

Report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment Screening

as required under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive
(Council Directive 92/43/EEC)

Athenry Fire Station Proposed Development

Prepared by: Moore Group – Environmental Services

11 March 2021



On behalf of Galway County Council

Project Proponent	Galway County Council
Project	Athenry Fire Station Proposed Development
Title	Report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment Screening Athenry Fire Station Proposed Development

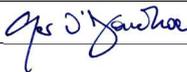
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Appendix A – Finding of No Significant Effects Report

Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
EEC	European Economic Community
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographical Information System
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
OSI	Ordnance Survey Ireland
pNHA	proposed Natural Heritage Area
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area

1. Introduction

1.1. General Introduction

The report contains information required for the competent authority to undertake screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) for a proposed Fire Station at Athenry, Co. Galway (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development) to significantly affect European sites. The report has been prepared to support an application for planning permission for the Proposed Development.

Screening is the process that addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended) (referred to as the Habitats Directive):

- i) whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site, and
- ii) whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site (also referred to as a “European site”) in view of its conservation objectives.

Having regard to the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Section 177U and 177V). The purpose the purpose of a screening for appropriate assessment under Section 177U is “to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site.” The test for AA Screening is that if it cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site then it is necessary to carry out a stage 2 appropriate assessment.

In order to screen out a project, it must be *excluded*, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or the screening process becomes overly complicated, or if it cannot be excluded, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 (AA). Screening should be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation. If potential impacts clearly can be avoided through the modification or redesign of the plan or project, then the screening process is repeated on the altered plan or project.

When screening the project, there are two possible outcomes:

- the project poses no risk of a significant effect and as such requires no further assessment; or

- the project has potential to have a significant effect (or there is uncertainty or it cannot be excluded) and AA of the project is necessary.

This report has been prepared by Moore Group - Environmental Services to support an application for planning permission for the Proposed Development to allow Galway County Council to carry out AA screening in relation to the Proposed Development. The report was compiled by Ger O'Donohoe (B.Sc. Applied Aquatic Sciences (GMIT, 1993) & M.Sc. Environmental Sciences (TCD, 1999)) who has over 25 years' experience in environmental impact assessment and has completed numerous Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports and Natura Impact Statements on terrestrial and aquatic habitats. He has completed several Reports for AA Screening and Appropriate Assessments regarding Data Storage Facilities and Strategic Infrastructure Developments.

1.2. Legislative Background - The Habitats and Birds Directives

It is necessary that the Proposed Development has regard to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. This is transposed into Irish Law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, SI 477 of 2011 (referred to as the Habitats Regulations).

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) is the main legislative instrument for the protection and conservation of biodiversity in the European Union (EU). Under the Habitats Directive, Member States are obliged to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) which contain habitats or species considered important for protection and conservation in an EU context. The Planning and Development Act 2000 (Section 177U and 177V) govern the requirement to carry out appropriate assessment.

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) is concerned with the long-term protection and management of all wild bird species and their habitats in the EU. It is transposed into Irish law by the Habitats Regulations 2011. Among other things, the Birds Directive requires that Special Protection Areas (SPAs) be established to protect migratory species and species which are rare, vulnerable, in danger of extinction, or otherwise require special attention.

SACs designated under the Habitats Directive and SPAs designated under the Birds Directive, form a pan-European network of protected sites known as Natura 2000. The Habitats Directive sets out a unified system for the protection and management of SACs and SPAs. These sites are referred to as Natura 2000 sites and also as European sites.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive establishes the requirement to screen all plans and projects and to carry out a further assessment if required (Appropriate Assessment (AA)). Article 6(4) establishes requirements in cases of imperative reasons of overriding public interest:

Article 6(3): *“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”*

Article 6(4): *“If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to the beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.”*

2. Methodology

The Commission’s methodological guidance (EC, 2002 & 2018, see Section 2.1 below) promotes 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 Commission Guidance is interpreted in Ireland by the Guidance for Planning Authorities on Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 rev.) which is used throughout this report.

Stages 1 and 2 deal with the main requirements for assessment under Article 6(3). Stage 3 may be part of Article 6(3) or may be a necessary precursor to Stage 4. Stage 4 is the main derogation step of Article 6(4).

Stage 1 Screening: This stage examines the likely effects of a project either alone or in combination with other projects upon a Natura 2000 site and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant. In order to screen out a project, it must be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site. Measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the project on the site concerned cannot be taken into account at this stage.

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment: In this stage, there is a consideration of the impact of the Proposed Development with a view to ascertain whether there will be any adverse effect on the integrity of the Natura

2000 site either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are predicted impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts is considered.

Stage 3 Assessment of Alternative Solutions: This stage examines alternative ways of implementing the project that, where possible, avoid any adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

Stage 4 Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain: Where imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist, an assessment to consider whether compensatory measures will or will not effectively offset the damage to the sites will be necessary.

To ensure that the Proposed Development complies fully with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and all relevant Irish transposing legislation, Moore Group compiled this report to support an application for planning permission for the Proposed Development to allow Galway County Council to carry out AA screening to determine whether the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with another plan or project will have a significant effect on a European site.

2.1. Guidance

This report has been compiled in accordance with guidance contained in the following documents:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities. (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 rev.).
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10.
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001); hereafter referred to as the EC Article Guidance Document.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2000); hereafter referred to as MN2000.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018).

2.2. Data Sources

Sources of information that were used to collect data on the Natura 2000 network of sites, and the environment within which they are located, are listed below:

- The following mapping and GIS data sources, as required:
 - National Parks & Wildlife (NPWS) protected site boundary data;
 - Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI) mapping and aerial photography;

- OSI/ Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rivers and streams, and catchments;
- Open Street Maps;
- Digital Elevation Model over Europe (EU-DEM);
- Google Earth and Bing aerial photography 1995-2021;
- Online data available on Natura 2000 sites as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from www.npws.ie including:
 - Natura 2000 - Standard Data Form;
 - Conservation Objectives;
 - Site Synopses;
- National Biodiversity Data Centre records;
 - Online database of rare, threatened and protected species;
 - Publicly accessible biodiversity datasets.
- Status of EU Protected Habitats in Ireland. (National Parks & Wildlife Service, 2019); and
- Relevant Development Plans:
 - Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021

3. Description of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Development comprises the construction of a new Fire Station at Ballygarraun South to the west of Athenry, Co. Galway.

The existing environment comprises a field of improved agricultural grassland which was one third disturbed when used as a construction compound for the adjacent link road development.

Figure 1 shows the Proposed Development location and Figure 2 shows a detailed view of the Proposed Development site on recent aerial photography, note the visible section of recolonised ground to the western third of the site.

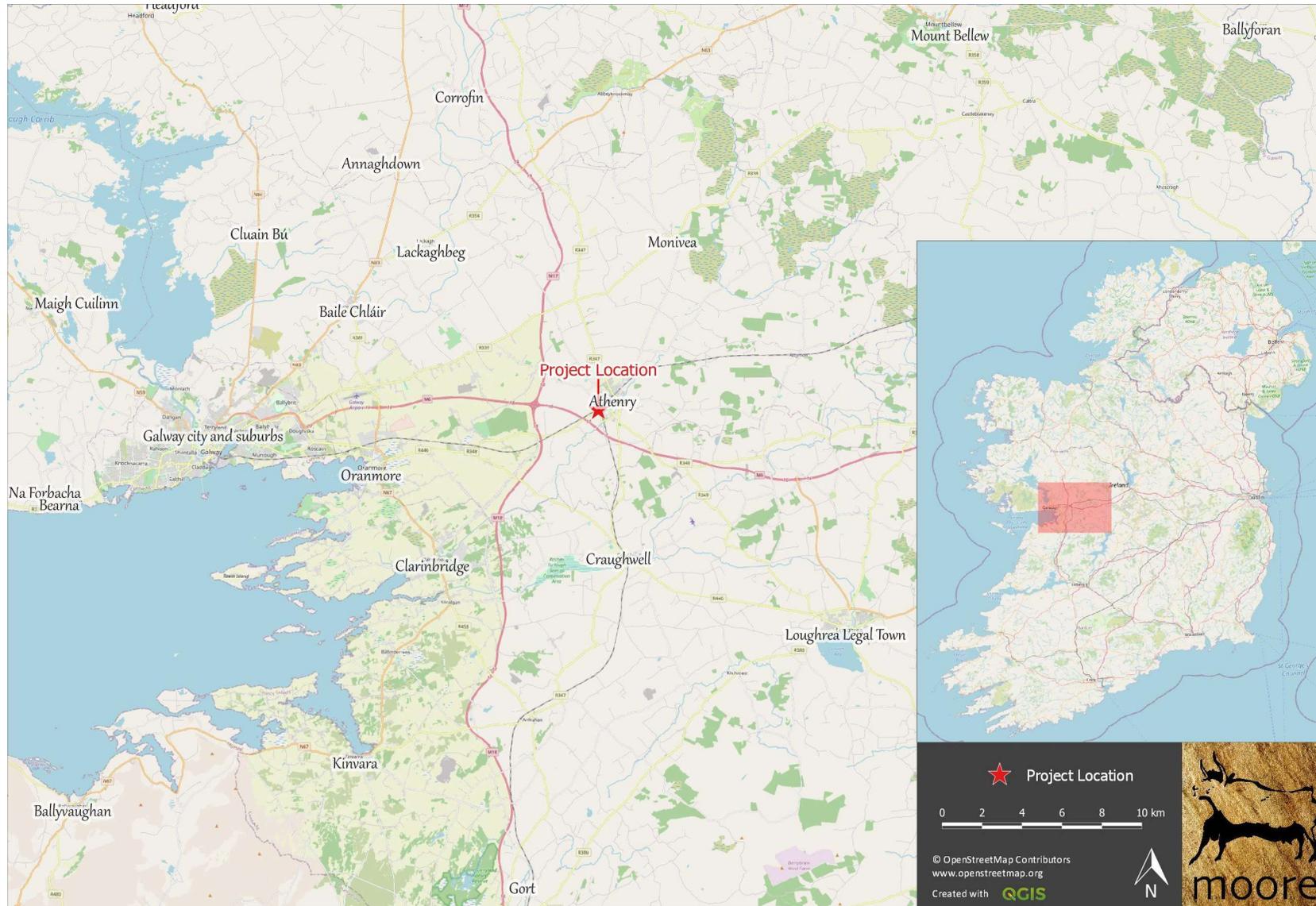


Figure 1. Showing the Proposed Development location at Athenry, Co. Galway.



Figure 2. Showing the Proposed Development location on recent aerial photography.

4. Identification of Natura 2000 Sites

4.1. Description of Natura Sites Potentially Affected

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009) Guidance on Appropriate Assessment suggests an assessment of European sites within a Zone of Impact (Zol) of 15km. This distance is a guidance only and the potential zone of impact has been identified taking consideration of the nature and location of the Proposed Development to ensure all European sites with connectivity to it are considered in terms of a catchment-based assessment.

The zone of impact may be determined by connectivity to the Proposed Development in terms of:

- Nature, scale, timing and duration of works and possible impacts, nature and size of excavations, storage of materials, flat/sloping sites;
- Distance and nature of pathways (dilution and dispersion; intervening 'buffer' lands, roads etc.); and
- Sensitivity and location of ecological features.

The guidance provides that, at the screening stage, it is necessary to identify the relevant European sites and compile information on their qualifying interests and conservation objectives. In preparation for this, the potential for source – pathway – receptor connectivity is firstly identified and detailed information is then provided on sites with connectivity. European sites that are located within 15km of the Proposed Development site are listed in Table 1 and presented in Figure 3 below. Spatial boundary data on the Natura 2000 network was extracted from the NPWS website (www.npws.ie) on 11 March 2021.

Table 1 European Sites located within 15km or the potential zone of impact¹ of the Proposed Development.

Site Code	Site name	Distance (km) ²
000242	Castletaylor Complex SAC	12.0
000268	Galway Bay Complex SAC	9.7
000297	Lough Corrib SAC	8.7
000322	Rahasane Turlough SAC	7.2
000606	Lough Fingall Complex SAC	13.2
001285	Kiltiernan Turlough SAC	13.8
002244	Ardrahan Grassland SAC	14.3
002352	Monivea Bog SAC	7.9
004089	Rahasane Turlough SPA	7.2
004142	Cregganna Marsh SPA	11.0

¹ All European sites potentially connected irrespective of the nature or scale of the Proposed Development.

² Distances indicated are the closest geographical distance between the Proposed Development site and the European site boundary, as made available by the NPWS. Connectivity along hydrological pathways may be significantly greater.

All European sites are located over 5km with the closest at Rahasane Turlough over 7km to the south.

There are no pathways and no connectivity to any of the European sites considered in the assessment. There are no pathways to the Clarin River and no pathways to Galway Bay.

It is possible to rule out likely significant effects on European sites as there is no potential for contamination of surface water during construction, the Proposed Development will not result in any changes to the amount of surface water run-off during operation nor will it result in any contamination of surface waters during operation and no significant increase in foul water will arise from the Proposed Development.

Having considered the above, significant effects on any European sites as a result of the Proposed Development can be ruled out and, therefore, potential significant effects on European sites can be excluded at a preliminary screening stage.

4.2. Ecological Network Supporting Natura 2000 Sites

An analysis of the proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) and designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) in terms of their role in supporting the species using Natura 2000 sites was undertaken. It was assumed that these supporting roles mainly related to mobile fauna such as mammals and birds which may use pNHAs and NHAs as “stepping stones” between Natura 2000 sites.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations 2011 place a high degree of importance on such non-Natura 2000 areas as features that connect the Natura 2000 network. Features such as ponds, woodlands and important hedgerows were taken into account during the preparation of this AA Screening report.

There are no other areas of conservation concern that would be affected by the Proposed Development.

The NHAs and pNHAs identified in Figure 3 are either associated with European sites or located outside the Zone of Impact. There are no areas of supporting habitat that will be affected by the Proposed Development.

5. Identification of Potential Impacts & Assessment of Significance

The Proposed Development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the sites considered in the assessment and therefore potential impacts must be identified and considered.

5.1. Potential Impacts

There are no pathways and no connectivity to any of the European sites considered in the assessment.

It is possible to rule out likely significant effects on European sites as there is no potential for contamination of surface water during construction, the Proposed Development will not result in any changes to the amount of surface water run-off during operation nor will it result in any contamination of surface waters during operation and no significant increase in foul water will arise from the Proposed Development.

Having considered the above, significant effects on any European sites as a result of the Proposed Development can be ruled out and, therefore, potential significant effects on European sites can be excluded at a preliminary screening stage.

5.2. Assessment of Potential In-Combination Effects

In-combination effects are changes in the environment that result from numerous human-induced, small-scale alterations. In-combination effects can be thought of as occurring through two main pathways: first, through

persistent additions or losses of the same materials or resource, and second, through the compounding effects as a result of the coming together of two or more effects.

As part of the Screening for an Appropriate Assessment, in addition to the Proposed Development, other relevant plans and projects in the area must also be considered at this stage. This step aims to identify at this early stage any possible significant in-combination effects of the Proposed Development with other such plans and projects on European sites.

A review of the National Planning Application Database was undertaken. The first stage of this review confirmed that there were no data outages in the area where the Proposed Development is located. The database was then queried for developments granted planning permission within 500m of the Proposed Development within the last three years, these are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Planning applications granted permission in the vicinity of the Proposed Development.

Planning Ref.	Description of development	Comments
171875	for development consisting of a new 2 storey 11,386sqm Post-Primary School, including a 2-classroom Special Needs Unit, incorporating Sports Hall; Classrooms; General Purpose Hall and all ancillary pupil and staff facilities; with all associated site works; a new sub-station; 92 number car parking spaces; ballcourts; hard and soft play areas and landscaping: including a new pedestrian/cycle path along the R348 and modifications to existing vehicular bridge into the site. Gross floor space of proposed works 11,386sqm.	This Project is complete and there is no potential for in-combination effects.
1877	to demolish the existing roofed sheep penning/sales shed and re-erect a new sheep penning/sales shed on the footprint of the existing sheep penning/sales shed. Gross floor space of proposed works 2231 sqm.	No potential for in-combination effects given the small scale and location of the project.
18355	for development comprising the decommissioning of the existing, private on-site waste water treatment system to include remedial site works and a proposed connection to the public waste water treatment system to facilitate construction of 19 no. two storey 3 bed residential dwellings and 9 no. 2 storey 2 bed residential dwellings and provision of car parking, open space, landscaping and associated site works. Gross floor space of proposed works 2906 sqm.	A Report for AA Screening submitted by the Landscape Architects was considered deficient in terms the consideration of in-combination effects. Departmental Guidance requires that AA assessment is prepared by an Ecologist. A revised report was prepared and accepted by GCC in consideration of the grant of permission.
181101	to extend existing cattle sales Ring Number 3 building. The proposed extension will be used for retail use. It also seeks planning permission for a change of use of existing sales Ring 3 from cattle sales to retail use. Gross floor space of proposed works 118.5 sqm. Gross floor space of work to be retained 174.2 sqm.	Significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites were ruled out.
19581	completion of a dwelling house, previously permitted under Ref 16/164 at 5 Ballygarraun South. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 174 sqm	Significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites were ruled out.

There are no predicted in-combination effects given that the reasons discussed in the 'Comments' column of Table 2, above, and given that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any adverse effects on the European sites considered in the assessment.

The Galway County Development Plan in complying with the requirements of the Habitats Directive requires that all Projects and Plans that could affect the Natura 2000 sites in the same zone of impact of the Proposed Development site would be initially screened for Appropriate Assessment and if requiring Stage 2 AA, that appropriate employable mitigation measures would be put in place to avoid, reduce or ameliorate negative impacts. In this way any, in-combination impacts with Plans or Projects for the proposed development area and surrounding townlands in which the proposed development site is located, would be avoided.

The listed developments have been granted permission in most cases with conditions relating to sustainable development by the consenting authority in compliance with the relevant Local Authority Development Plan and in compliance with the Local Authority requirement for regard to the Habitats Directive. The development cannot have received planning permission without having met the consenting authority requirement in this regard. There are no predicted in-combination effects given that it is predicted that the Proposed Development will have no effect on any European site.

Any new applications for the Proposed Development area will be assessed on a case by case basis *initially* by Galway County Council which will determine the requirement for AA Screening as per the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

6. Conclusion

There are no pathways and no connectivity to any of the European sites considered in the assessment.

It is possible to rule out likely significant effects on European sites as there is no potential for contamination of surface water during construction, the Proposed Development will not result in any changes to the amount of surface water run-off during operation nor will it result in any contamination of surface waters during operation and no significant increase in foul water will arise from the Proposed Development.

Having considered the above, significant effects on any European sites as a result of the Proposed Development can be ruled out and, therefore, potential significant effects on European sites can be excluded at a preliminary screening stage.

It has been objectively concluded by Moore Group Environmental Services that:

1. The Proposed Development is not directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of the European sites considered in this assessment.

2. The Proposed Development is unlikely to significantly affect the Qualifying interests or Conservation Objectives of the European sites considered in this assessment.
3. The Proposed Development, alone or in combination with other projects, is not likely to have significant effects on the European sites considered in this assessment in view of their conservation objectives.
4. It is possible to conclude that there would be no significant effects, no potentially significant effects and no uncertain effects if the Proposed Development were to proceed.

It can be *excluded*, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

It is the view of Moore Group Environmental Services that it is not necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process.

A finding of no significant effects report is presented in Appendix A in accordance with the EU Commission's methodological guidance (European Commission, 2001).

7. References

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2010) Guidance on Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (as amended February 2010).

European Commission (2000) Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.

European Commission (2001) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, Brussels.

European Commission (2018) Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC.

European Commission (2007) 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 interests, compensatory measures, overall coherence and opinion of the Commission. European Commission, Brussels.

European Commission (2018) Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.

NPWS (2019) The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

NPWS (2021) National Parks and Wildlife Service Metadata available online at <https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data>.

Appendix A

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS REPORT

Finding no significant effects report matrix

Name of project or plan

Athenry Fire Station Proposed Development

Name and location of the Natura 2000 site(s)

All European sites are located over 5km with the closest at Rahasane Turlough over 7km to the south.

There are no pathways and no connectivity to any of the European sites considered in the assessment. There are no pathways to the Clarin River and no pathways to Galway Bay.

Description of the project or plan

The Proposed Development comprises the construction of a new Fire Station at Ballygarraun South to the west of Athenry, Co. Galway.

The existing environment comprises a field of improved agricultural grassland which was one third disturbed when used as a construction compound for the adjacent link road development.

Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site(s)

No

Are there other projects or plans that together with the projects or plan being assessed could affect the site

A review of the National Planning Application Database was undertaken. The first stage of this review confirmed that there were no data outages in the area where the Proposed Development is located. The database was then queried for developments granted planning permission within 500m of the Proposed Development within the last three years presented in the Table below.

Planning Ref.	Description of development	Comments
171875	for development consisting of a new 2 storey 11,386sqm Post-Primary School, including a 2-classroom Special Needs Unit, incorporating Sports Hall; Classrooms; General Purpose Hall and all ancillary pupil and staff facilities; with all associated site works; a new sub-station; 92 number car parking spaces; ballcourts; hard and soft play areas and landscaping: including a new pedestrian/cycle path along the R348 and modifications to existing vehicular bridge into the site. Gross floor space of proposed works 11,386sqm.	This Project is complete and there is no potential for in-combination effects.
1877	to demolish the existing roofed sheep penning/sales shed and re-erect a new sheep penning/sales shed on the footprint of the existing sheep penning/sales shed. Gross floor space of proposed works 2231 sqm.	No potential for in-combination effects given the small scale and location of the project.
18355	for development comprising the decommissioning of the existing, private on-site waste water treatment system to include remedial site works and a proposed connection to the public waste water treatment system to facilitate construction of 19 no. two storey 3 bed residential dwellings and 9 no. 2 storey 2 bed residential dwellings and provision of car parking,	A Report for AA Screening submitted by the Landscape Architects was considered deficient in terms the consideration of in-combination effects. Departmental Guidance requires that AA assessment is prepared by an Ecologist. A revised report was prepared and accepted by GCC in consideration of the grant of permission.

Planning Ref.	Description of development	Comments
	open space, landscaping and associated site works. Gross floor space of proposed works 2906 sqm.	
181101	to extend existing cattle sales Ring Number 3 building. The proposed extension will be used for retail use. It also seeks planning permission for a change of use of existing sales Ring 3 from cattle sales to retail use. Gross floor space of proposed works 118.5 sqm. Gross floor space of work to be retained 174.2 sqm.	Significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites were ruled out.
19581	completion of a dwelling house, previously permitted under Ref 16/164 at 5 Ballygarraun South. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 174 sqm	Significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites were ruled out.

There are no predicted in-combination effects given that the reasons discussed in the 'Comments' column of the Table above and given that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any adverse effects on the European sites considered in the assessment.

The Galway County Development Plan in complying with the requirements of the Habitats Directive requires that all Projects and Plans that could affect the Natura 2000 sites in the same zone of impact of the Proposed Development site would be initially screened for Appropriate Assessment and if requiring Stage 2 AA, that appropriate employable mitigation measures would be put in place to avoid, reduce or ameliorate negative impacts. In this way any, in-combination impacts with Plans or Projects for the proposed development area and surrounding townlands in which the proposed development site is located, would be avoided.

The listed developments have been granted permission in most cases with conditions relating to sustainable development by the consenting authority in compliance with the relevant Local Authority Development Plan and in compliance with the Local Authority requirement for regard to the Habitats Directive. The development cannot have received planning permission without having met the consenting authority requirement in this regard. There are no predicted in-combination effects given that it is predicted that the Proposed Development will have no effect on any European site.

Any new applications for the Proposed Development area will be *initially* assessed on a case by case basis by Galway County Council which will determine the requirement for AA Screening as per the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

THE ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS

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

There are no pathways and no connectivity to any of the European sites considered in the assessment.

It is possible to rule out likely significant effects on European sites as there is no potential for contamination of surface water during construction, the Proposed Development will not result in any changes to the amount of surface water run-off during operation nor will it result in any contamination of surface waters during operation and no significant increase in foul water will arise from the Proposed Development.

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.

It is possible to rule out likely significant effects on European sites as there is no potential for contamination of surface water during construction, the Proposed Development will not result in any changes to the amount of surface water run-off during operation nor will it result in any contamination of surface waters during operation and no significant increase in foul water will arise from the Proposed Development.

Having considered the above, significant effects on any European sites as a result of the Proposed Development can be ruled out and, therefore, potential significant effects on European sites can be excluded at a preliminary screening stage.

List of agencies consulted: provide contact name and telephone or e-mail address

The requirement for Appropriate Assessment Screening was determined by Galway County Council.

Response to consultation

N/A.

DATA COLLECTED TO CARRY OUT THE ASSESSMENT

Who carried out the assessment

Moore Group Environmental Services.

Sources of data

NPWS database of designated sites at www.npws.ie

National Biodiversity Data Centre database <http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie>

Level of assessment completed

Desktop Assessment with a site visit.

Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed

Galway County Council Planning Section.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

There are no pathways and no connectivity to any of the European sites considered in the assessment.

It is possible to rule out likely significant effects on European sites as there is no potential for contamination of surface water during construction, the Proposed Development will not result in any changes to the amount of surface water run-off during operation nor will it result in any contamination of surface waters during operation and no significant increase in foul water will arise from the Proposed Development.

Having considered the above, significant effects on any European sites as a result of the Proposed Development can be ruled out and, therefore, potential significant effects on European sites can be excluded at a preliminary screening stage.

It has been objectively concluded by Moore Group Environmental Services that:

1. The Proposed Development is not directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of the European sites considered in this assessment.
2. The Proposed Development is unlikely to significantly affect the Qualifying interests or Conservation Objectives of the European sites considered in this assessment.
3. The Proposed Development, alone or in combination with other projects, is not likely to have significant effects on the European sites considered in this assessment in view of their conservation objectives.
4. It is possible to conclude that there would be no significant effects, no potentially significant effects and no uncertain effects if the Proposed Development were to proceed.

It can be *excluded*, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

It is the view of Moore Group Environmental Services that it is not necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process.