



Screening Statement in Support of
Appropriate Assessment

Demolition of a Disused Dwelling &
Replacement with 2 no. Dwellings

at

Woodford, Co. Galway

Doherty Environmental Consultants Ltd.

March 2024

Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

Woodford Residential Dwelling Refurbishment

Document Stage	Document Version	Prepared by
Final	1	Pat Doherty MSc, MCIEEM

For and on behalf of

Doherty Environmental

Prepared By: Pat Doherty

This report has been prepared by Doherty Environmental with all reasonable skill, care and diligence. Information report herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

This report is prepared for Galway County Council and we accept no responsibility to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

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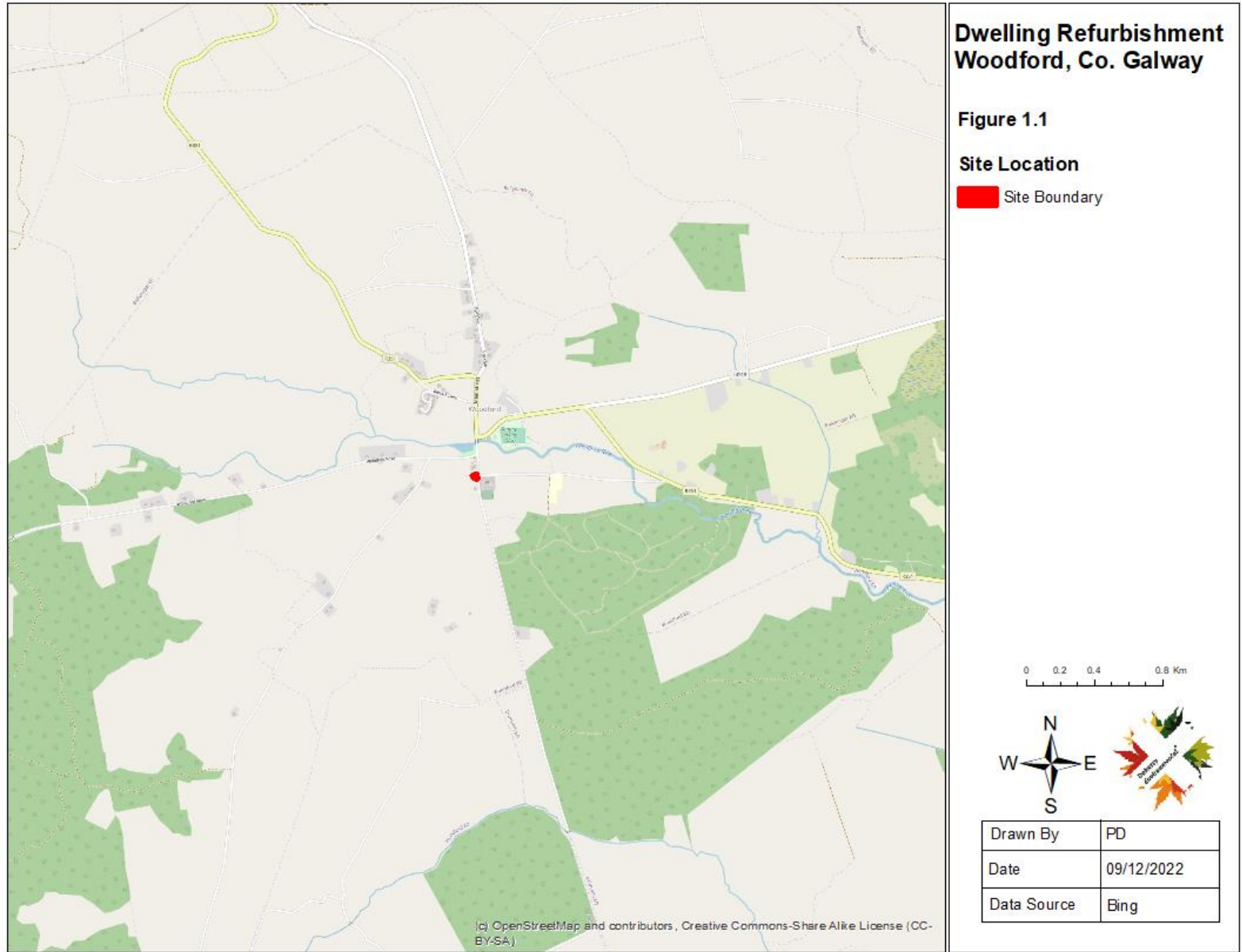
1.0 INTRODUCTION

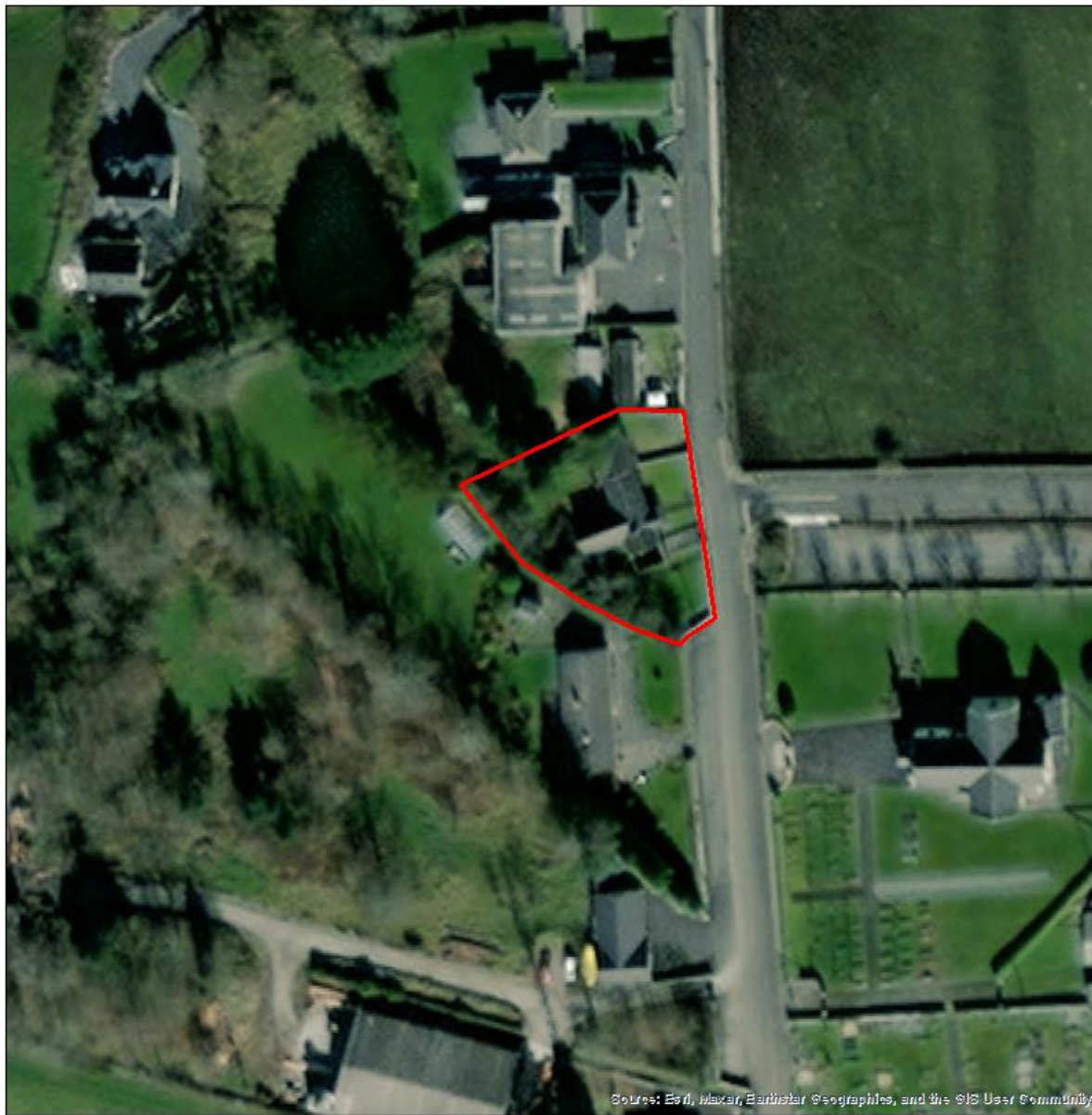
Doherty Environmental Consultants (DEC) Ltd. has been commissioned by Galway County Council, to prepare a Screening Report in support of an Appropriate Assessment (AA), under Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive for the demolition of an existing residential dwelling and replacement with 2 no. 2-bedroom dwellings at Woodford, Co. Galway (see Figure 1.1 for Site Location and Figure 1.2 for site aerial).

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment forms Stage 1 of the Habitats Directive Assessment process and is being undertaken in order to comply with the requirements of the Habitats Directive Article 6(3). The function of this Screening Report is to determine if it can or cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European Site. This Screening Report has been prepared to provide information to the competent authority to assist them in their determination as to whether a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required for the project.

1.1 STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

This Natura Impact Statement has been prepared by Mr. Pat Doherty BSc., MSc, MCIEEM, of DEC Ltd. Mr. Doherty is a consultant ecologist with over 20 years' experience in completing ecological impact assessments and environmental impact assessments. Pat has been involved in the completion of assessment reports for proposed developments and land use activities under the EIA Directive and Article 6 of the Habitats Directive since 2003 and 2006 respectively. He has extensive experience completing such reporting for projects located in a variety of environments and has a thorough understanding to the biodiversity issues that may arise from proposed land use activities. Pat was responsible for completing one of the first Appropriate Assessment reports for large scale infrastructure developments in Ireland when he prepared the Appropriate Assessment for the N25 New Ross Bypass in 2006/07. Since then, Pat has completed multiple examinations of both plans and projects in Ireland. He has completed Natura Impact Statements for national scale plans such as Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan and National Seafood Development Plan and regional and county scale plans including County Development Plans, Local Area Plans, Tourism Strategies and Climate Action Plans. Pat has completed multiple Natura Impact Statements for a range of development types that include





Dwelling Refurbishment Woodford, Co. Galway

Figure 1.2

Aerial View of the Site

 Site Boundary

0 0.0075 0.015 0.03 Km



Drawn By	PD
Date	09/12/2022
Data Source	Bing

large scale infrastructure developments in sectors such as transport and energy as well as industrial, commercial and residential developments.

Pat has completed focused certified professional development training in Appropriate Assessment as well as in a range of ecological survey techniques and assessment processes. Training has been completed for National Vegetation Classification (NVC) and Irish Vegetation Classification (IVC) surveying, bryophyte survey for habitat assessment and identification, professional bat survey and assessment training, mammal surveying and specific training for bird and bat survey techniques. Ongoing training has been completed by approved training providers such as CIEEM, British Trust for Ornithology, the Botanic Gardens and the Field Studies Council.

1.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Legislative protection for habitats and species is provided within the European Union by the Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive has been implemented in Ireland and throughout Europe through the establishment of a network of designated conservation areas known as the Natura 2000 (N2K) network. The N2K network includes sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), under the EU Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the EU Birds Directive. SACs are designated in areas that support habitats listed on Annex I and/or species listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. SPAs are designated in areas that support: 1% or more of the all-Ireland population of bird species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive; 1% or more of the population of a migratory species; and more than 20,000 waterfowl. Under the Habitat Regulations all sites that have been identified as part of the N2K Network, including SACs, SPAs, candidate SACs (cSACs) and proposed SPAs (SPAs) are referred to as European Sites.

The Habitats Regulations requires competent authorities, to carry out a Screening for Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects that, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site's conservation objectives. This requirement is transposed into Irish Law by Part 5 of the Habitats Regulations and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment is being prepared in order to enable the competent authority to comply with Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive). It is prepared to examine whether or not the project alone or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect on any European Site in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European Sites and specifically on the habitats and species for which the sites have been designated.

1.2.1 Requirement for an Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive

According to Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 – 2015, the competent Authority has a duty to:

- Determine whether the proposed Project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of one of more European Sites; and, if not,
- Determine if the Project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the European Site(s) in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of the site(s).

This Report contains information to support a Screening for Appropriate Assessment and is intended to provide information that assists the competent authority when assessing and addressing all issues regarding the construction and operation of the Project and to allow the competent authority to comply with the Habitats Directive. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive defines the requirements for assessment of projects and plans for which likely significant effects on European Sites may arise. The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 – 2015 (the Habitats Regulations) transpose into Irish law Directive 2009/147/EC (the Birds Directive) and Council Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive) together which list habitats and species that are of international importance for conservation and require protection. The Habitats Regulations requires competent authorities, to carry out a Screening for Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects that, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site's conservation objectives. This requirement is transposed into Irish Law by Part 5 of the Habitats Regulations and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

1.3 STAGE 1 SCREENING METHOD

This Screening Report has been prepared in order to comply with the legislative requirements outlined in Section 1.1 above and aims to establish whether or not the proposed project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site’s conservation objectives. In this context “likely” means a risk or possibility of effects occurring that **cannot** be ruled out based on objective information and “significant” means an effect that would undermine the conservation objectives of the European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects (Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR), 2021) .

The nature of the likely interactions between the Plan and the Conservation Objectives of European Sites will depend upon the:

- the ecological characteristics of the species or habitat, including their structure, function, conservation status and sensitivity to change; *and/or*
- the character, magnitude, duration, consequences and probability of the impacts arising from land use activities associated with the plan, in combination with other plans and projects.

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken with reference to respective National and European guidance documents: *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG 2010)* and *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC; Office of the Planning Regulator – OPR Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*, and recent European and National case law. The following guidance documents were also of relevance during the preparation of this Screening Report:

- A guide for competent authorities. Environment and Heritage Service, Sept 2002. *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010)*. DEHLG.
- *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/42/EEC*. European Commission (2021).

- Managing Natura 2000 Sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European commission (2018).

The EC (2021) guidelines outline the stages involved in undertaking a Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment for projects. The methodology adopted during the preparation of this Screening Report is informed by these guidelines and was undertaken in the following stages:

1. Describe the project and determine whether it is necessary for the conservation management of European Sites;
2. Identify European Sites that could be influenced by the project;
3. Where European Sites are identified as occurring within the zone of influence of the project identify potential effects arising from the project and screen the potential for such effects to negatively affect European Sites identified under Point 2 above; and
4. Identify other plans or projects that, in combination with the project, have the potential to affect European Sites.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject site is in the ownership of Galway County Council and has been identified as an ideal site to meet the housing needs of a candidate in the Woodford area.

The existing dwelling is in a very poor condition with structural deterioration noted to all elements of the building during a site inspection by the project engineers.

The project engineers and County Council have determined that the current size and layout of the existing house is not suitable for the housing need proposed for the site. It is proposed to demolish the existing dwelling and replace it with 2 no. 2-bedroom dwellings. The proposed dwellings will provide the required housing need in Woodford.

3.0 PROJECT SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is located at the southern end on the town of Woodford. It is accessed from the town by the R351.

The subject site is comprised of an existing residential dwelling that is in an advanced state of disuse. The main dwelling is located to the south of the structure while a shed adjoins the dwelling on the north side. The dwelling is of 19th Century origin and appears on the historic 25-inch mapping from 1895.

The R351 forms the eastern boundary of the site. A hedgerow and treeline form the western and northern boundary of the site. Existing residential dwellings occur to the north and south of the site.

A review of National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) in March 2024 did not reveal any previous records for bats within or surrounding the project site. There are no records for bats within the 1km square M7399 in which the subject site is located. The project site is not located within the zone of influence of any Special Area of Conservation (SAC) that is designated for its role in supporting lesser horseshoe bats. A review of the NPWS National lesser horseshoe bat database indicates that the nearest known lesser horseshoe bat record to the project site is approximately 30km to the west. As such the project site is located well outside the core sustenance zone of any lesser horseshoe bat population that is listed as an SAC qualifying feature of interest, where the core sustenance zone is set at a distance of 2.5km from the SAC roost site

4.0 IS THE PROJECT NECESSARY FOR THE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN SITES

The project has been described in Section 2 of this Screening Report and it is clear from the description provided that the project is not directly connected with or necessary for the future conservation management of any European Sites.

5.0 THE PROJECT & EUROPEAN SITE BASELINE

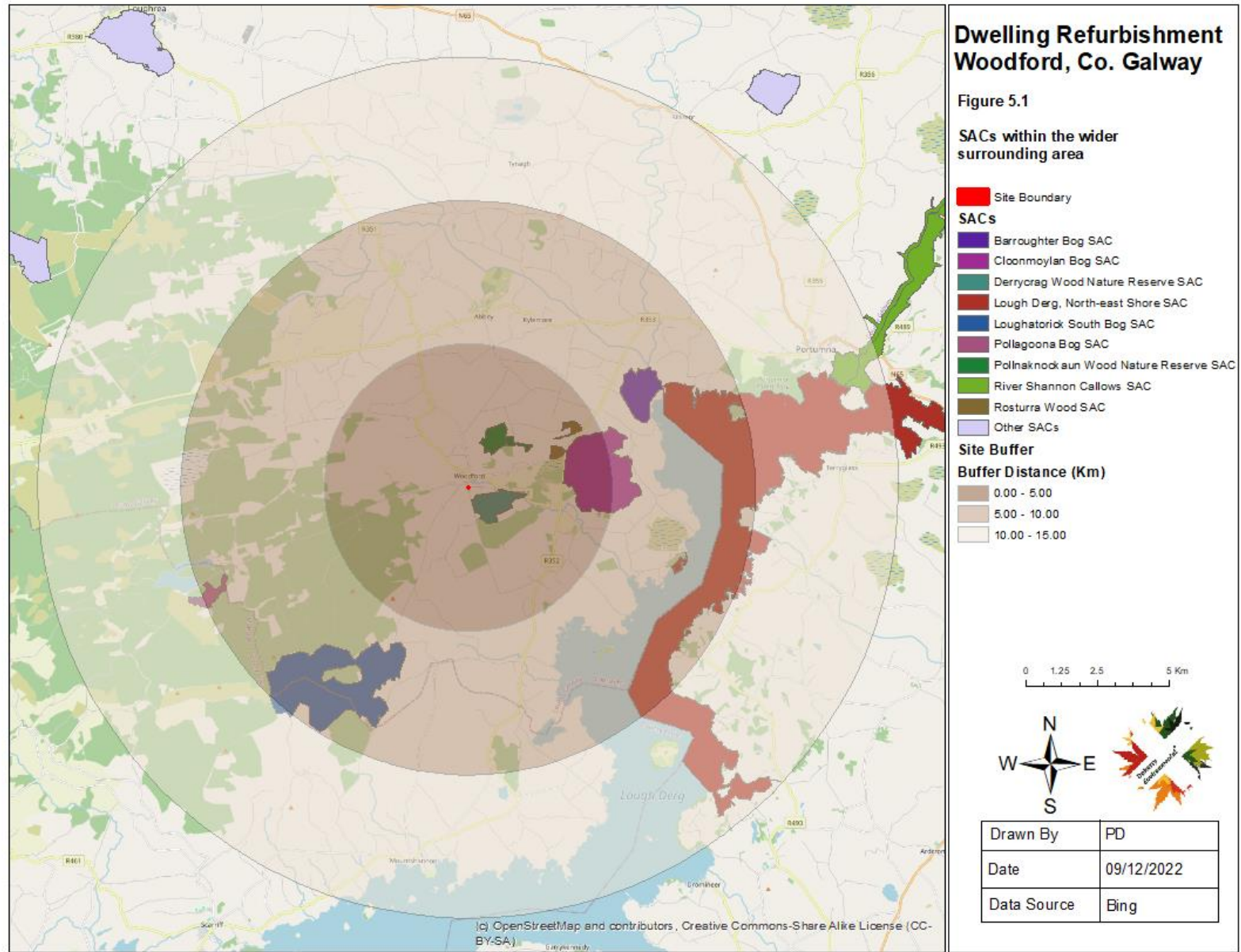
5.1 IDENTIFICATION OF EUROPEAN SITES

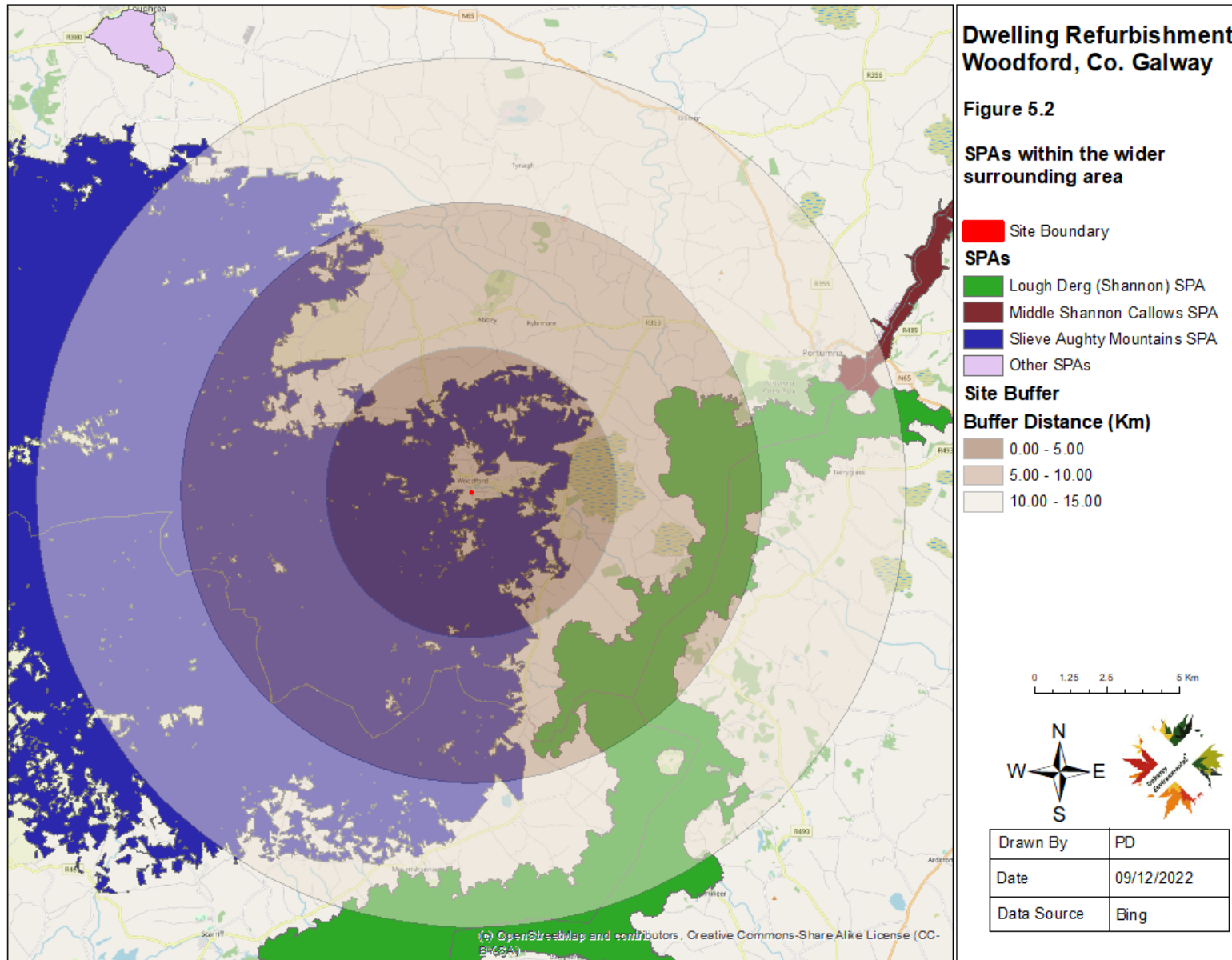
Current guidance informing the approach to screening for Appropriate Assessment defines the zone of influence of a proposed development as the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. It is recommended that this is established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor (SPR) framework (OPR, 2021).

As a first step in identifying the European Sites that could be connected to the project via SPR pathways, all European Sites occurring in the wider surrounding area that could be conceivably connected to the project were identified. As can be seen in Figures 5.1 and 5.2, 9 SACs and 3 SPAs are located in the wider area surrounding the project site. The nearest SAC to the project site is the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC, located approximately 350m to the southeast. The nearest SPA to the project site is the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA, located approximately 240m to the southeast. Aside from these two European Sites, all other European Sites shown on Figure 5.1 and 5.2 are located at a remote distance from the project site, with the next nearest site being the Pollnacknockaun Wood Nature Reserve SAC, located approximately 1.3km to the north.

Given that the project site does not overlap with any European Sites, there will be no potential for the project to result in direct impacts, in the form of habitat loss, damage or physical disturbance to European Sites. As such the remainder of this screening exercise focuses on establishing whether or not European Sites are at risk of the project as a result of potential impacts arising from the project and these impacts being conveyed via pathways to receptors (i.e., the features of interest) of European Sites.

Given the small-scale nature of the project which involves the demolition of an existing dwelling and its replacement with 2 no dwellings the potential for any impacts is considered to be restricted to the immediate area at and surrounding the project site. As such this screening will be completed by examining whether or not the project has the potential to result in indirect impacts to the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA and Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC, which are the two nearest European Sites to the project.





5.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE EUROPEAN SITES BEING CONSIDERED

5.2.1 *Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA*

The Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA is a very large site that extends southwards from just south of Lough Rea, County Galway to Scariff in County Clare. The site consists of a variety of upland habitats, though approximately half is afforested. The coniferous forests include first and second rotation plantations, with both pre-thicket and post-thicket stands present. Substantial areas of clear-fell are also present at any one time. The principal tree species present are Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) and Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta*). Almost one-third of the site is unplanted blanket bog and heath, with both wet and dry heath present. Well-developed blanket bog occurs at several locations, notably Sonnagh, Loughatorick South and Glendree. The vegetation is characterised by such species as Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) and especially Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*). Bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) are well-represented. The remainder of the site is mostly rough grassland that is used for hill farming. This varies in composition and includes some wet areas with rushes (*Juncus* spp.) and some areas subject to scrub encroachment.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for:

Hen Harrier; and

Merlin

The Slieve Aughty Mountains are a stronghold for Hen Harrier and support the second largest concentration in the country. A survey in 2005 recorded 27 pairs, which represents over 12% of the all-Ireland population. A somewhat lower count of between 15 and 23 pairs in the 1998-2000 period is considered to reflect poorer coverage then. The mix of forestry and open areas provides optimum habitat conditions for this rare bird, which is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. The early stages of new and second-rotation conifer plantations are the most

frequently used nesting sites, though some pairs may still nest in tall heather of unplanted bogs and heath. Hen Harriers will forage up to c. 5 km from the nest site, utilising open bog and moorland, young conifer plantations and hill farmland that is not too rank. Birds will often forage in openings and gaps within forests. In Ireland, small birds and small mammals appear to be the most frequently taken prey. The site also supports a breeding population of Merlin. The population size is not well known but is likely to exceed five pairs. Red Grouse is found on many of the unplanted areas of bog and heath – this is a species that has declined in Ireland and is now Red-listed. The Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA is of ornithological significance, as it provides excellent nesting and foraging habitat for nationally important breeding populations of Hen Harrier and Merlin, two species that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Some woodlands within the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA are designated as Statutory Nature Reserves.

5.2.2 Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC

Derrycrag Wood is an old oak woodland, situated 1.5 km south-east of Woodford, Co. Galway, and is traversed by the Woodford River. The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

[91A0] Old Oak Woodlands

Before commercial conifer planting in the 1930s and 1940s, this would have been part of the largest oak woodlands in the country. In the fragments remaining, the Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) canopy can be up to 17m tall. The woodland also contains Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Yew (*Taxus baccata*) are locally abundant. Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) occur on the slightly richer soil. In spite of the fact that the site is dominated by planted conifers, elements of the original ground flora persist, especially where mature Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) is present. The ground flora consists mainly of Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*), Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*), Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*) and Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), with an abundance and diversity of mosses in the more open areas. At one small location on the Woodford River bank there is a remarkably rich flora, including the Red Data Book species

Alder Buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) and three plant species which are otherwise scarce in Ireland: Blue-eyed-grass (*Sisyrinchium bermudiana*), Lesser Meadow-rue (*Thalictrum minus*) and Columbine (*Aquilegia vulgaris*). Most of the site is also designated as a Nature Reserve, but an adjacent area of thinned out Scots Pine with a very diverse ground flora and an area of wet grassland are also included. Pine Marten and Badger (both Red Data Book species), Red Squirrel, Fox and Fallow Deer are all found in the wood. Bat species also forage in the area. Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and Jay are a few of the more notable bird species present in the site. Management of the wood includes the gradual removal of all conifers except for a few areas with mature Scots Pine. The cleared areas, however, are vulnerable to invasion by non-native species, e.g. Beech (*Fagus sylvaticus*) and to grazing by deer. Derrycrag Wood is of considerable conservation significance as an old oak woodland, a habitat listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Furthermore, it supports a diverse flora and fauna including the Red Data Book species Alder Buckthorn, Pine Marten and Badger.

6.0 POTENTIAL FOR INDIRECT EFFECTS

A Screening Matrix, in line with European Commission (2021) guidelines is provided below in Table 6.1 that examines the potential for the demolition of the disused dwelling and its replacement with 2 no. dwellings to result in indirect and likely significant effects to the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA and the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC

Table 6.1: Screening Matrix for Project

Screening Criteria	Assessment
Brief description of the project or plan	The project and associated activities are described in Section 2 above.
Brief description of the European Sites	The European Sites occurring in the wider surrounding area are identified and briefly described in Section 5 above.
Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European Sites.	The project will not result in any changes in land cover at or surrounding the project site. The project will result in the demolitions of an existing dwelling and its replacement with 2 no.

Screening Criteria	Assessment
	<p>dwelling within the existing curtilage. There are no streams or drains at or surrounding the project site and there are no hydrological pathway connecting the project site to the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA and the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC in the wider area.</p> <p>The works associated with the project will not be of a scale that will have potential to result in impacts to the receiving environment, biodiversity or the features of interest of the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA and the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC.</p>
<p>Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European Sites site by virtue of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • size and scale; • land-take; • distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site; • resource requirements (water abstraction etc.); • emissions (disposal to land, water or air); • excavation requirements; • transportation requirements; • duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.; 	<p>There will be no direct impacts from the project to the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA or the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC.</p> <p>There are no pathways connecting the project site to these two European Sites, or for that matter any other European Sites.</p> <p>There are no streams or drains at the project and there is no hydrological pathway connecting the project to the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA or the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC.</p> <p>The project will not result in emissions to air that could have potential to result in changes to baseline ambient air conditions.</p> <p>The project will not result in perceptible changes to baseline noise conditions in the surrounding area.</p> <p>The project will not result in light emissions to the surrounding area.</p>

Screening Criteria	Assessment
	<p>The project will not result in any perceptible changes to the visual and landscape setting at the town of Woodford.</p> <p>The project site does not provide suitable habitat for supporting mobile species (i.e., hen harrier and merlin) that are features of interest of the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA. No mobile species are listed as features of interest of the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC.</p> <p>The project is small in scale relating to the demolition of an existing dwelling and its replacement with 2 no. dwellings in the town of Woodford.</p> <p>The project will not result in any land take from the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA or the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC.</p> <p>The project is located outside the boundary of the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA and the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC and is buffered from these two European Sites by at least 240m.</p> <p>The project will not result in any resource requirements from these two European Sites.</p> <p>In light of the foregoing the project will not have the potential to result in any emissions to the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA and the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC.</p> <p>The project will not result in any excavations in the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA or the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC.</p> <p>The project will not result in any perceptible changes to baseline traffic at Woodford.</p>

Screening Criteria	Assessment
	<p>The duration of the construction phase of the project will be short with all works expected to be completed within a 12-month period.</p>
<p>Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduction of habitat area; • disturbance to key species; • habitat or species fragmentation; • reduction in species density; • changes in key indicators of conservation value • (water quality etc.); • climate change. 	<p>The project will not:</p> <p>have the potential to result in a reduction in habitat area of any qualifying habitats or habitats relied upon by qualifying species of the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA or the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC;</p> <p>there are no impact pathways linking the project site to the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA and the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC and there will be no potential for the project to result in activities that could result in disturbance to wild fauna or flora. The project site does not support any habitats upon which mobile qualifying species of the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA rely.</p> <p>The project will not have the potential to result in the emission of greenhouse gases that could contribute to climate change.</p>
<p>Describe the potential for the project alone or in combination with other plans or projects to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>	<p>Given that the project will not result in any changes in land use activities, will not result in any perceptible emissions to the surrounding environment and is not connected to any European Sites via pathways it will not have the potential to combine with other existing or proposed plans or projects in the surrounding area to result in cumulative negative effects to the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA or the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC or any other European Sites.</p>

Screening Criteria	Assessment
Describe any likely impacts on the European Sites site as a whole in terms of: interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site; interference with key relationships that define the function of the site	For reasons set out above the project will not have the potential to interfere with key relationships that define the structure and function of European Sites.
Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss; • fragmentation; • disruption; • disturbance; • change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.). 	For reasons set out above the project will not have the potential to result in such effects to European Sites.
Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.	The project will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.

7.0 SCREENING STATEMENT CONCLUSION: FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

During the Screening of the proposed demolitions of an existing dwelling and its replacement with 2 no. dwellings at Woodford it was found that 12 European Sites occur in the wider area surrounding the project site. Two of these are located in relatively close proximity to the project site, with the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA and the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC being located approximately 240m and 350m to the southeast at their nearest points.

These two European Sites and their constituent features of interest, nor any other European Sites, will not be negatively influenced by the project. This is due to the nature of the project, which will not result in changes to land use, will not result in perceptible emissions to the environment and is not connected via pathways to any European Sites. Given the absence for potential effects to the surrounding environment and biodiversity, the project will not have the potential, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, to result likely significant effects to the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA or the Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC or any other European Sites.

In light of the findings of this report it is the considered view of the authors of this Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment that it can be concluded by the Galway County Council that the project is not likely, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, to have a significant effect on any European Sites in view of their Conservation Objectives and on the basis of best scientific evidence and there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to that conclusion.