
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

56 UNIT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT COSMONA, LOUGHREA, CO. GALWAY

SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESMENT

OCTOBER 2024

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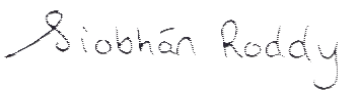


DOCUMENT APPROVAL

PROJECT	56 Unit Residential Development at Cosmona, Loughrea, Co, Galway	
CLIENT / JOB NO	Galway County Council	6561
DOCUMENT TITLE	Screening for Appropriate Assessment	

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Date October 2024	Signature 	Signature 

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited have been commissioned by Galway County Council to carry out a Stage I Appropriate Assessment Screening under Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) for the proposed Residential Development at Loughrea, Co. Galway, hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'.

The purpose of this report is to assess the various elements of the project in terms of potential impacts to European Sites within the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the project site. Potential cumulative impacts of the overall Proposed Development, individually and in-combination with other plans and projects within the area of the waterbody catchment were also assessed in relation to existing, or proposed elements of the project. Locations where works will be carried out were surveyed for the presence of protected habitats and species as set out in the Birds and Habitats Directives.

This proposal is not necessary for the conservation management of a European site.

1.2 AUTHOR'S QUALIFICATION AND EXPERTISE

This Stage I Appropriate Assessment Screening has been prepared by Siobhan Roddy and Sarah Moore and Reviewed by David Kiely.

Siobhan Roddy is a graduate Environmental Scientist with a BSc in Environmental Science and Technology from Dublin City University. She has experience through various projects since joining JOD with a current focus on the environmental sector. Siobhan's key capabilities are in report writing of EIAR Chapters, Appropriate Assessments, Natura Impact Statements, Feasibility Studies and using software such as ArcGIS Pro.

Sarah Moore is an Environmental Scientist in JOD with over 17 years of environmental consultancy experience. She has obtained a MSc in Environmental Engineering from Queens University, Belfast, and a BSc in Environmental Science from University of Limerick. Since joining JOD, Sarah has been involved as a Project Environmental Scientist on a range of renewable energy, wastewater, structures and commercial projects. She has experience in the preparation of Appropriate Assessments, Ecological Impact Assessments, Environmental Impact Assessments and Geographic Information Systems.

1.3 REGULATORY CONTEXT

Under Section 177U (1) of the Planning Acts, a Screening for AA of the Proposed Development shall be carried out by the competent authority (in this case, Galway County Council or An Bord Pleanála) to assess in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect(s) on any European sites.

Collectively, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are referred to as the Natura 2000 Sites. The legal basis on which SACs are selected and designated is the EU Habitats Directive, 92/43/EEC transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), as amended. The designation features of SACs are referred to as Qualifying Interests (QI) and include both species (excluding birds) and habitats. Similarly, Special Protection Areas (SPA's) are legislated in the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC. The designation features of SPAs are referred to as Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) which comprise bird species as well as wetland bird habitats.

In general terms, SACs and SPAs are considered to be of exceptional importance in terms of rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats and species within the European Community.

Article 6, paragraphs 3 of the Habitats Directive state that:

“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. In the 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”.

The statutory agency responsible for the European sites is the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

This report has been prepared in accordance with current guideline documents:

- Assessment of plans and projects significantly effecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001)
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG 2009, Revised February 2010)
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG, 2009, rev 2010)
- Communication from the Commission on the Precautionary Principle. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, (EC, 2000a)
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I. No.477 of 2011).
- Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. European Commission (EC, 2013)
- EU Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC (EC, 2007)
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018)

- OPR Practice Note PNO1 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management March 2021

The following European Court and Irish High Court rulings have been considered:

- C-721/21 Eco Advocacy CLG v An Bord Pleanála and Keegan Land Holdings Limited
- C-127/02 Waddenzee v Staatssecretaris
- C-258/11 Sweetman v An Bord Pleanála
- C-512/12 Briels
- C-387/12 & C388/15 Orleans and others v Vlaams Gewest
- C-142/15 Moorbug
- C-323/17 People Over Wind and Peter Sweetman v Coillte
- C-162/17 Grace and Sweetman
- C-883/18 Holohan and others v An Bord Pleanála
- IEHC 84 (2019) - Kelly v An Bord Pleanála

Relevant plans from national to local scales are critical to inform a robust assessment of in-combination impacts; these are listed below:

- National Biodiversity Action Plan, for the period 2023-2030
- River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021
- Galway County Development Plan 2017-2023
- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

1.4 THE STAGES IN AN APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

There are 4 stages in an Appropriate Assessment as outlined in the European Commission Guidance document (2001). The following is a brief summary of these steps:

Stage 1 - Screening: This stage examines the likely effects of a project either alone or in- combination with other projects upon a European site and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant.

Stage 2 - Appropriate Assessment: In this stage, the impact of the project on the integrity of the European site is considered, with respect to the conservation objectives of the site and to its structure and function.

Stage 3 - Assessment of Alternative Solutions: Should the Appropriate Assessment determine that adverse impacts are likely upon the European site, this stage examines alternative ways of implementing the project that, where possible, avoid these adverse impacts.

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 European site will be necessary.

As part of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment, a desk-based study of the European site within the zone of influence (Zol) of the Proposed Development is required.

1.5 SCREENING METHODOLOGY

The function of the Screening Assessment is to identify whether or not the proposal will have a likely significant effect on any European Site. In this context “likely” refers to the presence of doubt with regard to the absence of significant effects (ECJ case C-127/02) and “significant” means not trivial or inconsequential but an effect that has the potential to undermine the site’s conservation objectives (ECJ case C-127/02). In other words, any effect that compromises the functioning and viability of a site and interferes with achieving the conservation objectives for the site would constitute a significant effect.

The nature of the likely interactions between the Proposed Development and the integrity of a European Site will depend upon the sensitivity of the European Site’s qualifying features to potential impacts arising from the project; the current conservation status of the European Site and its qualifying features; and any likely changes to key environmental indicators (e.g. water quality) that underpin the conservation status of European Sites and their qualifying features, in-combination with other plans and projects.

The European Commission (2018) Guidelines outline the stages involved in undertaking a Screening Assessment of a project that has the potential to have likely significant effects on European Sites. The methodology adopted for this Screening Assessment is informed by these guidelines and was undertaken in the following steps:

1. Define the project and determine whether it is directly connected with or necessary for the conservation management of European Sites
2. Identify other plans or projects that, in-combination with the project, have the potential to effect European Sites
3. Assess whether or not the project is likely to have significant effects on European Sites in the view of its conservation objectives.

1.6 DESK STUDY

A desk study was carried out to collate the available information on the ecological environment of the proposed site. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) database was consulted concerning designated conservation areas and records of rare and protected plant and animal species in the vicinity of the Proposed Development. The EPA Geoportal website was used when researching European designated sites and watercourses. The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) website was also consulted.

The Study area for the Proposed Development is 8.14 acres (blue line boundary) and the red line boundary is 6.11 acres (see Drawing No.240026-DR-VHA-AR-003). No protected species have been

recorded within the study area. The Project is entirely contained within the 1 one-kilometre Grid square 'M6117'. Three protected species have been recorded in this grid namely, West European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) and Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

The Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Galway County Council planning enquiry website were reviewed to identify any proposed plans or projects which may have a direct, indirect or cumulative impact with this project.

1.7 FLOODING

Office of Public Works (OPW) website and the CFRAM study were accessed (July 2024) to determine flood areas within and near the Project. **Figure 1.1** shows the probability of flooding at and in the vicinity of the Project, along with records of past flood events.

The Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) mapping predicts that fluvial flooding will not occur within the development site for all modelled flood Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) events. Therefore, the Proposed Development site is in Flood Zone C, as referenced in the OPW Planning Systems and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities and is considered to not be at risk of fluvial and tidal flooding. The nearest recurring flood event is Earlspeak, Loughrea located along the south boundary of Lough Rea approximately 1.5km south of the Proposed Development.

The Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) Groundwater Flooding Probability Maps were also examined (July 2024) to determine if there was an existing risk from groundwater flooding at the site. The groundwater flood mapping confirmed that the site is not at risk from groundwater flooding with the closest historic record of groundwater flooding to the Proposed Development also approximately 15.2 km southwest. Given that the entirety of bedrock at the work area is of 'Waulsortian Limestones', there is not a high risk of groundwater flooding.

A Flood Risk Assessment Report (FRA) has been prepared by Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited for Galway County Council to assess the flood risk associated with the Proposed Development. The report was prepared in accordance with the report 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in November 2009.

The conclusion taken from the FRA is that the Proposed Development site is not at risk of flooding (fluvial, tidal, pluvial or groundwater) and the proposed works will not result in any significant change in risk or flooding regime. As such, no further stages of flood risk assessment are required for the site (**Figure 1.1**).



Figure 1.1 Flood Map for the Proposed Site (Source: FloodInfo.ie)

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 SITE LOCATION

The Proposed Development is located approximately 1km to the north of Loughrea, County Galway (**Figure 2.1**). Galway City Centre is located approximately 54km to the west. The Proposed Development is located approximately 990m north of Lough Rea and approximately 450m west of the Kilcogan River. The land in ownership of the applicant covers an area of approximately 32,968m² (8.14 acres) while the land to which the application relates covers an area of approximately 24,751m² (6.11 acres). The site is bounded by a housing estate to the north. The R530 extends the full length of the site boundary to the east. The southern and western boundaries are bordered by an existing natural stone wall, however, sections of this natural stone wall are to be demolished as part of the Proposed Development. There is a graveyard to the southwest of the Proposed Development. The Site is located on improved agricultural grassland (GA1) which has been modified and used for grazing. There are treeline (WL2)/ hedgerow (WL1) habitats along the north, west, south and central site boundaries. There are mature trees reaching 10-15m tall in the centre of the site. WL1/WL2 habitats are sometimes discontinuous, especially along the southern site boundary. Treeline/hedgerow habitats are more dense and support semi-mature trees along the northern Proposed Development boundary. Onsite WL1/WL2 habitats have associated stone walls (BL1) along much of their length, reaching generally approx. 1m tall. Sections of the walls are in disrepair.



Figure 2.1 Location of the Proposed Development Site

2.2 PROPOSED WORKS

The Proposed Development will comprise an area of approximately 24,751m² to facilitate the development of 56 housing units. The units will consist of 3 different bungalow units: 3 bed/5 person (1), 2 bed/4 person (1), 2 bed/3 person (9), and 5 different two storey units: 5bed/8 person (1), 4bed/7 Person (2), 3 bed/6person (3), 3 bed/5person (21), 2 bed/4person (6), and also 3 blocks of apartment units: 2 bed/3 person (6) and 1bed/ 2person (6).

In addition to the housing units, the Proposed Development will consist of an open space area (4,881m² total), 2m wide footpath, 6m wide access road, garden fencing/walls, 106 parking spaces and 4 accessible parking spaces.

The Proposed Development site is relatively flat with ground levels consistently between approximately 82m and 78.5m OD. The ground level drops from c.82m OD at the western boundary to c.78.5m OD at the eastern boundary of the site, a drop of c.3.5m.



Figure 2.2: Existing Site Plan

3. RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The Proposed Development is located entirely within Waulsortian Limestones. This bedrock formation is described by the Geological Survey of Ireland as a 'Massive unbedded lime-mudstone'. The bedrock indicated is a locally important aquifer, (LI), with one spring / well drawing from within the vicinity of the site. The groundwater vulnerability was determined to be moderate to high. The EPA Maps indicate that the subsoil onsite is characterised as till type. The soil type found onsite is classified as 'Limestone till (Carboniferous)'. Corine 2018 denotes this area as *Agricultural Areas*.

3.2 HYDROLOGY AND HYDROGEOLOGY

The Proposed Development is located within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) wider catchment area of Galway Bay South East covering an area of 1,267.9km² and is located within the Kilcogan_SC_010 WFD sub catchment (149.86km²).



Figure 3.1: Rivers within the vicinity of the site.

The site overlies bedrock which is classified as a ‘*Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones*’. The groundwater vulnerability of the site is classified as both moderate ‘M’ and high ‘H’. The Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE) Rahasane Turlough Ground waterbody which underlies the Proposed Development site currently has a water classification of ‘Good’. There was a well (borehole) drilled in the vicinity of the Proposed Development in December 1999, however, the yield was recorded as poor. There are no springs or wells recently recorded within the vicinity of the site.

The nearest watercourse is the order 2 Kilcogan River (Segment Code: 29_513) which lies approximately 450m metres east of the Proposed Development (**Figure 2.5**). The Kilcogan River flows in a westerly direction for approximately 35km before entering Galway Bay, part of Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA. The River subsequently discharges into the Atlantic Ocean.

Currently, the groundwater in the area has significant underlying pressures from agriculture and domestic wastewater (EPA Water Maps, accessed July 2024). The project is within the Rahasane Turlough groundwater body for the abstraction of drinking water (Article 7- EPA Code IEPA1_WE_G_0100). The Water Framework Directive (WFD) latest status for the Rahasane Turlough GWB (2016-2021) is ‘Good’, indicating no change from the previous 2013-2018 and 2010-2015 records held. The site is not within a GSI public or group water scheme source protection area. The Proposed

Development is within the Rahasane Turlough groundwater body for the abstraction of drinking water (Article 7- EPA code IEPA1_WE_G_0100).

The EPA Maps (Water) website was also accessed (July 2024) to examine the Proposed Development area and its environs for nitrate and phosphorus loading and Pollutant Impact Potential (PIP). PIP maps for Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorus (P) have been generated by the EPA to show the highest risk areas in the landscape for losses of N and P to waters. The PIP model estimates the annual nutrient losses from agricultural land at specific locations, using spatial data from farm management, soils and hydrogeology. This model estimates loads at an annual temporal resolution.

The Proposed Development and immediate surrounding lands have a Phosphorus ranking of between 4 and 7 (7 is the lowest impact ranking). Pollution Impact Potential Nitrate (PIP N) for the lands within and surrounding the Project have a ranking of 7. The nature of the Proposed Development will generate a demand for water, but this is for residential use and is not considered significant. Adherence to best practice Construction and Environmental Management during the construction phase will ensure that the Proposed Development would not result in pollution of groundwater or any surface water. The lack of an overall ranking for these parameters likely reflects little fertiliser use on The Proposed Development land in the past, with low level or no stock. Overall, the Critical Source Areas Maps for The Proposed Development and adjacent lands do not indicate a Site where either phosphorus or nitrates are a significant issue.

3.3 HABITATS

When examining the project site on the EPA maps using Corine 2018, the habitats surrounding the project site are all classed as artificial surfaces and urban fabric or otherwise classified as artificial surface BL3, according to Fossitt (2000). The site itself is bordered by a road on the east side, a housing estate to the north and north west while the south of the project site is bordered by managed grassland and agriculture (GA1, improved agricultural grassland, Fossitt, 2000).

The Proposed Development is located on improved agricultural grassland (GA1) which has been modified and used for grazing. There are treeline (WL2)/ hedgerow (WL1) habitats along the north, west, south and central site boundaries. There are mature trees reaching 10-15m tall in the centre of the site. WL1/WL2 habitats are sometimes discontinuous, especially along the southern site boundary. Treeline/hedgerow habitats are denser and support semi-mature trees along the northern Proposed Development boundary. Onsite WL1/WL2 habitats have associated stone walls (BL1) along much of their length, reaching generally approx. 1m tall. Sections of the walls are in disrepair.

4. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

This AA Screening examined the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development, either alone or in-combination with other projects or plans on European sites, which were situated within a zone of

influence (Zol), or a distance that has a potential source-pathway-receptor (SPR), both direct and indirect with the Proposed Development.

4.1 EUROPEAN SITES WITHIN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE (ZOI) OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The potential Zol currently recommended for plans, is a distance of 15km from the plan boundary and derives from UK guidance (Scott Wilson et al., 2006). For projects however, the distance could be more, or much less than 15km, and in some cases less than 100m, but guidance advises that this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in-combination effects.

The European Sites identified as being within the Proposed Development's Zol's using the Source Pathway Receptor (SPR) principle will be assessed (**Table 4.1**) to examine the likelihood of significant effects of the Proposed Development either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, on any European Sites. **Figure 4.1** shows a 15km radius Zol around the Proposed Site and the associated Natura 2000 sites.

The Proposed Development is not located within the boundary of any European Site, with the nearest such sites, Lough Rea SAC and Lough Rea SPA, located approximately 1.2km south of the Proposed Development.

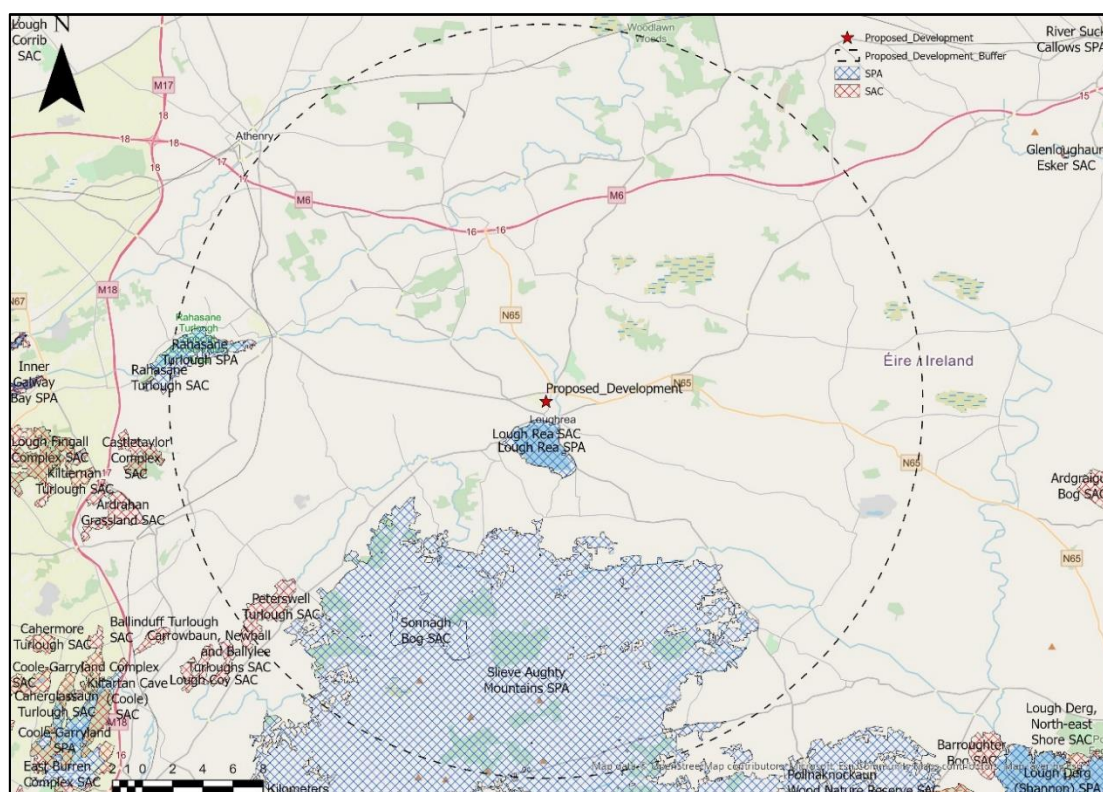


Figure 4.1 European Sites located within the 15km Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development

Table 4.1: Relevant European Sites, reasons for designation and data for Screening

Designated Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 03 rd July 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Distance from Proposed Development (km)	Source-Pathway-Receptor Linkage
SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (SACs)			
Lough Rea SAC (000304)	Habitats Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140] According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2019) for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.	Approximately 1.2km south of the Proposed Development.	Construction phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no significant effects anticipated. Operation phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no significant effects anticipated during the operation phase.
Sonnagh Bog SAC (001913)	Habitats Blanket bogs (*if active) [7130] According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2019), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.	Approximately 10.2km south east of the Proposed Development.	Construction phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no significant effects anticipated. Operation phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no significant effects anticipated during the operation phase.
Rahasane Turlough SAC (000322)	Habitats Turloughs [3180] According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2020), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation	Approximately 14.5km north west of the Proposed Development.	Construction phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no

Designated Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 03 rd July 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Distance from Proposed Development (km)	Source-Pathway-Receptor Linkage
	condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.		significant effects anticipated. Operation phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no significant effects anticipated during the operation phase.
Peterswell Turlough Sac (000318)	Habitats Turloughs [3180] Rivers with muddy banks with <i>Chenopodium rubri</i> p.p. and <i>Bidention</i> p.p. vegetation [3270] According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 8.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2021), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.	Approximately 13.5km south east of the Proposed Development.	Construction phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no significant effects anticipated. Operation phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no significant effects anticipated during the operation phase.
SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (SPAs)			
Lough Rea SPA (004134)	Birds Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] Habitats Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1.0. Department of Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage 2022), for each of the listed Qis and SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or	Approximately 1.2km south of the Proposed Development.	Construction phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no significant effects anticipated. Operation phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no significant effects anticipated during

Designated Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 03 rd July 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Distance from Proposed Development (km)	Source-Pathway-Receptor Linkage
	the Annex II species for which the SPA has been selected.		the operation phase.
Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA (004168)	Birds Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082] Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) [A098] According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2022), for each of the listed QIs and SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SPA has been selected.	Approximately 11.0km south of the Proposed Development.	Construction phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no significant effects anticipated. Operation phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no significant effects anticipated during the operation phase.
Rahasane Turlough SPA (004089)	Birds Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] Habitats Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2023), for each of the listed QIs and SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SPA has been selected.	Approximately 14.5km north west of the Proposed Development.	Construction phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no significant effects anticipated. Operation phase No hydrological link or SPR to any European site, therefore no significant effects anticipated during the operation phase.

There is no direct hydrological link from the project site to Kilcogan River (Segment Code: 29_513) which is located to the east of the project site.

Due to the scale and scope of the proposed works related to the proposed residential development, the embedded design measures, the lack of a hydrological link to a European Site and the intervening distances to any European Site within the ZOI, it was considered that negative impacts would not occur on any European Site that have no direct or indirect SPR to the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development is not located within the boundary of any European Site, with the nearest such site, Lough Rea SAC, located approximately 1.2km south of the Proposed Development. There will be no SPR linkage that will cause significant effect to any European Site from the proposed works during the construction phase. Storm drainage for the entire development will be designed in accordance with the *Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas* and also the recommendations of the *Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS)*.

The catchment profile indicates groundwater flow of south eastern direction; however, the slope of the land is quite flat, and with no history of the project site having flooded in the past, the only potential risk would be overland flooding. Therefore, with due consideration, impacts on the conservation objectives of the designated sites outlined above in **Table 4.1** were not considered likely.

4.2 IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

Planning Permission Applications

While effects on European Sites are not expected as a result of the construction and operation of the Development, the potential for cumulative effects on these designated sites due to other plans and projects acting in-combination with the Development were considered. The Galway County Council on-line planning application portal was used to search planning applications close to the Proposed Development. A five-year search timeframe was assessed. Retention, refused, and withdrawn planning applications were excluded. **Table 4.2** shows the planning applications in close proximity to the Proposed Development (c. 500m).

Table 4.2 Planning applications in close proximity (500m) to the Proposed Development.

Planning Reference	Description of Development	Site Address	Decision Date	Distance from Site
2461295	for amendments to previously permitted housing development granted under Pl. Ref. No. 22/748. The development will consist of; (1) Extension to the area of the housing estate permitted under Pl. Ref. No. 22/748 by 140sqm, (2) Variation/omission of Condition no. 2 of Pl. Ref. No. 22/748, (3) Demolition of existing shed, (4) Construction a block of 3 no. 2 bed two storey terraced houses and (5) Connection to access and services permitted under Pl. Ref. No. 22/748, together with all associated site works. Gross floor area of proposed works: 229.80sqm (3 x 76.60 = 229.80sqm)	Cosmona, Loughrea, Co. Galway	N/A	Approx. 222m north
2461243	for: (a) demolition of existing rear extension to dwelling, (b) construction of a new two storey extension to rear of dwelling, (c) changes to front elevation and (d) all associated site services. Gross floor space of proposed works: 86.56 sqm. Gross floor space of any demolition: 13.42 sqm	Loughrea, No. 14 Mount Carmel Crescent, Co. Galway	N/A	Approx. 226m south
2460868	for alterations and extension to existing semi-detached dwelling, including provision of parking area to front of site with all associated site works. Gross floor space of proposed works: 65.00 sqm	Cosmona, No.9 Liam Mellows Terrace, Loughrea Co. Galway	04/09/2024	Approx. 242m southwest
2460551	the construction of a single storey, discount foodstore with ancillary off-license sales area. Construction of surface level car parking spaces, including electrical vehicle (EV) charging spaces and pre-wiring other spaces to accommodate future EV parking; cycle	Cosmona & Loughrea, Gallows Hill (R350)	N/A	Adjacent to the south of the site

Planning Reference	Description of Development	Site Address	Decision Date	Distance from Site
	stands; trolley bay canopy; hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatments including retaining structures; ESB substation building; site lighting; mechanical plant area; roof mounted photovoltaic panels; all advertising signage including a "flagpole" sign at the entrance. Vehicular access and egress for the foodstore is from the R350 which will require works to the existing stone wall on the west side of the R350 a new footpath and land reserved for a cycle path along the east side of the site; on site drainage infrastructure including SUDS measures; connection to existing watermain; and construction of foul drain connection from the application site to an existing foul drain at Hazelwood to the north. All other works required to complete the development. The application is accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement. A Protected Structure, RPS reference 330 on its attendant grounds. Gross floor space of proposed works: 2,326.50 sqm			
2460496	to construct a housing development. The Development will consist of 33 No. dwelling units; 2 by 1 bedroom units, 3 by 2 bedroom units, 13 by 3 bedroom units, and 15 by 4 bedroom units, terraced detached and semi-detached units. The proposed development will also include access via the existing Abbeyfields estate road, foul sewer, surface water and mains water connections to existing services pedestrian connectivity to existing footpath network. Provision of communal open space, private open space, bicycle	Cosmona, Loughrea, Co Galway	N/A	Approx. 78m north

Planning Reference	Description of Development	Site Address	Decision Date	Distance from Site
	parking, public lighting, landscape plan together with all associated services and siteworks. Gross floor space of proposed works: 3,696.00 sqm			
2460328	(a) demolition of existing rear extension to dwelling, (b) construction of a new two storey extension to rear of dwelling, (c) changes to front elevation and (d) all associated site services. Gross floor space of proposed works: 113.40 sqm. Gross floor space of any demolition: 13.42 sqm	Loughrea, No. 14 Mount Carmel Crescent, Co. Galway	17/05/2024	Approx. 307m south
2360688	(1) of the insertion of an automatic opening vent (AOV) over an internal stairs, (2) full permission to install a new external stairway to the rear of building & all ancillary works	St. Joseph's Convent, Mount Carmel, Cosmona, Loughrea	17/08/2023	Approx. 127m south
2260376	for the revisions to front elevation of existing 2 storey mid terrace dwelling, removal of chimney, extension to rear, internal alterations and all associated site development works. Gross floor area of extension: 42sqm	Loughrea, Co. Galway	15/06/2022	Approx. 370m south
22574	to construct an extension at the front and rear of her dwelling. Gross floor space of proposed works: 58.11 sqm.	Moanmore, Co. Galway	28/06/2022	Approx. 124m northeast
22748	for (1) demolition of existing derelict house (2) construction of a residential development consisting of an overall 13 no. units comprising of (a) 1 no. 4 bed detached house, (b) 4 no. 3 bed semi-detached houses & (c) 8 no. 2 bed houses in 2 blocks of 4 and all associated site works and connection to services and (3) new vehicular site access onto local road. Gross floor space of proposed works: 1292.8 sqm	Cosmona, Co. Galway	19/05/2023	Approx. 428m north

Planning Reference	Description of Development	Site Address	Decision Date	Distance from Site
211616	to demolish existing house, construction of 2 two-storey dwellings with one additional entrance and associated services (gross floor space demolition 215sqm; proposed 281sqm)	Monearmore	27/10/2021	Approx. 69m north
212515	[i] the demolition of 3 substandard existing dwellings in ruin [ii]the construction of 3 replacement dwelling houses and all associated site services. Gross floor space of proposed works:316 msq	Loughrea, Co. Galway	24/02/2022	Approx. 267m south
21288	to construct a two storey Dwelling House and associated services. Gross floor space of proposed works: 110.2 msq.	Abbeyfields, Cosmona, Co Galway	27/04/2021	Approx. 115m north
20622	and completion of minor alterations to dwelling houses under construction on revised site boundaries and all ancillary site works, previous Planning Ref No. 18/227. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 1184.9 sqm	Cosmona	16/07/2020	Approx. 218m north
20254	for change of house plans and relocation of internal site boundary in relation to dwelling houses granted permission under planning reference number 16/485 all associated services. Gross floor space of proposed works 170sqm x 2 = 340sqm	Cosmona, Loughrea, Co. Galway	03/06/2020	Approx. 130m northeast
201409	to construct a new industrial shed on their existing brownfield site along with all associated site works/services. Gross floor space of proposed works: 139.75 sqm	Loughrea	10/03/2021	Approx. 323m east
201851	of chalet. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 71 sqm	Hillcrest Loughrea	24/03/2021	Approx. 459 m southwest
191952	sought for 1) demolition of old house and shed & 2) Construction of three 2 bedroom terrace houses in addition to previously approved housing development granted under 18/227 along with all	Cosmona, Co. Galway	08/06/2020	Approx. 385m north

Planning Reference	Description of Development	Site Address	Decision Date	Distance from Site
	ancillary site works. Gross floor space of proposed works: 287.6 sqm. Gross floor space of any demolition; 186.9 sqm			
191093	of existing dwelling house on revised site boundaries at No. 2 West Bridge. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 49.9 sqm	Pollroe buck	11/09/2019	Approx. 416m south
191094	of existing dwelling house on revised site boundaries at No. 1 West Bridge. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 49.9 sqm	Pollroe buck	11/09/2019	Approx. 475m east
191633	of creche area in dormer attic space at existing creche. Also, permission is sought for retention of minor amendments to layout and elevations of granted pl. ref. no. 98/4657. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 128 sqm	Cosmona	12/12/2019	Approx. 500m north
191872	for development at Cosmona, Loughrea. The development will consist of building number 1. Four number office units and one number coffee shop with an over all area of 421.17 sqm. Building No. 2. One number gym with an overall area of 261.15 sqm along with ancillary signage, siteworks, boundary treatments, drainage systems and landscaping. Gross floor space of proposed works: 682.32 sqm	Cosmona	04/02/2020	Approx. 500m west
19727	for (A) the demolition of the existing building formerly the FCA Barracks, (B) the construction of a residential development consisting of the provision of 8 number residential units as follows - 2 no. 2 bedroom terrace dwellings, 2 no. 3 bedroom terrace dwellings, 1 no. 5 bedroom ground floor 'assisted living' Unit, 2no.2 bedroom duplex apartments and 1 no. 3 bedroom duplex apartment together with all associated landscaping, site works	Loughrea	09/07/2019	Approx. 390m south

Planning Reference	Description of Development	Site Address	Decision Date	Distance from Site
	(including the reinstatement of the existing moat) and connection to existing services fronting onto both Dolphin Street and Abbey Street. The site contains elements of the Loughrea town defences with form part of national monument RMP No. GA105-150. Ministerial Consent C000921 by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has issued pertaining to this application under Section 14 of the National Monuments Act 1930 as amended by Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004. Gross floor space of proposed works: 893.47 sqm. Gross floor space of any demolition: 391.5 sqm			
181809	of a habitable unit to rear of dwelling. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 88.27 sqm	Abbey Street Loughrea Td, Co. Galway	14/02/2019	Approx. 400m south
191019	Revision to the previously granted site entrance and site boundaries attached to the previously granted planning permission 18556	Cosmona, Loughrea, Co. Galway	26/08/2019	Approx. 660m west
18227	(1) Demolition of 2 no. existing derelict houses (2) construction of a small residential development consisting of an overall 12 no. units comprising of : a) 2 no. 3 bed semi-detached dormer houses with ground floor bedroom to accommodate elderly residents, b) 2 no 2 bed semi-detached houses c) 4 no. 2/3 bed semi-detached dormer houses and d) 4 no. 3 bed semi-detached dormer houses, along with all associated site works and connection to services and (3) new vehicular site access onto local road	Cosmona, Loughrea, Co. Galway	24/04/2018	Approx. 300m north

Planning Reference	Description of Development	Site Address	Decision Date	Distance from Site
	segment L-8199-0. Gross floor space of proposed works 1184.9 sqm. Gross floor space of any demolition 134.29 sqm.			
181448	for conversion of archway through an existing building to use as a restaurant. The proposed unit to extend to an area to the rear of existing archway. The works will consist of a new shop front with signage over, the renovation of the arch and the provision of associated services. Gross floor space of proposed works: 77.0 sqm	Loughrea	26/02/2019	Approx. 500m south
181545	to extend an existing commercial unit along with all associated works. Gross floor space of proposed works: 110 sqm	Loughrea	02/01/2019	Approx. 323m east
181809	of a habitable unit to rear of dwelling. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 88.27 sqm	Abbey Street Loughrea Td	14/02/2019	Approx. 288m south
18423	to construct a rear extension to the existing house. Gross floor space of proposed works 27.9sqm.	Loughrea	31/05/2018	Approx. 360m southwest
18957	for 1) Change of use and extension of existing pharmacy unit into the adjoining retail unit previously granted under PI. Ref. No. 02/3800 and 5621, 2) Changes to existing plans and elevations including changes to opes and signage previously granted under PI. Ref. No. 02/3800 and 5621, 3) Change of use of 2 x No. Existing residential units to office/consultancy and, 4) All associated services. Permission for retention is also being sought for changes to the plans and elevations previously granted under PI. Ref No. 02/3800 and 5621. Gross floor space of proposed works 330.31sqm, Gross floor space of	Dunkellin Street	30/08/2018	Approx. 488m south

Planning Reference	Description of Development	Site Address	Decision Date	Distance from Site
	work to be retained 24.63sqm. Demolition 12.1sqm			
18556	Construction of 5 no. residential units provided as follows: 4 no. 2.5 storey semi-detached Type A houses; and 1 no. 2 storey detached Type B house and associated domestic garage together with the provision of vehicular and pedestrian access from the Athenry Road (N66) via 'The Maltings' residential development immediately south of the proposed site and all associated landscaping, boundary treatment, site works and connection to existing services. Gross floor space of proposed works 788 sqm.	Cosmona, Loughrea, Co. Galway	Granted 15/01/2019	Approx. 500m west

There were no other planning applications in the area at the time of writing (October 2024).

The AA Screening assessment has shown there will be no likely significant effects to any European Site during the construction or operations phases of the Proposed Development. Therefore, there will be no in-combination effects with local planning applications.

5. SCREENING ASSESSMENT – CONCLUSION

It can be objectively concluded that there are not likely to be significant effects on any European Site as a result of the proposed Residential Development at Cosmona, Loughrea, Co. Galway. Therefore, an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

6. REFERENCES

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Client: Galway County Council
Project Title: 56 Unit Residential Development at Cosmona, Loughrea Co. Galway
Title of Document: Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Date: October 2024
Job No: 6561
Document Issue: Final
Page No.: Appendix

APPENDIX A DRAWINGS

