

rapidly transported into the groundwater system, and vice versa. Furthermore, there are a number of terrestrial ecosystems within this GWB with varying dependence on groundwater[7]'.

4.4 EPA / Site Suitability Assessment

The results of the percolation test undertaken for the proposed dwelling site indicates that the site will be facilitated by a 'tertiary treatment system and infiltration / treatment area'. Given the high water table within the proposed development site, it is proposed to install a secondary wastewater treatment system which will feed onto a tertiary coco filter unit.

The installation and operation of a wastewater treatment system will ensure that wastewater generated on site will be treated and attenuated before being released to the ground / the receiving environment. Surface water run-off from the building's hard surfaces will be directed to soakaway areas (soakpits) within the residential dwelling site boundary for percolation to ground.

The site layout including the location of the wastewater treatment system and percolation area is presented in **Figure 1.2**.

[7] https://gsi.geodata.gov.ie/downloads/Groundwater/Reports/GWB/ClareCorribGWB.pdf

5 SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

This section provides the information required for the competent authority (Galway County Council) to undertake a Screening for AA and determine in view of best scientific knowledge, whether the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have a significant effect on the European site. Specifically, it aims to:

- Provide information on, and assess the potential for the proposed works to significantly impact on European sites; and
- Determine whether the activities proposed, alone or in combination with other projects, are likely to have significant effects on European sites in view of their Conservation Objectives.

This screening assessment provides information to address the following elements:

1. Description of the plan or project, and local site or plan area characteristics. The description covers the full scope of the proposed plan or project (i.e. site set up, construction and operational and phases).

2. Description of the receiving environment setting of the proposed plan or project and its surrounds.

3. Identification of relevant European sites within the projects the potential zone of influence. A preliminary assessment to determine connectivity between the proposed works and receptors (i.e. European sites and/ or features for which the sites are designated). Where connectivity exists, the receptors in question are brought forward in the screening assessment process.

4. For receptors that exhibit potential connectivity to the proposed work a screening assessment is undertaken to establish whether the plan or project is likely to have a direct, indirect or cumulative effect on receptors based on a consideration of likely impacts (i.e. an assessment of significance of effect).

5. Screening statement with conclusions on whether or not an AA is necessary for the relevant a Qualifying Feature.

Table 5-1 presents Screening Assessment Criteria considering the proposed works area.

Table 5-1: Screening Assessment Criteria

Screening Assessment Criteria Screening Questions	Impacts
Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European Sites.	The proposed works are not located within the bounds of a European Site. The proposed works do not support direct connectivity to European sites within the project ZoI. The operational phase of the development will not give rise to any direct discharge or emission to any European Site. There is therefore no likelihood of direct impacts arising from the proposed housing development during either the construction or operational phases which would have the potential to give rise to likely significant effects on any European Site, in view of their conservation objectives.

Screening Assessment Criteria Screening Questions	Impacts
	Based on proximity and topography / geographic distribution, any source / receptor pathways for potential impacts affecting designated European Sites can be excluded based on the distance of sensitive receptors from the development, the potentially tenuous hydrological / hydrogeological connectivity between the proposed works area and European Sites and the assimilative capacity of the downstream hydrological catchments and the large lacustrine waterbody of Lough Corrib. This is with particular reference to the nature and scale of the development footprint which is within habitats of negligible to local ecological value. The proposed development supports indirect hydrological connectivity with Lough Hackett via a drainage channel located on the site's western boundary. This drainage channel drains towards Lough Hackett ca. 400m north. Lough Hackett is a lacustrine waterbody which drains the local area of Caherlistrane to the north. Analysis of aerial photography and data held by the EPA did not identify a hydrological feature draining Lough Hackett to the surrounding environment. Nonetheless, the proposed residential development and the receiving environment are located within the Clare-Corrib groundwater body which also partially underlies and overlaps Lough Corrib waterbody located to the west. To that end, there may be the potential for remote tenuous connectivity to the Lough Corrib catchment and its constituent European Sites via groundwater vectors. The proposed development site is located within the Clare-Corrib groundwaterbody (IE_WE_G_0020) which overlaps the site boundary of Lough Corrib SAC. Nonetheless, there will be no discharge to or abstraction from groundwater as a result of the proposed development, during the project's construction of operational phases. All other European Sites within the potential zone of influence do not support connectivity to the proposed development site via surfacewater, groundwater or other environmental vectors.
Likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project on the European Sites:	
• Size and Scale	The size and scale of the proposed works are small when compared with the surrounding environment and the size of European Sites within the project Zone of Influence.
• Land Take	The proposed development will not result in land-take to European Sites. The most proximal European Site is Lough

Screening Assessment Criteria Screening Questions	Impacts
	Corrib SAC located 4.5km west of the proposed development site. The proposed development site does not support habitats or species for European Sites within the project Zone of Influence.
• Distance from European Sites or Key Features of the Site	The proposed development site will not result in land-take to European Sites. The most proximal European Site is Lough Corrib SAC located 4.5km west. The proposed development site does not support connectivity with the surrounding environment via surfacewater, groundwater or other environmental vectors.
• Resource Requirements	The proposed development will require use of standard construction methods, including wet cement, precast concrete, aggregates and water. Limited volumes of cement and aggregate materials may also be required. Given the absence of viable ecological and environmental vectors on site, it is not considered that the proposed works would result in the release of construction related materials from the proposed site to the receiving and surrounding environment and by extension European Sites.
• Emissions	There are potential dust (to air) and washwater (potential overland flow to the receiving environment) emissions as a result of the proposed works. Potential impacts associated with emissions include run-off of silt laden water to the receiving environment. The discreet and isolated character of the construction phase, combined with the small scale and localised nature of the construction works negates the potential for indirect effects on the receiving environment and by extension, European Sites. Wastewater generated on site will be treated using an on-site wastewater treatment system and percolation area. Based on proximity and topography / geographic distribution, any source / receptor pathways for potential impacts affecting designated European Sites can be excluded based on the distance of sensitive receptors from the development and the absence of indirect hydrological or hydrogeological connectivity. This is with particular reference to the nature and scale of the development footprint which is within habitats of negligible to local ecological value.
• Excavation Requirements	Localised excavations will be required for the proposed development. Potential impacts associated with excavations include run-off of silt laden water to the receiving environment. Excavation requirements could result in the production of mounded aggregate, soils and subsoils. The discreet and isolated character of the construction phase, the

Screening Assessment Criteria Screening Questions	Impacts
	separation distance between the works and European Sites and the small scale of the construction works negates the potential for indirect effects on the Lough Corrib waterbody, with regard to the SCIs of the SPA / QIs of the SAC.
• Transport Requirements	Transport requirements as part of the proposed development will utilise the existing roads serving the proposed development site; i.e. R333 and the local road located along the northern boundary of the site.
• Duration of construction, operation and decommissioning	Duration of construction will be short term, i.e. 12-24 months. The project's operational phase will be long term, i.e. 50+ years. There will be no impacts and consequent likely significant effects as a result of the proposed project duration.
• Cumulative impact with other plans and projects in the area	As part of the AA, in addition to the proposed development, other relevant projects and plans in the area must also be considered at this stage. These plans and projects are considered further in this respect in **Table 5-2** below.

Table 5-2: In-combination Effects associated with the proposed development.

Programmes, Plans and Projects	Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to the Conservation of the Natura 2000 Network	Potential for In-combination Effects
Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	**NHB 1 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species** Protect and where possible enhance the natural heritage sites designated under EU Legislation and National Legislation (Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and Wildlife Acts) and extend to any additions or alterations to sites that may occur during the lifetime of this plan. Protect and, where possible, enhance the plant and animal species and their habitats that have been identified under European legislation (Habitats and Birds Directive) and protected under national Legislation (European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011), Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 and the Flora Protection Order (SI 94 of 1999). Support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves, Wild Fowl Sanctuaries (and other designated sites including any future designations) and the promotion of the development of a green/ ecological network. **NHB 2 European Sites and Appropriate Assessment** To implement Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects likely to impact on European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. All such projects and plans will also be required to comply	A number of strategies, policies and objectives are set out in the ***Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028*** with the aim of protection of the counties natural heritage and biodiversity. A number of policies and objectives provide for the protection of the integrity of sites designated under European and National legislation and ecological works. The Natural Heritage objective (NHB-1) highlights the council's policy to support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European sites. The adherence and implementation of this plan within the Development Plan area will ensure that European Sites are protected, and that Appropriate Assessment is undertaken for all plans, projects or programmes that have the potential for significant effects to European Sites.

Programmes, Plans and Projects	Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to the Conservation of the Natura 2000 Network	Potential for In-combination Effects
	with statutory Environmental Impact Assessment requirements where relevant. **NHB 3 Protection of European Sites** No plans, programmes, or projects etc. giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource 198 requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects.	
River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022 – 2027	The Third Cycle Draft River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 Consultation Report has been published. This report presents a summary of the issues raised in the submissions reviewed from the public consultation on the draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027. The 3rd cycle of River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for the period of 2022-2027 is currently being prepared by Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) in line with the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC). Key issues raised as part of the consultation process within the ten most prominent themes are as follows. - Water Quality / Pollution - Agricultural Practices - Public Engagement and Awareness - Local Authority - Level of ambition - Sewage Pollution	The implementation of the RBMP seeks compliance with the environmental objectives set under the plan, which will be documented for each water body. This includes compliance with the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations S.I. No. 272 of 2009 (as amended). The implementation of the RBMP and achievement or maintenance of environmental objectives which will be set for the receiving water bodies will have a positive impact on water dependent habitats and species within European Sites.

Programmes, Plans and Projects	Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to the Conservation of the Natura 2000 Network	Potential for In-combination Effects
	- Department / Agency - Co-ordination - Funding - Forestry - Peat - Shellfish waters / aquaculture - Other Following review of the submissions, the DHLGH will commence a review and where necessary update the draft RBMP with a view to finalisation and publication in Q3/Q4 of 2022. The SEA and AA processes will continue in parallel until finalisation and will be completed prior to adoption of the 3rd cycle plan.	
Inland Fisheries Ireland Corporate Plan 2021 -2025	IFI's Corporate Plan details the Inland Fisheries Ireland's, Vision, Mission and Values across seven strategic objectives for the period 2021 to 2025. Under each of the seven objectives a series of actions required to achieve the objectives are described, with the intended outcomes outlined. The strategic objectives outline where Inland Fisheries Ireland will focus their efforts between 2021 and 2025. Inland Fisheries Ireland will secure stakeholder feedback on the implementation of the Strategy mid-2023.	The implementation and compliance with key environmental issues and objectives of this corporate plan will result in positive in-combination effects to European sites. The implementation of this corporate plan will have a positive impact for biodiversity of inland fisheries and ecosystems. It will not contribute to in-combination or cumulative negative impacts with the proposed development.
EPA Licenced Facilities	There are no EPA Licenced facilities located within the environs of or downstream of the proposed housing development at Donaghpatrick, Caherlistrane, Co. Galway.	EPA licenced facilities are subject to conditions and parameters associated with licencing requirements, restricting the release of polluted or contaminated materials to the receiving or surrounding environment. Therefore, these facilities will not contribute towards significant negative effects to European Sites.

Programmes, Plans and Projects	Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to the Conservation of the Natura 2000 Network	Potential for In-combination Effects
Local Planning Applications	A search of Galway County Council's online planning enquiry database[8] was undertaken to identify other projects and plans consented within the past five years that are proximal or within the proposed development area. Numerous applications for dwellings, dwelling extensions and agricultural buildings with granted planning permission were noted within the environs of the proposed development site. These small-scale projects are not likely to cause effects to European sites when considered in combination with the current proposal under examination, either during the construction or operational phase. There is therefore no potential for significant in-combination effects of these developments with proposed development.	Adherence to the policies and objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 ensure that local planning applications and subsequent grant of planning comply with the core strategy of proper planning and sustainability and with the requirements of relevant EU Directives and environmental considerations, there is no potential for adverse in-combination effects on European Sites.

[8] https://www.eplanning.ie/GalwayCC/SearchTypes

5.1.1 Conclusion of Cumulative Impact Assessment

Provided adherence to the overarching policies and objectives of the plans and programmes and best practice and mitigation measures are implemented for individual projects, there is no potential for the mentioned plans and projects to have a cumulative impact to European sites, in combination with the proposed development.

In particular, the adherence and implementation of the policies and objectives within the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 will ensure that European Sites are protected, and that Appropriate Assessment is undertaken for all plans, projects or programmes that have the potential for significant effects to European Sites.

Screening Assessment Criteria is further assessed in **Table 5-3** below.

Table 5-3: Screening Assessment Criteria

Screening Assessment Criteria Screening Questions	
Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of the following	
Reduction of Habitat	The proposed development site footprint primarily supports improved grassland with fringing hedgerow and boundary features. The proposed dwelling site does not support habitats or species of European Sites within the project Zone of Influence.
Disturbance to Key Species	The proposed development site footprint primarily supports improved grassland with fringing hedgerow and boundary features. The proposed dwelling site does not support habitats or species of European Sites within the potential project Zone of Influence. The proposed development site does not support suitable foraging habitat for features of Qualifying Interest for which Lough Corrib SAC has designated. The proposed development is located >20k east of the core foraging range (2.5km) held by Lesser Horseshoe Bat within Lough Corrib SAC[9]. Therefore, there will be no ex-situ disturbance to this species as a result of the proposed development.
Habitat or Species Fragmentation	The proposed development site does not support habitats of Qualifying Interest or suitable habitat for species of Qualifying Interest for Lough Corrib SAC and will not contribute to habitat or species fragmentation.

[9] As identified on NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Lough Corrib SAC 000297. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

Screening Assessment Criteria Screening Questions	
Reduction in Species Diversity	The location of the proposed development does not overlap with the boundaries of European Sites. As a result, there will be no reduction in species diversity to European Sites. In addition, the nature and scale of the proposed works and the separation distance between the works and European Sites means that there will be no reductions in species diversity.
Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value	Changes in key indicators of conservation value could occur to downstream hydrologically connected European Sites, should waterborne pollutants leave the site and enter the receiving watercourses. However, the discreet and isolated character of the construction phase, the vast separation distance between the works and European Sites and the small scale of the construction works negates the potential for indirect effects on downstream sections of Lough Corrib SAC / SPA.
Climate Change	The proposed development site will not result in significant negative effects contributing to climate change that could in turn affect the conservation objectives of those European Sites within the project ZoI.
Describe any likely impacts on the European Sites as a whole in terms of Interference with key relationships that define the structure and function of the site;	Likely impacts include the release of water borne pollutants to the receiving environment. However, the discreet and isolated character of the construction phase, the vast separation distance between the works and European Sites combined with the localised nature of the construction works negates the potential for indirect effects on downstream sections of Lough Corrib SAC / SPA.
Provide Indicators of Significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of;	
Loss	The footprint of the proposed works does not directly overlap with any European sites. Therefore, there will be no potential effects to European Sites resulting from direct loss. In addition, the separation distance between the site and European Sites means that there will be no loss to habitats or species of Qualifying Interest of Special Conservation Interest species.
Fragmentation	The footprint of the proposed works does not directly overlap with any European sites.

Screening Assessment Criteria Screening Questions	
	Therefore, there will be no potential for fragmentation to habitats and species of conservation interest associated with European Sites as a result of the proposed development.
Disruption	There will be no direct disruption to features of Qualifying Interest to European Sites as a result of the proposed development. Given the separation distance between the proposed development site footprint and European Sites, there will be no direct disturbance to European Sites and their component Qualifying habitats and species. The discreet and isolated character of the construction phase, combined with the localised scale of the construction works negates the potential for indirect effects on downstream sections of Lough Corrib SAC / SPA.
Disturbance	
Changes to Key Elements of the Site	Changes to key elements of European Sites within the project Zone of Influence are highly unlikely. There is no connectivity between the proposed development site and European Sites. Therefore, the proposed development will not contribute changes to key elements of European Sites.
Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts are not known	The discreet and isolated character of the construction phase, combined with the localised nature of the construction works negates the potential for indirect effects to the Special Conservation Interests of the SPA or Qualifying Interests of the SAC. Taking account of the size and scale of the proposed development, as well as the evaluation of any significant effects which could potentially arise with regard to the sensitivities of the SCIs for the SPA or QIs for the SAC, there are no potential indirect impacts identified which would have the potential to give rise to likely significant effects on either the SPA or SAC designations, in view of the conservation objectives.

5.2 Screening for AA Conclusion

The proposed project has been assessed taking into account:

- The nature, size and location of the proposed project and the associated works and possible impacts arising from same;
- The Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs), Conservation Objectives and conservation status of any European Sites within the project zone of influence;
- The potential for likely significant effects impacts arising from the project on any European Sites; and
- The potential for cumulative impacts.

The Appropriate Assessment Screening process considered the potential for likely significant effects which may arise during the construction and operational phases of the proposed housing development at Donaghpatrick, Caherlistrane, Co. Galway.

The closest European Site to the proposed housing development is Lough Corrib SAC and, located 4.5km west via the nearest straight line distance. However, there is no connectivity identified in relation to the sensitivities of the features of Qualifying Interest for this European Sites, in view of the Conservation Objectives.

This Screening for Appropriate Assessment comprised an evaluation of the pathways for effects on the qualifying interests of designated European Sites, with reference to the location, size, scale, and duration (construction and operation) associated with the proposal. Pathways for impacts on any European Site were evaluated with regard to the nature of the proposed works and the lack of environmental vectors between the proposed works and European Sites in the wider study area. This leads to a determination that there are no likely significant effects on the Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests of any designated European Site, with regard to their conservation objectives.

In particular, no potential for likely significant effects is identified with respect to the Inagh River Estuary SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. There are no impact pathways arising from the proposed project which could interact with the features of Qualifying Interest of the SAC with the potential to give rise to significant effects. Therefore, taking account of the nature of the proposed works, the potential for significant effects via hydrological impact pathways or other environmental vectors are excluded.

It is concluded that there are no likely potential impacts, whether direct, indirect or cumulative/in-combination, which could give rise to significant effects on the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of any designated European Site, in view of their conservation objectives. Consequently, this proposal does not require Appropriate Assessment process and can be screened out.