April '26

ENVIROPLAN CONSULTING
LIMITED

Title

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Development Description

"Construction of a new Galway Fire Brigade Mechanics Building."

Location

Ballygarraun South, Athenry, Co. Galway

Applicants

Galway County Council.

Prepared by:

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James O' Donnell (BA, MRUP, DipAPM)

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1 INTRODUCTION

This Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EcIA) has been prepared by consultant ecologist Edel Hardiman (B. Sc) in consultation with James O'Donnell, Planning Consultant (BA, MRUP, Dip APM) on behalf of Galway County Council who are applying for planning permission for the *"construction of a new Galway Fire Brigade Mechanics Building at Ballygarraun South, Athenry, Co. Galway"*.

The assessment is based on a desk survey and field surveys conducted on the 07th of April 2026 by Edel Hardiman (B. Sc). A mammal camera and survey was conducted from the 07th of April 2026 to the 22nd of April 2026. A detailed flora study of the site was conducted on the 07th of April 2026.

The application site is located within the north of the operational Athenry Fire Station, to the southwest of the Athenry settlement. The Athenry Relief Road, L3124, borders the west of the site, while Prospect Road, R348 is to the south of the Fire Station. The Galway to Dublin railway line is located to the north of the site. The site itself is a greenfield site, and is 7016 sqm in size. The application site for proposed development lies 7.2 km to the north of the Rahasane Turlough SAC (Site code: 000322) and Rahasane Turlough SPA (Site code: 004089). There is no identifiable hydrological/ ecological connector receptor pathway between the application site and these Natura 2000 sites.

This report follows a standard approach based upon the description of the current baseline conditions within the proposed site. A survey of the likely habitats and species present in the proposed site is provided, in addition to the identification of the potential ecological impacts, resulting from the construction and operational phases of the development. An assessment of the likely significance of the identified impacts on valued ecological receptors (VERs), within the site and in close proximity to the site, was also provided. Appropriate remedial mitigation measures are provided where significant negative impacts were identified, to prevent, reduce or counteract the impact.

1.1 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Legislative Context

The Irish Wildlife Act 1976 and the Wildlife (Amended) Act 2000 allows for the protection of most wild animals and birds. Licenses are required for interference with protected species. This act makes it illegal to interfere with or damage the resting or breeding places of any protected wild animal.

The Flora Protection Order 1999 provides protection in Ireland to several rare plant species from being purposefully cut, picked, uprooted, or damaged. It is also illegal under this order to interfere, alter or damage the relevant habitats.

There are three main types of designation for nature conservation in Ireland: Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). NHAs are designated under the Irish Wildlife Act 1976 (amended 2000). A NHA is protected from damage for the presence of habitats and protected plant and animal species. As NHA are not part of the Natura 2000 network, the Appropriate Assessment process is not applicable to these sites.

SACs and SPAs are designated under European legislation, the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed into Irish law in the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 as amended in 1998 and 2005) and the EU Birds Directive 79/409/EEC, respectively. These European designated sites (SACs and SPAs) are also known as Natura 2000 sites. This means that they are part of the Natura 2000 Network, a network of important ecological sites across the European Union. Certain habitats, within the EU Habitats Directive, are classed as 'priority' habitats and are afforded greater protection. For example, Irish priority habitats include turloughs, heaths, blanket bogs and raised bogs. Waterbodies are also afforded protection and are designated as SACs for the presence of species such as the Harbour seal, Salmon, and Freshwater Pearl Mussel.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC) was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 722, 2003). The WFD aims to achieve good status in all waterbodies. It forms a framework for community involvement in the topic of water policy. The WFD updates existing legislation and provides for the management of River Basin Districts (RBDs). RBDs are administrative areas that consist of river basins (catchments) and cross-border basins assigned to an International RBD. RBD allows for a coordinated approach to water management. Currently, Ireland is in the 2nd Cycle of the WFD (2015-2021), where previous RBDs form one national RBD. The 2nd Cycle allows for greater community involvement in water management at a local level.

2 METHODOLOGY

The flora and habitats of the site were assessed using a desk study of information pertaining to the proposed and surrounding areas, ecological records and information pertaining to designations and legislation.

The assessment is based on a desk survey and field surveys conducted on the 07th of April 2026 by Edel Hardiman (B. Sc). A mammal camera and survey was conducted from the 07th of April 2026 to the 22nd of April 2026. A detailed flora study of the site was conducted on the 07th of April 2026.

'*A Guide to Habitats in Ireland'* (Fossitt, 2000) was used to identify and assess habitats in and adjacent to the site, based on current vegetation composition and habitat management. The site was traversed and identified habitats were classified and sketched into field maps of the site. This survey was conducted during the favourable flora survey period as most plants flower during the summer months allowing for easier identification and a comprehensive collection of data regarding the flora on site. This survey included a detailed assessment as to whether species protected under the Flora Protection Order were identified on site. The Flora Protection Order, 1999, provides protection in Ireland to several rare plant species from being purposefully cut, picked, uprooted, or damaged. It is also illegal under this order to interfere with, alter or damage the relevant habitats.

The capability of the site to support certain species (particularly those of conservation importance that may have been recorded during the field survey due to their seasonal absence or cryptic/nocturnal habits) were assessed.

All habitats and species of interest were readily identifiable based on the field surveys carried out on the 07th of April 2026. From the information collected during the field surveys, the published information on the site and its environment, it is considered that a comprehensive ecological assessment was achieved.

Figure 2.1: Indicative Location of the context of the Proposed Development

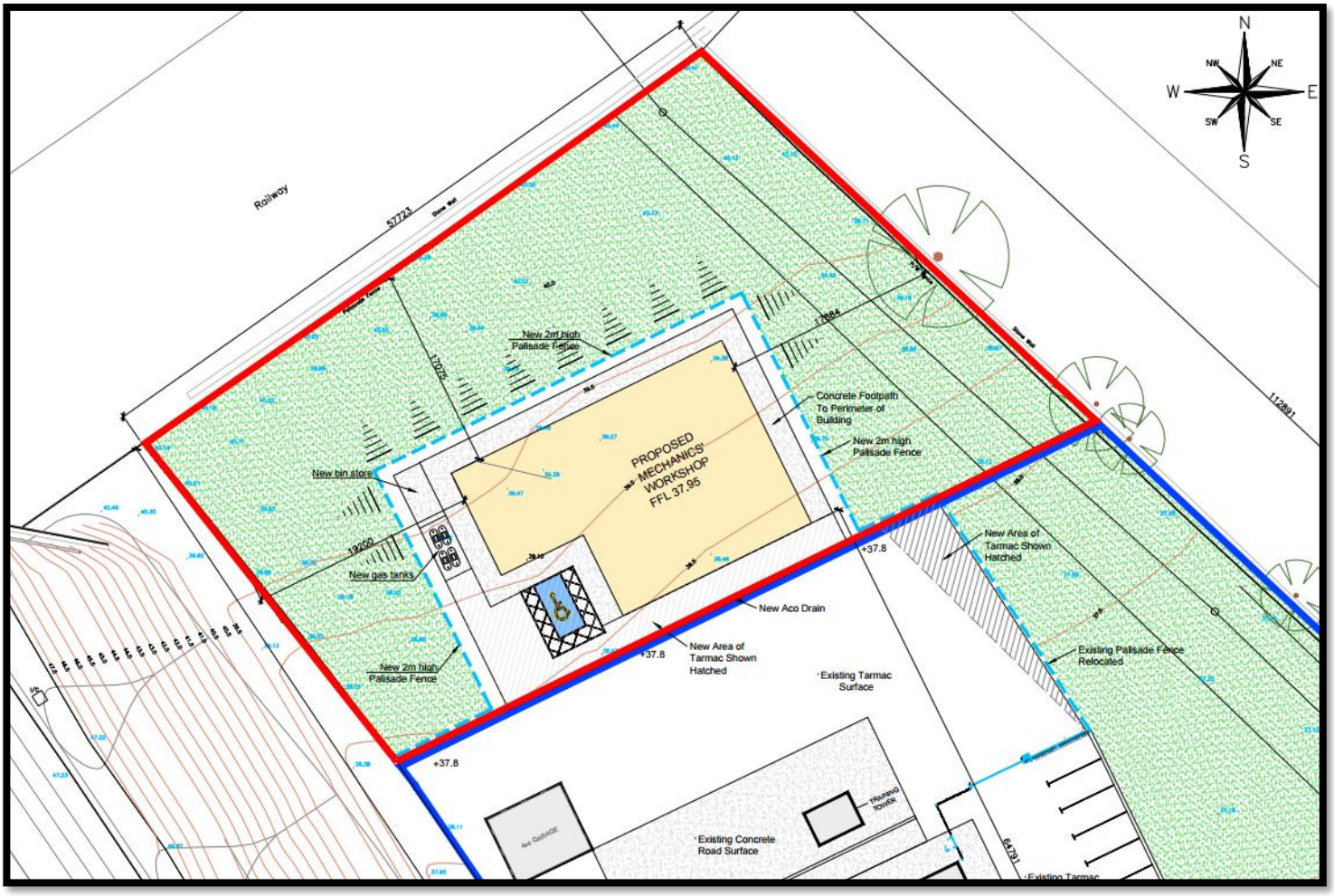

Figure 2.2: Extract of Site layout prepared by Vincent Hannon Architects

3 ESTABLISHING AN ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

3.1 DESK STUDY

A desk study was undertaken to review information that was available with regards to the flora and fauna of the area, including the application site. The following sections pertain to NPWS site synopses for designated conservations sites, birds and plant atlases and specialist research publications. These published sources were consulted for the completion of the Ecological Impact Assessment.

3.1.1 Designated Sites

All European and National designated sites within a 15km radius of proposed site were identified in relation to this development. Designated sites located further than 15km were also identified, however no pathways for impacts on these sites were identified due to the nature and scale of the development, in addition to the lack of hydrological connectivity. Table 3.1 indicates the proximity of designated sites to the proposed development. The locations of the Natura 2000 SAC/SPA sites in relation to the proposed site can be seen in Figure 3.1. The locations of NHA/pNHA sites in relation to the proposed site can be seen in Figure 3.2.

Table 3.1 Designated sites within the 15km of the proposed development and proximity of these sites to the proposed development.

Designated Site and Site Code	Distance from Proposed Site (m/km)
SACs	
Rahasane Turlough SAC - Site code: 000322	7.2 km
Monivea Bog SAC - Site code: 002352	7.9 km
Galway Bay Complex SAC - Site code: 000268	9.7 km
Lough Corrib SAC - Site code: 000297	9.9 km
Lough Fingall Complex SAC - Site code: 000606	13.4 km
Castletaylor Complex SAC - Site code: 000242	12 km
Kiltiernan Turlough SAC - Site code: 001285	13.8 km
Ardrahan Grassland SAC - Site code: 002244	14.3 km
SPAs	
Rahasane Turlough SPA - Site code: 004089	7.2 km
Cregganna Marsh SPA - Site code: 004142	11 km
Inner Galway Bay SPA - Site code: 004031	11 km
NHA	
Cregganna Marsh NHA - Site code: 000253	11 km
Lough Tee Bog NHA - Site code: 000307	11.5 km
Killaclogher Bog NHA - Site code: 001280	13.2 km
Raford River Bog NHA - Site code: 000321	13.7 km
pNHA	
Rahasane Turlough - Site code: 000322	7.2 km
Monivea Bog - Site code: 000311	7.9 km
Tiaquin Bog - Site code: 001709	10.5 km
Kiltullagh Turlough - Site code: 000287	12.5 km

Galway Bay Complex - Site code: 000268	9.7 km
Lough Fingall Complex - Site code: 000606	13.4 km
Castletaylor Complex - Site code: 000242	12 km
Kiltiernan Turlough - Site code: 001285	13.8 km

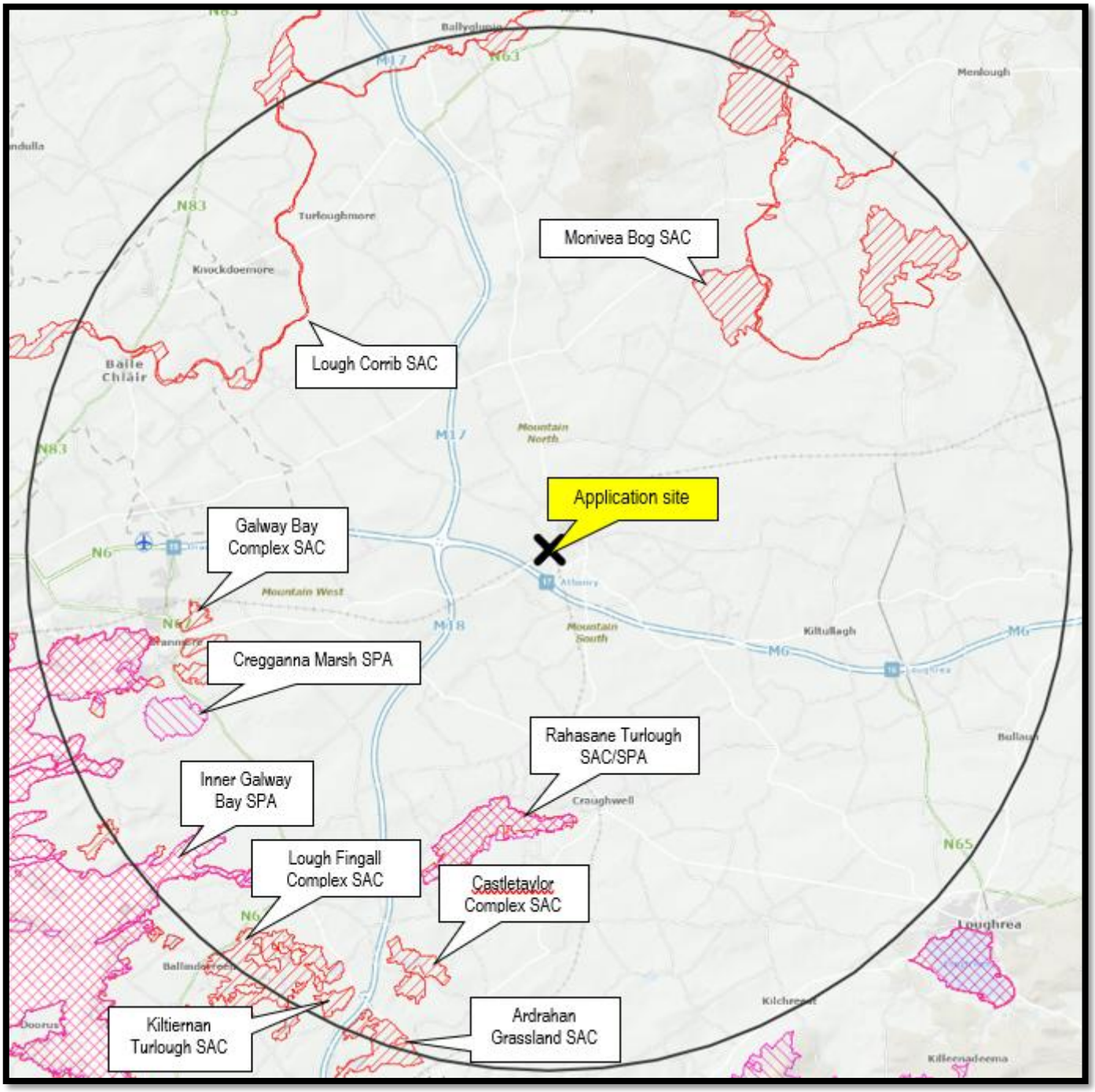

Fig 3.1: Location of the proposed site (black cross) in relation to closest SAC and SPA Sites

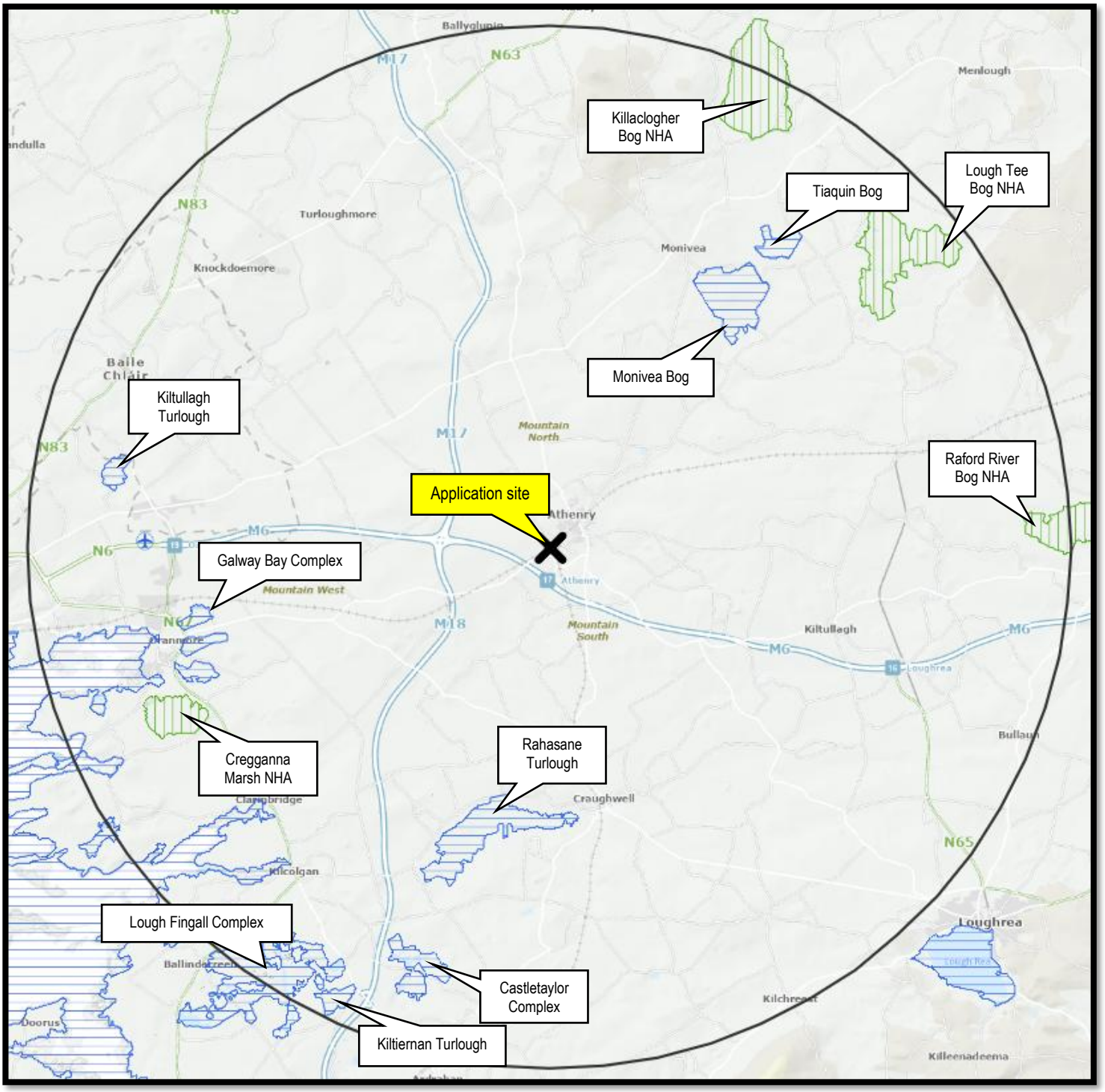

Fig 3.2: Location of the proposed site (black cross) in relation to closest NHA and pNHA Sites

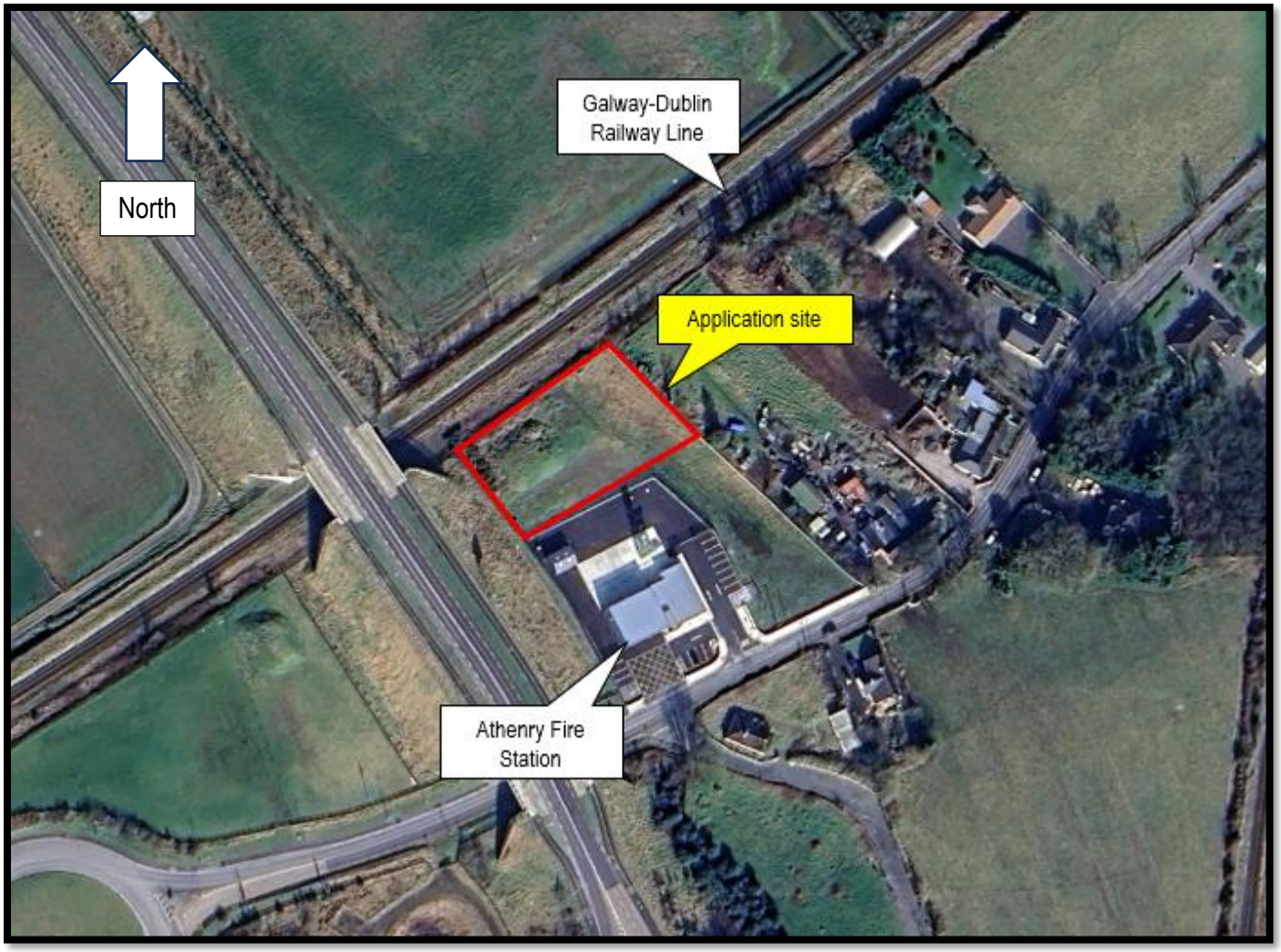

Fig 3.3: Indicative extent of the application site (outlined in red).

Fig 3.4: Indicative location of the application site in relation to the Rahasane Turlough SAC/SPA

4 FLORA

Species listed in Annex II of the Habitat's Directive (CEC, 1992)

No vascular plant species listed in the Annex II of the Habitat's Directive in the site in the Atlas of British and Irish flora.

Species listed in the Flora (Protection) Order:

No plant species listed in the Flora (Protection) Order were present in the site.

Species listed in 'The Irish Red Data Book.10. Vascular Plants' (Jackson, *et al*, 2016)

No plant species listed in the Irish Red Data Book.10. Vascular Plants were present on the site.

4.1 FLORA SURVEY

A site specific habitat and flora survey was conducted on the 07th of April 2026. This survey recorded what habitats are identifiable on site and the flora species present were noted throughout the site. The site is a greenfield site featuring common flora on this unmanaged grassland. This survey was conducted during the favourable flora survey period as most plants flower during the summer months allowing for easier identification and a comprehensive collection of data regarding the flora on site. This survey included a detailed assessment as to whether species protected under the Flora Protection Order were identified on site. The Flora Protection Order, 1999, provides protection in Ireland to several rare plant species from being purposefully cut, picked, uprooted, or damaged. It is also illegal under this order to interfere with, alter or damage the relevant habitats.

There were no treelines or hedgerows noted on site. An area of scrub, largely composed of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and Brambles (*Rubus fructicosus*), was noted to the northwest of the site. The site was largely flat, except for a mound of soil that had recolonized with grass to the northwest of the site. Species recorded on site include Common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Common Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), Cleavers (*Galium aparine*), Dock leaves (*Rumex Obtusifolius*), Curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), Common Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium),* Cut-leaved Crane's-bill (*Geranium dissectum*), Common Ramping-fumitory (*Fumaria muralis*). Common grassland flora was recorded on site of low ecological value. The land adjacent to the site to the south was also surveyed. This was mainly composed of artificial surfaces for the existing fire station as well as a small area of wet grassland, with Rushes (*Juncus*) present in this area.

Following this site specific habitat and flora survey it was concluded that the application site does not appear to support any rare or protected plant/ flora species. Due to the habitats identified on site, significant negative impacts with regards to flora are not predicted for this proposed development considering the common grassland flora recorded and as the habitats on site have little conservation value. Recommendations to preserve flora on site have been highlighted in Section 8.2.2 below.

Figure 4: Habitat Map of area surveyed during the flora survey

5 FAUNA

5.1 BATS

5.1.1 Desktop Research

A desktop survey was carried out on the 18th of February 2026. The National Bat Database of Ireland maintains a Bat suitability index. This grades the site in terms of suitability for each bat species found in Ireland within 1km^2 of the site.

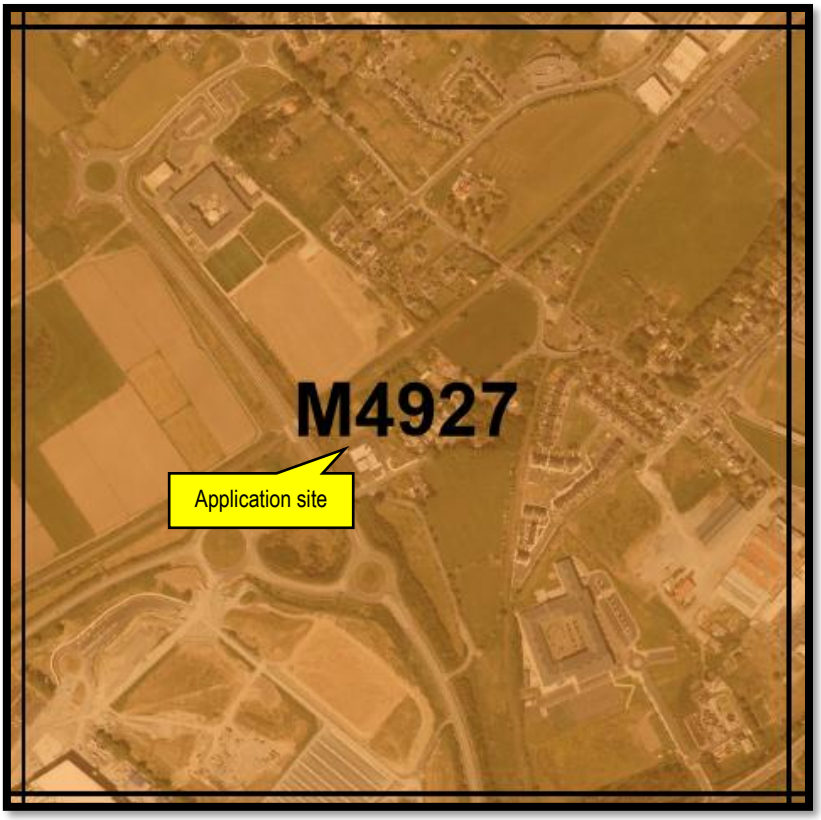

Figure 5.1: Bat Suitability Map of Grid M4927-Source: https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Map

The records of the database search are provided in Table 5.1.1

Table 5.1.1 National Bat Suitability of M4927

Species Name	Scientific Name	Suitability Index[1]	Conservation Status
Brown long-eared bat	*Plecotus auritus*	40	EU Habitats Directive: Annex IV; Wildlife Acts 1976-2017
Lesser Noctule	*Nyctalus leisleri*	43	EU Habitats Directive: Annex IV; Wildlife Acts 1976-2017
Lesser horseshoe bat	*Rhinolophus hipposideros*	6	EU Habitats Directive: Annex II & IV; Wildlife Acts 1976-2017
Common pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	44	EU Habitats Directive: Annex IV; Wildlife Acts 1976-2017
Soprano pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	41	EU Habitats Directive: Annex IV; Wildlife Acts 1976-2017
Whiskered bat	*Myotis mystacinus*	28	EU Habitats Directive: Annex IV; Wildlife Acts 1976-2017
Daubenton's bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	30	EU Habitats Directive: Annex IV; Wildlife Acts 1976-2017
Nathisius' pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus nathusii*	3	EU Habitats Directive: Annex IV; Wildlife Acts 1976-2017
Natterer's bat	*Myotis nattereri*	43	EU Habitats Directive: Annex IV; Wildlife Acts 1976-2017

[1] The maps are a visualisation of the results of the analyses based on a 'habitat suitability' index. The index ranges from 0 to 100 with 0 being least favourable and 100 most favourable for bats. The maps are constructed using spatial units of the OSi National Grid. The index presented is for all species combined, in addition to the individual species' indices.

A desk-study of the proposed site shows that there is moderate suitability for all species of Irish bats within the hectad. The site is located outside the lesser horseshoe foraging ranges as shown in the SSCO maps published by the NPWS: https://dahg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=63b6a14f5b164b289ad87048f71532b8.

The application site is not located within a known Lesser Horseshoe Foraging Range. The closest Lesser Horseshoe Foraging Range is over 13 km to the southwest of the application site and is associated with Lough Fingall Complex SAC. No impacts are predicted on this species due to the significant intervening distance.

Considering the development to the south of the site and the lack of suitable foraging and commuting corridors on site, together with open landscape that is undesired by bat species, it is not considered that bat species will be impacted by the proposed development.

Figure 5.2: Site location in relation to Lesser Horseshoe range associated with Lough Fingall Complex SAC

5.2 OTHER MAMMALS

A search of the National Biodiversity Data Centre website was done that revealed that the following mammals have been recorded within 1km^2 of the site.

During the site surveys, there was a potential small mammal track noted to the north of the site, recorded underneath the metal fencing to the northeast of the site. A wildlife camera was placed on site towards this potential mammal track from the 07th of April 2026 until the 22nd of April 2026. This camera did not record any mammals on site during this survey. No other mammal indicators were noted on site, including prints, scat, dens, holts, setts, or droppings.

Figure 5.3: Image looking north showing faint potential small mammal track to the railway

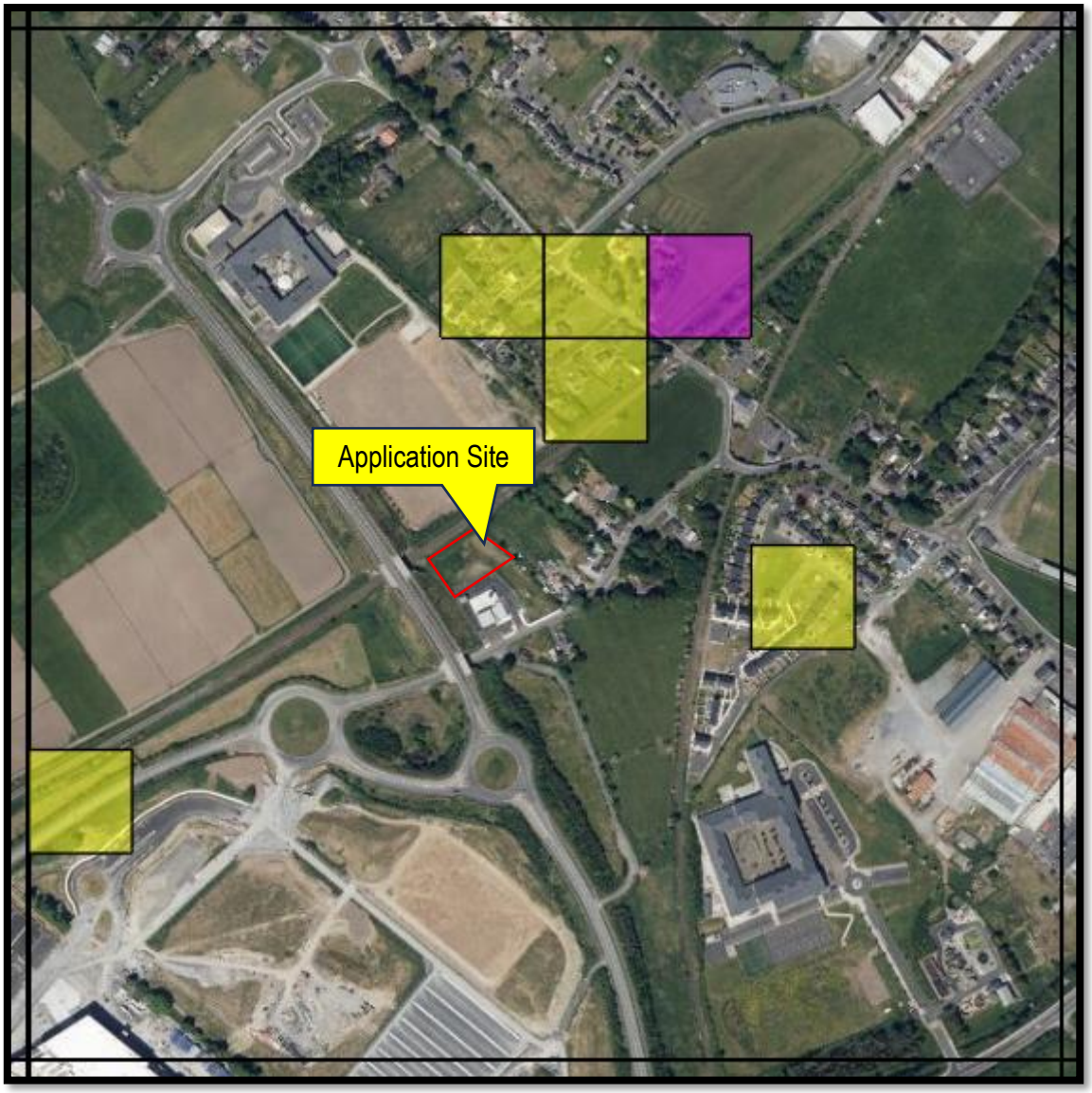

Figure 5.4: NBDC Map (Grid M4927) showing recordings of Fox (Purple) and Hedgehogs (Yellow) within 1 km of the site

Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) – This species was recorded in 2015 further north to the railway tracks. No visual signs of this species was identified on site including tracks, scat or dens. This species is highly adaptable to various habitats and can thrive in urban areas. No foxes were recorded on the mammal camera that recorded on site from the 07th of April 2026 until the 22nd of April 2026. Considering no fox indicators were noted on site during the site visit, no impacts are predicted on this species.

Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) – This species was recorded most recently in 2023 further to the east of the site. No impacts are predicted on this species. The preferred habitat for hedgehogs is grassland abuts mixed woodland and scrub. There were no indicators of hedgehogs on site such as footprints or droppings. No hedgehogs were recorded on the mammal camera that recorded on site from the 07th of April 2026 until the 22nd of April 2026. Considering the site is within a built-up environment adjacent to an existing fire station, no impacts are predicted on this species.

5.3 BIRDS

During the site visit on the 07th of April 2026, birds recorded on site included Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*), Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*), Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*), Eurasian bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), and Eurasian wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*).

6 DESCRIPTION OF BASELINE ENVIRONMENT

6.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY AREA

The application site is located within the north of the operational Athenry Fire Station, to the southwest of the Athenry settlement. The Athenry Relief Road, L3124, borders the west of the site, while Prospect Road, R348 is to the south of the Fire Station. The Galway to Dublin railway line is located to the north of the site.

The site itself is an unmanaged grassland (GA1) and is 7016 sqm in size. Fencing borders the field. There were no treelines or hedgerows noted within the site boundaries. An area of scrub (WS1), largely composed of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and Brambles (*Rubus fructicosus*), was noted to the northwest of the site. The site was largely flat, except for a mound of soil that had recolonized with grass to the northwest of the site.

The land adjacent to the site to the south was also surveyed. This was mainly composed of artificial surfaces for the existing fire station (BL3) as well as a small area of wet grassland (GS4), with Rushes (*Juncus*) present in this area.

Plate 6.1 Looking East from the Southwest of the site

Plate 6.2 Looking East from the Northwest of the site

Plate 6.3 Looking North from the South of the site

Plate 6.4 Looking South from the North of the site

Plate 6.5 Looking South from the Northeast of the site

Plate 6.6 Looking West from the East of the site

Plate 6.7 Looking Northwest from the North of the site at the scrub on site

Plate 6.8 Looking North from the West of the site at the scrub on site

Plate 6.9 Looking Northwest from the South of the site area at the existing Fire Station

Plate 6.10 Looking Northwest from the South of the site area at existing infrastructure to the rear of the Fire Station

Plate 6.11 Looking North from the South of the site area at the wet grassland area to the south of the site

Plate 6.12 Looking East from the South of the site area

7 PLANNING SEARCH

A search was carried out on Galway County Council's online planning query system and Galway County Councils Consultation Portal on the 23rd of April 2026. It was ascertained that the following local planning applications have been granted within a 300m radius of the site in the past 5 years.

- **Part 8 LA 11/21 Proposed New Fire Station, Ballygarraun South, Athenry** - *In accordance with Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 as amended, notice is hereby given that Galway County Council proposes the construction of a new Fire Station at Ballygarraun South, Athenry, County Galway. Proposals include site clearance works, a training tower, signage, landscaping, parking, connections to existing services, public footpaths and all associated site development works*
- **Pl. Ref. no. 2361035**: "*for the proposed development will consist of: • construction of a 4no. storey medical device manufacturing facility providing warehousing, production areas, administration offices & restaurant (GIA: 40,226.6 m2); • construction of a central utilities compound to comprise a gas insulated switchgear substation building (GIA: 124.57 m2), pumphouse building (GIA: 84.79 m2) & MV building (GIA: 306.46 m2); • the development includes 4no. surface car park areas, which comprise a total of 500no. car parking spaces (including 100no. EV charging spaces & 18no. accessible spaces), 10no. motorcycle parking spaces & 178no. bicycle parking spaces; • provision of an outdoor landscaped 'Wild Plaza' & a 2.1km nature trail; • provision of roof mounted solar PV panels & plant equipment on the roof of the manufacturing facility; • provision of water, foul & surface water drainage infrastructure, including – o wastewater treatment plant, o processed wastewater holding, treatment, testing & filtration facility, & o pumping stations & attenuation areas, • provision of access roads, landscaping, alterations/removal of existing field boundaries, public lighting & all other site development works & services ancillary to the proposed development; • provision of pedestrian connectivity infrastructure on the R348, Prospect Road & L3103 including footpaths, pedestrian crossings & all associated works; • provision of temporary construction compound during the construction phase of the development. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) & Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) will be submitted to the planning authority with the planning application*."
- **Pl. Ref. no. 241:** *"of the existing pedestrian accessway to the new Clarin College"*
- **Pl. Ref. no. 212026**: *"for the upgrade of the sewerage network in the town of Athenry and the townlands of Caherroyn, Gorteenacra, Knockaunglass, Athenry, Baunmore, Gortnahown, Prospect, Newford, Ballygarraun South, Raheen and Cullairbaun in Co. Galway. The Athenry Town Walls and Gateway (Record of Proteccted Structure No. 132) is located within the subject site. The development will consist of; Decommissioning of an existing combined sewer overflow at North Gate street within the centre of Athenry Town; upgrade/replacement of the sewers from the Cuirt Ard/Caheroyan Road junction to the Caheroyan Pumping Station; decommissioning and removal of above ground structures of the Caheroyan Pumping station; construction of a new sewer from the decommissioned Caheroyan Pumping including crossing of the River Clarin and lands to the south east; construction of a new sewer which starts at North Gate, crosses the River Clarin at Bridge Street, flows via a new*

sewer to a pumping station adjacent to Pairc na hAbhainn housing estate, crossing a tributaryof the River Clarin to the pumping station site; construction of a new main wastewater pumping station adjacent to Pairc na hAbhainn housing estate including underground chambers, emergency storage tank, wet kiosk, above ground control kiosk, generator, lifting gantry (max 4m in height) and vent stack; Rising main from the pumping station, crossing the R348, to Athenry wastewater treatment plant; Construction of new boundary fencing of 2.4m in height around the pumping station and stormwater overflow outfall to stream to the north of the pumping station site; Decommissioning and removal of existing on-site package wastewater treatment plant at the pumping station site; construction of a new sewer which begins at a small estate in Raheen, passes through the Presentation College school site, crosses 2 no. railway lines and connects into a newly built sewer within the Clarin College school site and then flows to the Athenry Wastewater Treatment Plant; and connecting the existing rising main from the Presentation College to the new sewer; Installation of a new access gate between Caheroyan Drive and Caheroyan House to facilitate access to the sewer for maintenance and for agricultural purposes; and all associated site development works above and below ground. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) accompanies this planning application"

- **Pl. Ref. no. 24348:** "*to construct 3 No. dwelling houses including all associated works and services. The proposed works includes the removal of an existing wastewater treatment system and percolation which was approved under Pl Ref no. 07/2841*"

No potentially significant cumulative and/or in-combination pollution disturbance, disruption, displacement, or habitat loss effects on any QI of any European Site have been identified regarding the proposed development.

8 ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 DO NOTHING IMPACT

If the proposed development did not go ahead, it is likely that the site would remain as an infill site and the vegetation on site would remain as it currently is.

8.2 IMPACTS DURING CONSTRUCTION

8.2.1 Impacts to Fauna

General Fauna

Permanent Slight Negative Impact

The proposed development works will be confined to the application site. The proposed development is localized within the site, which means a negative impact in the short term is predicted.

Best Practice Incorporated into the project design

- Confine disturbance of vegetation to a minimum and where possible stay out of area where no work is to take place.
- Care should be taken during the removal of vegetation for animals which may be using, hibernation, nesting or feeding in. If wildlife is encountered such as hedgehogs, badgers and/or foxes the area of work should be changed until animal moves away or is relocated.
- Where possible, vegetation should be removed in accordance with the Wildlife act and at the appropriate times outside of the bird nesting season. Hedge cutting should not take place between the 1st of March and the 31st of August, in order to ensure minimal distribution to wildlife active during this time.
- All lighting during the construction phase is to be minimal where possible.
- No lighting will remain on after construction works on site have finished each day.

Residual Impact

No residual significant impacts on fauna are expected.

8.2.2 Loss of Floral Habitat

The degree of impact on floral habitat, in absence of best practice, is assessed as:

Permanent Slight Negative Impact

Given the current use of this site, the site does not feature ecologically diverse species. Where possible existing vegetation will be retained.

Best Practice incorporated into the project design

- All planting and landscaping will be carried out in line with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.
- Where possible, vegetation should be removed in accordance with the Wildlife act and at the appropriate times outside of the bird nesting season. Hedge cutting should not take place between the 1st of March and the 31st of August, in order to ensure minimal distribution to wildlife active during this time.
- No long-term significant impacts on floral habitats are predicted.

Residual Impact

The proposed development will impact vegetation and the floral habitat within the proposed development site. However, given the current infill characteristics of the site, no significant residual impacts are predicted.

8.2.3 Pollution of the Wider Area

Temporary Moderate Negative Impact

The construction phase of the proposed development will involve earth moving and levelling which create the potential for pollution in various forms to run off the site and enter the surrounding environment. Chemicals used in construction including hydrocarbons and cement-based products could potentially be washed off the site. Good construction practices will be in place to prevent any risk of pollution running off the site. Lighting during the construction phase should be minimal where possible.

The degree of impact, in the absence of best practice, is assessed as **Temporary Moderate Negative Impact.**

Best Practice incorporated into the project design

- All machinery maintenance and re-fuelling shall be carried out off-site. Spill kits for contaminants such as fuels oils and lubricants must be used.
- All petroleum products are to be bunded during the construction stage of the development.
- The works shall be planned and executed in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency Guidelines.
- Wash water from on-site mixers or lorries shall be disposed of appropriately off site.
- To prevent run-off from stripped ground, banks are to be placed on the downstream side of stockpiles.
- Water from excavations shall be pumped to land and allowed to settle.
- Washing out of concrete trucks should not be permitted within the site and should be conducted in hard standing areas.
- Works with concrete shall be done during dry conditions for a period sufficient to cure the concrete (at least 48 hours).
- Concrete pours shall occur in contained areas.
- Portable toilets and sanitary facilities will be provided for site use.
- Plant will be re-fuelled away from watercourses.

- All site operatives will have immediate access to spill kits when machinery is being used.
- No lighting should remain on after construction works on site have finished each day.

Residual Impact

With best practice incorporated into the design and the above mitigation in place, no significant residual impacts are anticipated.

8.2.4 Spread of Invasive Species

Long Term Slight Negative Impact

The proposed development will involve the movement of soil on the site and will create disturbed ground. In the absence of suitable control measures this impact is classed as **Long Term Slight Negative Impact.**

General Good Construction Management

If any construction machines or construction materials are being brought onsite ensure that the source is free of invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, Gunnera and Rhododendron.

Residual Impacts

With control measures in place, there is deemed to be 'No Impact' in terms of the potential for the introduction and establishment of invasive alien species.

9 IMPACTS DURING OPERATION

9.1 INCREASED HUMAN ACTIVITY

The proposed development includes an application seeking permission for the "*construction of a new Galway Fire Brigade Mechanics Building at Ballygarraun South, Athenry, Co. Galway"*

However, as there are existing developments in the close vicinity of the site and due to the nature of the development, it is not anticipated that there will be a significant increase in human activity at the site.

9.2 DISTURBANCE TO FAUNA

The site of the proposed development is of low ecological significance.

- Care should be taken during the removal of vegetation for animals which may be using, hibernation, nesting or feeding in. If wildlife is encountered such as hedgehogs, badgers and/or foxes the area of work should be changed until the animal moves away or is relocated.

- Vegetation should be removed in accordance with the Wildlife act and at the appropriate times outside of the bird nesting season. Hedge cutting should not take place between the 1st of March and the 31st of August, in order to ensure minimal distribution to wildlife active during this time.

9.3 POLLUTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT – NO IMPACT

Storm water runoff will be treated via a petrol interceptor before discharging into a soakaway, located to the east of the proposed building. No impacts are predicted in this regard.

Wastewater will be discharged into the existing foul drainage network to the south of the site that serves the existing fire station. Given the nature of the proposed development as a mechanics workshop, this will not result in a notable increase in foul discharge onto the existing sewer network. No impacts are predicted in this regard.

A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment was prepared by TOBIN in 2021 for the construction of the fire station to the south of the site. This report included the application site for the proposed mechanics workshop within the assessment area for flood risk. This report concluded that "*Based on the results of this Flood Risk Assessment, the proposed Fire Station is appropriately located in Flood Zone C*." Furthermore, as per the Flood Info Maps (https://www.floodinfo.ie/map/floodmaps/#), there is no identifiable flood risk zone on site. Therefore, no impacts are predicted in regard to flood risk.

10 IMPACTS ON NATIONALLY DESIGNATED SITES

Any potential impacts on European sites are discussed in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report which accompanies this application. The site for the proposed development lies approximately 7.2 km to the north of the Rahasane Turlough SAC (Site code: 000322) and Rahasane Turlough SPA (Site code: 004089). There are no identifiable hydrological/ ecological connector receptor pathways between the application site and these Natura 2000 sites. There is no identifiable potential flood risk on the site. Considering these factors, indirect impacts are not predicted during the construction and operational phase of the proposed works.

11 CONCLUSION

This development will involve the construction of a new Galway Fire Brigade Mechanics Building to the rear of the existing Athenry Fire Station. Given the existing habitats on the site, no long-term impacts are predicted with regards to flora and fauna in the vicinity.

Provided that the proposed development is constructed and operated in accordance with the design, best practice and mitigation that is described within this application, significant effects on ecology are not anticipated.

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