



December '21

Title

*APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT
SCREENING REPORT*

Development Description

"Proposed extension to Creagh Burial Ground."

Location

Kilgarve, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway

Applicants

Galway County Council

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APPENDIX A Site Layout Plan

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Note: The scope of this report is to provide the necessary information to the competent authority, to assess whether the proposed development alone and in combination with other projects, could have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites in the area in view of the sites conservation objectives, in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, and does not purport to be an ecological assessment of the subject site.

1 INTRODUCTION

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Colette Casey (BSc) in partnership with James O' Donnell, Planning Consultant (BA, MRUP, Dip APM) on behalf of Galway County Council who is applying for planning permission for "*Proposed extension to Creagh Burial Ground.*" in Kilgavre, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway

Colette Casey is an experienced and qualified ecologist. She has obtained a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science (BSc Hons) at the National University of Ireland, Galway. She has been involved in the completion of numerous Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports (AASR's), Natura Impact statements (NIS's), Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMP's), Otter and Bat Surveys in the Republic of Ireland. She is an active member of Birdwatch Ireland, Bat conservation Ireland and a Registered member of CIEEM.

James O' Donnell is a qualified Town Planner and Project Manager with over 22 years planning experience in both the public and private sector in the west of Ireland, including 6 years' experience as a local authority planning officer. James has particular experience in the project management and delivery of a wide range of complex planning applications requiring environmental and ecological assessment, in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and EIA Directives.

The site for the proposed development lies 465 meters from the River Suck Callows SPA which has been designated under the EU Birds Directive, and so it is necessary that the potential impacts of the proposed works be assessed by the competent authority, in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. This report provides the information necessary for the competent authority to complete an Appropriate Assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed works on sites of European importance in the area. This report has also had regard to the provisions of the March 2021 publication entitled "*OPR Practice Note PN01- Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.*"

Table 1.1: Step One: Description of the project/proposal and local site characteristics

Brief description of the project plan	<i>“Proposed extension to Creagh Burial Ground.”</i>
Brief description of site characteristics	<p>The subject site is located to the East of Ballinasloe town.</p> <p>The proposed development site seeks to extent of the current Creagh Cemetery. The proposed application site is located to the south of the current cemetery. The application site is located 200 meters North of Creagh National School and 350 meters to the west is St. Brigids Hospital.</p> <p>Located on the public road R357.</p> <p>Surrounding the proposed site is a number of residential houses and land used for agriculture.</p> <p>A Housing development has begun construction directly to the east of the application site</p>

1.1 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

1.1.1 EU Nature Conservation Legislation and Natura 2000 Sites.

There are three main types of designation for nature conservation in Ireland: Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). NHAs are designated under the Irish Wildlife Act 1976 (amended 2000). 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.

Sites are designated on the basis of the presence of certain ‘Qualifying Features’, i.e. the habitats listed under Annex I and the species listed under Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive.

Once a site is designated as a SAC and publicly advertised it is legally protected and becomes a proposed candidate SAC (pcSAC). A three-month period follows during which landowners may lodge an objection to the

designation. Details of each proposed SAC are then given to the EU Commission, and thereafter the site is called a “candidate SAC”. Once the sites are approved by the commission, they are formally designated by the Minister.

1.1.2 Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites

Due to the proximity of the proposed development site to a candidate Special Area of Conservation, also known as a Natura 2000 site, an Appropriate Assessment may be required under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Article 6(3) and (4), Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites. Such assessments are required where it is identified that a proposed plan or project could have significant impact on a Natura 2000 site. Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Directive, state the following;

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 subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives... 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....’

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... the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected...’

To determine whether an Appropriate Assessment is required, an initial screening assessment must be conducted and issued to the Department of the Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht’s Development Applications Unit (DAU).

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The screening exercise will be conducted in line with the recommendations and protocol set out in the Guidance from the Commission (EC, 2002). This protocol involves a four-stage process to complete an Appropriate Assessment. At each stage, the findings of certain issues and tests will determine whether the next stage in the process is required.

1.2.1 Appropriate Assessment Stages

The four stages in the Appropriate Assessment process are outlined below:

Stage 1: Screening

This step consists of examining the likely potential impacts of a project or plan, alone or in combination with other projects, upon a Natura 2000 site or sites, and considers whether these impacts may be considered significant. If no significant impacts are foreseen, then a 'finding of no significant effects' (FONSE) statement is issued to the appropriate authority, and the process is complete. If the effects are considered significant or their significance is unknown, then the process moves on to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

Where the screening process has identified potential impacts which are considered significant or unknown, this process examines these potential impacts in detail, in relation to the conservation interests of the Natura 2000 site or sites. Mitigation measures may be suggested to reduce the likelihood or severity of these impacts. If the impacts are still considered to be significant or unknown after this stage is complete, then alternative solutions must be considered (Stage 3).

Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

If the potential impacts are still considered to be significant or unknown after the Appropriate Assessment stage, then alternative ways of implementing the project are considered at this stage. If no alternative solutions are possible, then it is considered whether the project or plan may go ahead regardless, if imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) are found.

Stage 4: Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)

If significant negative impacts on the Natura 2000 site are unavoidable, and no alternative solutions may be found, then this stage involves the consideration of whether the project or plan may go ahead despite these effects, for 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' (IROPI).

The results of a Stage 1 (Screening) Exercise are detailed in **Section 2** of this report.

2 STAGE 1: SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

2.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN OR PROJECT

It is “Proposed extension to Creagh Burial Ground.”

A Site Layout Plan is included as **Appendix A** to this report.

2.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

2.2.1 Site Location in Relation to Natura 2000 Sites

The proposed site is located in Kilgarve, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway (Grid Ref: E:186644.56, N:231008.09). The site for the proposed development lies approximately 465 meters from the River Suck Callows SPA (site code: 04097) (see **Figure 2.1** below).

All Natura 2000 sites within a 15km buffer of the proposed development are listed in **Table 2.1** and **Figure 2.2**.

Table 2.1: Step Two: Identification of relevant Natura 200 sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor Model and Compilation of information on QI and Conservation Objectives

European Site (Code)	List of Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest	Distance from the proposed development (km)	Receptor/Connection	Screen In – Yes/No
Glenloughaun Esker SAC (Site code 002213)	QIs –1 Habitat https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002213.pdf	5.65km	No- No receptors or pathway between this SAC and the application site.	No
Castlesampson Esker SAC (Site code 001625)	QIs –2 Habitats https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO001625.pdf	9.36 km	No- No receptors or pathway between this SAC and the application site.	No
Killeglan Grassland SAC (Site code 002214)	QIs – 1 Habitat https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002214.pdf	10.6km	No- No receptor or pathway between this SAC and the application site.	No
River Shannon Callows SAC (Site Code 000216)	QIs – 4 Habitat and 1 Species http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000216.pdf	10.92km	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site	No
Ballynamona Bog and Corkip Lough SAC (Site code:)	QIs – 2 Habitats https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives	13.25km	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site	No

002339)	/CO002339pdf			
River Suck Callows SPA (Site Code 004097)	QI's 1 Habitat and 5 Species http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004097.pdf	465 m	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site	No
Middle Shannon Callows SPA (Site Code 004096)	QI's 1 Habitat and 7 Species http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004096pdf	10.94km	No-due to the lack of connectors/receptors and significant distance from the proposed site	No

The River Suck Callows SPA has been screened out due to the significant distance between the Natura 2000 site and the application site, the surrounding environment of the application site and the lack of ecological and/or hydrological pathways. As this is the nearest Natura 2000 site it is further discussed below.



Figure 2.1: Site Location (Red X) in Relation to the River Suck Callows SPA Natura 2000 Site

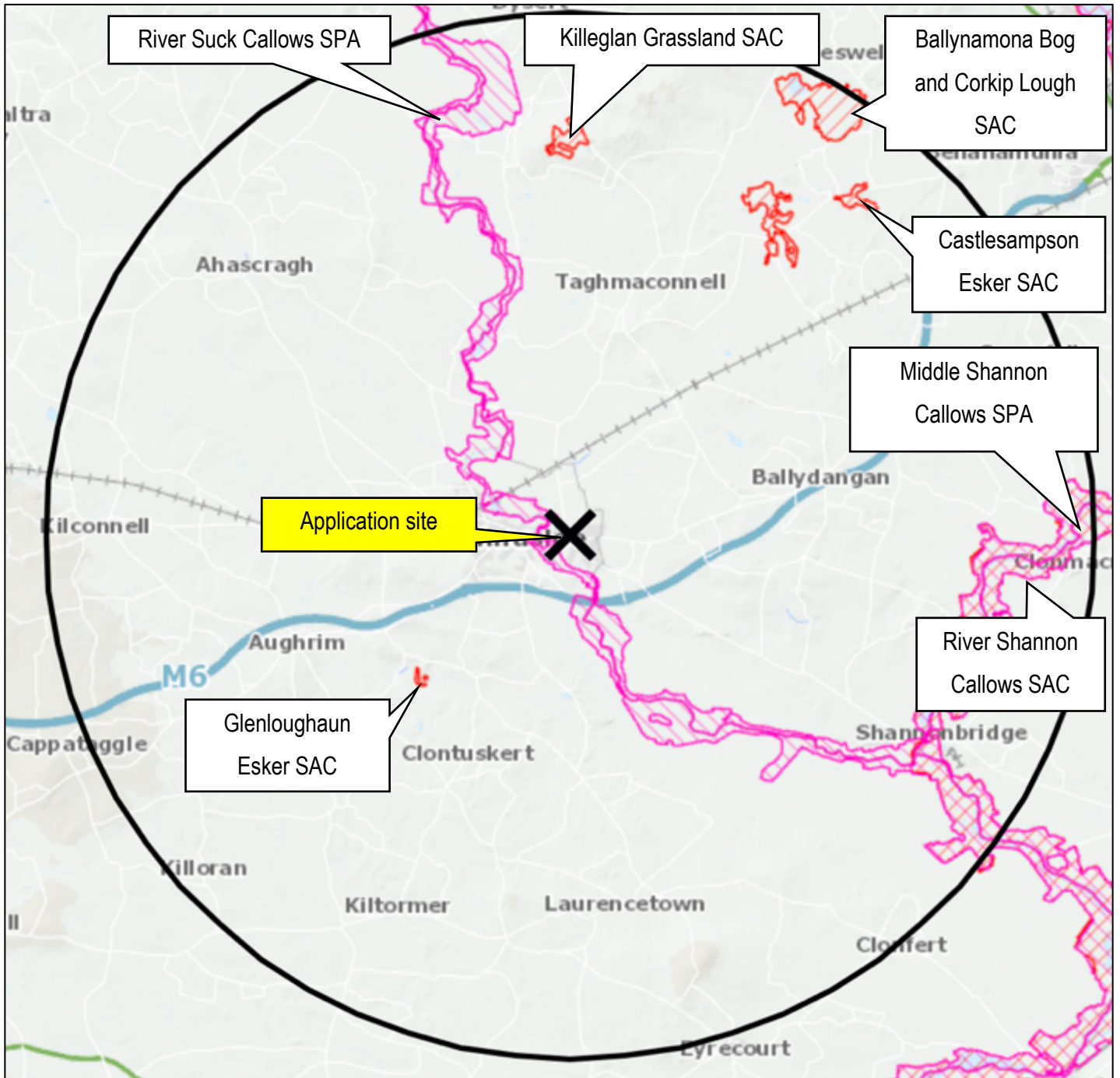


Figure 2.2: 15km Buffer Surrounding Site

2.2.2 Brief Description of the Natura 2000 Sites which may be affected

Qualifying Features

Natura 2000 sites are designated on the presence of certain habitats and species which are afforded protection under the Birds and Habitats Directives. These habitats and species are regarded as 'qualifying features' of the Natura 2000 sites. The following section provides details on the qualifying features of the Natura 2000 sites in question the River Suck Callows SPA Natura 2000 site. The NPWS site synopses for Natura 2000 site is given as **Appendix B** to this report.

Table 2.2 River Suck Callows SPA Habitat Information

Habitat code	Habitat name	Cover (ha)	Representativity
A999	Wetlands and Waterbirds	N/A	N/A
2110	Embryonic shifting dunes	5.66	C
2120	Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes)	7.07	C
2130	Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)	41.03	B
4030	European dry heaths	28.3	B

For species, a value is given for 'Population Significance'. This value is based on the relative density or size of the population of that species within the Natura 2000 site with that of the national population. Population Significance is ranked on a scale from A to D where A - $100 \geq p > 15\%$, B - $15 \geq p > 2\%$, C - $2 \geq p > 0\%$ and D - Non-significant population. The qualifying species found in the River Suck Callows SPA Natura 2000 sites are outlined in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 River Suck Callows SPA Species Information

Species code	Latin name	English name	Population significance
A038	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	Whooper Swann	C
A050	<i>Anas penelope</i>	Wigeon	C
A140	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Golden Plover	N/A
A142	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Lapwing	C
A395	<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>	Greenland White fronted Goose	B

Potential Pressures and Threats to the Natura 2000 Sites

The European Nature Information System (EUNIS) website contains data on all Natura 2000 sites, including details of the main threats to and pressures on their qualifying features. Potential threats to and pressures on the qualifying features of the River Suck Callows Natura 2000 site is listed in **Tables 2**.

Table 2.4 Potential Pressures and Threats to the River Suck Callows SPA Natura 2000 Site

Activity	Location	Intensity	Influence
Grazing	Outside	High	Negative
Hunting	Inside	Low	Negative
Mowing / cutting of grassland	Inside	Medium	Negative
Fertilisation	Outside	High	Negative
Nautical sports	Inside	Medium	Negative
Leisure fishing	Inside	Low	Negative
Sylviculture, forestry	Outside	Low	Negative
Dispersed habitation	Outside	Medium	Negative

Conservation Objectives of the Natura 2000 Sites

Once a site has been designated as a Natura site, a management plan should be put together for the site which sets out the Conservation Objectives for the site. Every effort should then be made to ensure that these objectives are fulfilled, in order to prevent potential impacts to the qualifying features of the site and maintain as far as possible their favourable conservation status.

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

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

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

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and

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

Generic conservation objectives have been published for the River Suck Callows SPA Natura 2000 site. Qualifying interests and objectives (bulleted) are listed below:

River Suck Callows SPA

*A038 Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus**

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.

*A050 Wigeon *Anas penelope**

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.

*A140 Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria**

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.

*A142 Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus**

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.

*A395 Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris**

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.

A999 Wetland and Waterbirds

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at River Suck Callows SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.

3 SOILS, GEOLOGY & HYDROGEOLOGY

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) website was consulted for available geological / hydrological information. The site is underlain by limestone Till. Topsoil on site consists of Poorly drained mineral soils with peaty topsoil - Derived from mainly calcareous parent materials. The groundwater vulnerability within

the site is rated as H, High. Vulnerability is a term used to represent the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological characteristics that determine the ease at which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities.

The HSE Report which accompanies this application found *“the top soil depth ranged from 18 inches to 30 inches and the underlying soils consisted mostly of gravels, some rock and a certain amount of heavy clay.”*

Table 3.1 Details information gleaned from catchments.ie on the water status of the groundwater waterbody. This concludes that the groundwater is rated as good overall status.

Suck South Groundwater Waterbody Information	
Name	Suck South
Code	IE_SH_G_225
Catchments	26B Upper Shannon 26C Upper Shannon 26D Upper Shannon 26E Upper Shannon 26G Upper Shannon 29 Galway Bay South East 30 Corrib
Longitude	53.4359069
Latitude	-8.3846698
Cycle 1 RBD	Shannon
Local Authority	Galway County Council
Waterbody Category	Groundwater
WFD Risk	Review
Protected Area	N/A
High Status Objective	No
Heavily Modified	N/A
Artificial	N/A
Area (km ²)	N/A
Length (km)	N/A
Transboundary	No
Canal	No
GW 2013-2018 Overall Groundwater Status	Good

4 OTHER PLANS AND PROJECTS IN THE AREA

It is a requirement of the Appropriate Assessment process to consider the ‘in combination’ effects of the proposed development with other plans and projects in the area. **Table 4.1** below gives details of the

other plans and projects in the area which may be affecting the River Suck Callows SPA Natura 2000 site.

Table 4.1: Other Plans and Projects Affecting the Natura 2000 Site

Name of Plan or Project	Key policies/issues/objectives directly related to the relevant Natura 2000 sites	Potential cumulative or in-combination effects on the relevant Natura 2000 sites
Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021	Designated Sites, Habitats and Species Policies and Objectives, Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Policies and Objectives, Natural Water Systems Polices	Positive Impact
River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018 - 2021	The River Basin Management Plan for Ireland, issued in April 2018, sets out a number of objectives and measures for all national water bodies which aim: (1) to prevent the deterioration of water bodies and to protect, enhance and restore them with the aim of achieving at least good status and (2) to achieve compliance with the requirements for designated protected areas.	Positive impact
NPWS Conservation Management Plans	A Conservation Management Plan is in place for the River Suck Callows SPA Natura 2000 site and its aims and objectives are outlined from Page 11	Positive impacts
Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) Corporate Plan 2016-2020	Goals: To improve the protection and conservation of the resource. To develop and improve wild fish populations. To increase the number of anglers. To generate a better return for Ireland from the resource	Positive impact
Planning Applications in the area	A search was carried out on Galway County Council's online planning query system. It was ascertained that there have been 10 other planning applications granted within a 300m radius of the site in the past 5 years, which are listed below: 19347- of 1. existing dwelling house on reduced site area. 2. Planning permission is sought to enlarge vehicular entrance to the existing dwelling house and complete all associated site works. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 134.63 sqm 18290- to demolish existing bungalow and construct two dormer bungalows and all associated site works.	Neutral Impact

	<p>Gross floor space of proposed works 448 sqm. Gross floor space of any demolition 116 sqm.</p> <p>21152- to construct a new on-site wastewater treatment system for a previously permitted dwelling house planning reference 17/1342 in lieu of a previously permitted Irish Water foul sewer connection.</p> <p>171341- for the construction of 1 no. single storey 4no. bedroom house, associated boundaries, new vehicular access, landscaping and all associated site development works (Gross floor space of proposed works 260sqm)</p> <p>20989 - for the construction of a housing development comprising of 47 no. houses at Church Street / Dublin Road (R446) . The development will consist of: 1 no. house type 'A' - 3 bed detached bungalow, 1 no. house type 'B' 2 bed detached bungalow, 4 no. house type 'C' 1 bed terraced bungalow, 1 no house type 'C1' 2 bed terraced bungalow, 2 no. house type 'D' 2 bed detached bungalow 1 no. house type 'E' - 2 bed semi-detached , 2 storey 1 no. house type 'E1' - 2 bed semi-detached, 2 storey 9 no. House type 'F' - 3 bed semi-detached, 2 storey 1 no. house type 'F1' - 3 bed semi-detached, 2 storey 16 no. house type 'G' - 2 bed terraced 2 storey 10 no. house type 'H' 2 bed semi detached, 2 storey. The proposed development includes demolition of an existing bungalow and outbuildings along Church Street / Dublin Road (R446) Replacement of existing access with the construction of a new access onto the R446 to serve the development connection to public mains water infrastructure including connection to existing surface water, foul drainage networks and construction of on-site sewerage pumping station to serve the development, provision of communal open space areas a playground, private open space, bicycle parking, footpath, public lighting, soft and hard landscaping, revised boundary treatments together with all associated site works and services. Gross floor space of proposed works; 4,043.94sqm, Gross floor space of any demolition; 163.54sqm Appeal Ref Number: ABP-310373-21</p> <p>21493- of extension to dwellinghouse to include two en-suite bedrooms and extended entrance hall. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 207.50 sqm</p>	
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	<p>2017- to erect new boundary fencing to the front and side (Southern and Eastern) boundaries of Scoil Mhuire gan Smal National School together with ancillary site works. Scoil Mhuire gan Smal is a protected structure.</p> <p>15922- to construct a storage shed together with ancillary site works. This is a protected structure (gross floor space 27.00 sqm)</p> <p>161406- to construct an extension (to form a new classroom) to the existing school together with ancillary site works at Kilgarve Td., Creagh, Ballinasloe. (Gross floor space of proposed works: 85.29)</p> <p>161485- a) To erect display unit 2.4m by 1.6m off R357 adjacent to Creagh Church Car Park (Kilgarve Td). The proposed development consists of works on/within the curtilage of Protected Structure RPS223 b) to erect display unit 2.15m by 1.45m off R357 at entrance to Ballinasloe/Creagh cemetery (Creagh T.d). The proposed development consists of works on/within the curtilage of Protected Structure RPS225. (SPLIT DECISION REFUSE FOR THE ERECTION OF DISPLAY UNIT 2.15M BY 1.45M OFF R357 AT ENTRANCE TO BALLINA</p>	
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5 SCREENING MATRIX FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT IN LINE WITH EU COMMISSION GUIDANCE

Having established the extent of the proposed project and the details of the River Suck Callows SPA Natura 2000 site, a screening assessment for possible impacts can be generated. This section follows the format of the Screening Matrix provided in Annex 2 of the following document;

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

Table 5.1: Step Three: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

(a) Identify all potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objective of a European site taking into account the size/scale of the project under the following headings:	
Impacts:	Possible significance of Impacts (Duration/Magnitude)
Construction Phase (Examples) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation Clearance • Demolition • Surface water runoff from excavation/infill • Dust, noise, vibration • Lighting disturbance • Impact on groundwater • Storage of excavation/construction materials • Access to site • Pests 	<p>The construction phase would principally consist of site drainage and leveling works. There are no impacts expected on the River Suck Callows SPA due to the distance between the application site and the Natura 2000 site.</p> <p>There is no hydrological connection between the subject site and the Natura 2000 site.</p> <p>Therefore, significant impacts/effects can be ruled out during the construction phase of the proposed development.</p>
Operation Phase (Examples) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct emissions to air and water • Surface water runoff containing contaminant/sediment • Lighting Disturbance • Noise/vibration • Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage/abstraction • Presence of people, vehicles and activities • Physical presence of structures (collision risks) • Potential for accidents/incidents 	<p>There are no impacts/effects predicted to arise during the operational phase.</p> <p>As there is no identifiable connectors or receptors between the application site and the River Suck Callows SPA.</p>
In combination/ other:	No likely significant in-combination effects are identified.
(b) Describe any likely changes to the European site:	
Examples of the type of changes to give consideration to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction/fragmentation of habitat • Disturbance to QI species • Habitat/species fragmentation • Reduction/fragmentation in species density • Changes in key indicators of conservation status value • Changes to areas of sensitivity/threats to QI • Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site 	<p>There are no predicted likely changes to occur to the Natura 2000 site due to the proposed development.</p> <p>The significant distance between the proposed development site and any European sites, and the absence of any identifiable direct or indirect ecological pathways is such that the proposal will not result in any likely changes to the European sites that comprise part of the Natura 2000 network.</p>
(c) Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

The findings of the screening matrix are summarised in **Table 2.8** below.

Table 2.8 Stage 1 - Screening Matrix for the Proposed Development

Brief Description of the Project or Plan
<p>Location: The proposed site is located in Kilgarve, Ballinasloe Co. Galway (Grid Ref: E:186644.56, N:231008.09).</p> <p>Distance from Designated Site: The site for the proposed development lies approximately 465 meters from the River Suck Callows (site code 004097)</p> <p>Brief Description of the Project: Planning permission is being sought for “<i>Proposed extension to Creagh Burial Ground.</i>” A Site Layout Plan for the proposed development is included as Appendix A to this report.</p>
Brief Description of the Natura 2000 Site
<p>Site Designation Status: The River Suck Callows SPA designated under EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).</p> <p>Qualifying Species</p> <p>River Suck Callows SPA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [A038] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) • [A050] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) • [A140] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) • [A142] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) • [A395] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) <p>(EU Birds Directive 79/409/EEC).</p> <p>Habitats and Species of Interest</p> <p>Full details of the sites are found in the River Suck Callows SPA Site Synopses included as Appendix B to this report.</p> <p>Unit Size: c.5,900sqm</p> <p>River Suck Callows SPA: 3182.02 ha</p>
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
Describe the individual elements of the project likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site.
<p>There are no expected impacts on the surrounding Natura 2000 sites, including the River Suck Callows SPA. This is due to the distance between the application site and the River Suck Callows SPA and no identifiable hydrological or ecological pathways being identified. Therefore, no impacts are expected due to the proposed development.</p>

Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of the following;

- Size and Scale

The development site comprises an overall area of c. 5,900 sqm which will have approximately 424 burial plots. At this size and scale, and due to the fact that the works will be located entirely outside the designated area, it is not expected that the development will have any significant impact (direct, indirect or secondary in nature) on the Natura 2000 site in this regard.

- Land-Take

The proposed works will be entirely located outside the designated site and so there will be no impacts in this regard.

- Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site

The site for the proposed development lies approximately 465 meters from the River Suck Callows SPA. At this distance, no impacts are expected on the Natura 2000 sites in this regard.

- Resource Requirements

It is not expected that the proposed development will have any significant impact (direct, indirect or secondary in nature) on the designated sites in this regard.

- Emissions

A HSE Report prepared by the environmental health officer accompanies the application, this was informed by 4 no. trial holes excavated at the application site. This report confirmed that the site would be suitable for a burial ground provide the site is leveled and suitable drained.

The risk of groundwater contamination due to formaldehyde was considered. It is noted that the 4 trial holes carried out for this site achieved satisfactory water clearance at a depth of 9ft (c2.74m). As such the results of the trial hole tests indicate the availability of an undisturbed unsaturated zone beneath the burial zone. This will allow for some chemical degradation, thus providing protection to underlying groundwaters.

Excavation Requirements

No impacts are expected on the Natura 2000 site in this regard.

- Transportation Requirements

During the construction phase of the proposed development (principally levelling and site drainage works), there will be a slight increase in the volume of traffic in the area for a short time. It is not expected that this slight increase will result in direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the Natura 2000 site.

- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning

The construction phase of the proposed development will last approximately 6 months. The proposed burial ground will be utilized within the next 10-15 years. Owing to the nature of the burial use, decommissioning considerations do not apply in this case.

Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of the following;

- **Reduction of Habitat**
There will be no changes in this respect.
- **Disturbance to Key Species**
There will be no changes in this respect.
- **Habitat or Species Fragmentation**
There will be no changes in this respect.
- **Reduction in species density**
There will be no changes in this respect.
- **Changes in key indicators of conservation value**
There will be no changes in this respect.
- **Climate change**
There will be no changes in this respect.

Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of the following;

- **Interference with key relationships that define the structure and function of the site**

No potential impacts which are likely to interfere with the key relationships that define the structure or function of the site are expected.

Provide Indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of the following;

- **Loss**
No loss is expected.
- **Fragmentation**
No fragmentation is expected.
- **Disruption**
No disruption is expected.
- **Disturbance**
No disruption is expected.
- **Change to key elements of the site**
No change is expected

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 is not known.

It is not considered that the proposed development will have any significant direct impacts on the River Suck Callows SPA alone or in combination with the other plans or projects in the area (outlined in Section 2.3 of this report).

6 CONCLUSIONS

Planning is being sought for an extension to a Burial Ground in the townland of Kilgarve, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. A Site Layout Plan for the proposed development is included as **Appendix A** to this report. The screening exercise examined impacts on the River Suck Callows SPA Natura 2000 site.

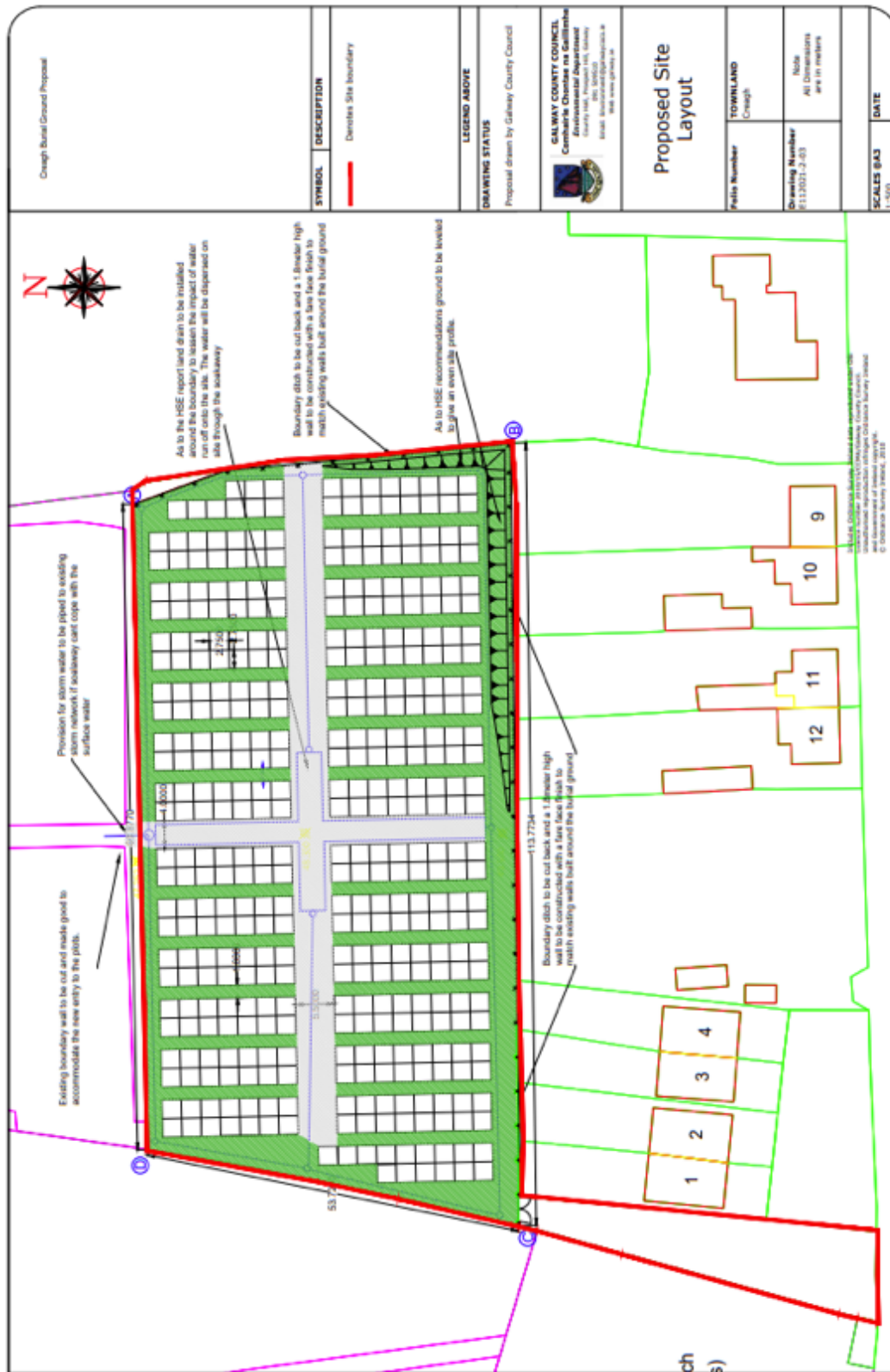
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The site for the proposed development lies approximately 465 meters from the River Suck Callows SPA. At this distance, it is not expected that the proposed development will give rise to any direct impacts on the Natura 2000 sites in question. No indirect Impacts/effects are predicted on the River Suck Callows SPA due to the lack of hydrological and ecological pathways.

Therefore, the conclusion of this screening exercise is that there is no significant effects expected on the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of the surrounding Natura 2000 sites, as a result of the proposed development in question, alone or in combination with the other plans and projects in the area. This report is therefore issued as a 'Finding of No Significant Effects' (FONSE) statement, in accordance with the EU Commission's methodological guidance (EC, 2001)

APPENDIX A-Site Layout Plan



APPENDIX B-NPWS Site Synopses for River Suck Callows SPA

Site Name: River Suck Callows SPA

Site Code: 004097

The River Suck Callows SPA is a linear, sinuous site comprising a section of the River Suck from Castlecoote, Co. Roscommon to its confluence with the River Shannon close to Shannonbridge, a distance of approximately 70 km along the course of the river. The river forms part of the boundary between Counties Galway and Roscommon. The site includes the River Suck itself and the adjacent areas of seasonally-flooded semi-natural lowland wet callow grassland. The River Suck is the largest tributary of the River Shannon.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Whooper Swan, Greenland Whitefronted Goose, Wigeon, Golden Plover and Lapwing. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

The River Suck Callows SPA is an important site for wintering waterfowl. Of particular note is the nationally important Greenland White-fronted Goose flock (293 – five year mean peak for the period 1994/95 to 1998/99) which congregates mainly in the middle reaches of the river. Four other species occur in populations of national importance, i.e. Whooper Swan (164), Wigeon (3,232), Golden Plover (2,241) and Lapwing (3,906) – all figures are five year mean peaks from aerial surveys between 2001/02 and 2005/06. Other species present include Mute Swan (122), Teal (402), Mallard (70), Black-tailed Godwit (24), Curlew (22) and Black-headed Gull (86).

The River Suck Callows SPA is of considerable ornithological importance, in particular for the presence of nationally important populations of five species. Of note is that three of the species that occur regularly, i.e. Whooper Swan, Greenland White-fronted Goose and Golden Plover, are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Part of the River Suck Callows SPA is a Wildfowl Sanctuary