Galbally Drive, Ballinasloe Housing Development

Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Prepared By:

Delichon Ecology

Prepared For:

Galway County Council

Galbally Drive, Ballinasloe Housing Development Screening for Appropriate Assessment

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1. INTRODUCTION

Delichon Ecology have been commissioned by Galway County Council to carry out a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) for proposed a housing development at Galbally Drive, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. The layout of the proposed housing development is presented in **Figure 1-1** while the site location is presented in **Figure 1.2.**

This Screening for Appropriate Assessment report has been prepared to provide the competent authority, Galway County Council, with the relevant scientific information to conduct the Appropriate Assessment (AA). This information will allow Galway County Council to determine, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed project, individually or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect on a European site and, where necessary, to ascertain whether or not the proposed project would adversely affect the integrity of a European site.

1.1 Legislative Context for Appropriate Assessment

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as "The Habitats Directive", provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000.

Natura 2000 sites are defined under the Habitats Directive (Article 3) as a coherent European ecological network of special areas of conservation, composed of sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, shall enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. In Ireland, these sites are designated as European Sites and include Special Protection Areas (SPAs), established under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC, as codified by 2009/147/EC) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), established under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC for habitats and species.

The Habitats Directive has been transposed into Irish law by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 - 2015 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477/2011) as amended.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to adversely affect the integrity of European Sites (Annex 1.1).

Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA):

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

1.2 Statement of Authority

Eamonn Delaney BSc, MSc, MCIEEM, CECOL prepared this Screening for Appropriate Assessment report. Eamonn has seventeen years consultancy experience and has prepared Screening for Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Statements for various projects, including residential, amenity, renewable energy and transport developments in addition to strategic policy and planning proposals. Eamonn conducted a field visit in November 2024. Eamonn's initial years in ecological consultancy involved botanical and habitat surveys for the purposes of EIA, EcIA and large scale habitat surveys for local authorities. This included plant species identification and habitat classification in a wide range of rural, urban and peri-urban environments. Eamonn is a member of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) and regularly attends local and regional BSBI field meetings in addition to carrying out recording for the proposed BSBI 2020 Atlas, in north Co. Galway and south Co. Mayo.

Eamonn has extensive experience in the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) role for Flood Relief Schemes, roads and pipeline developments which requires weekly site visits, monitoring of mitigation measures, reviewing contactors method statements in addition to ongoing liaison with site operational staff and the design team. Eamonn has also been involved in the preparation and review of numerous Screening for Appropriate Assessment reports, Natura Impact Statements, Ecological Impact Assessments and Invasive Species Management Plans for a range of project types including roads, water infrastructure, solar farms, wind farms and peatland rehabilitation works. Through his involvement in all of these projects, Eamonn has honed his skills in field based assessments and the subsequent reporting and interpretation of information yielded from desk and field based resources.

Eamonn routinely drafts, reviews and completes AAs for numerous projects. As the project design is developed, Eamonn seeks to influence the project design and refine the AA process to avoid and reduce potential impacts to the habitats and species for which the potentially impacted European site is designated. The outcome ensures that the finalised AA has been developed through an iterative process where the findings of the AA inform and are being informed by the project design throughout

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish Law relevant to this project includes Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

Natura 2000 sites in Ireland (herein referred to as European sites) that form part of the Natura 2000 network of protected sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated due to their significant ecological importance for species and habitats protected under Annexes I and II respectively of the Habitats Directive, and Special Protected Areas (SPAs), designated for the protection of populations and habitats of bird species protected under the EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/409/EEC). Features for which SACs and SPAs are designated are termed Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests respectively. Collectively, Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests are herein referred to as Qualifying Features.

As the proposed project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European Site, Galway County Council as the competent authority, is obliged to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on European Sites.

The staged assessment process undertaken to meet Article 6(3) obligations is described in **Section 2** below.

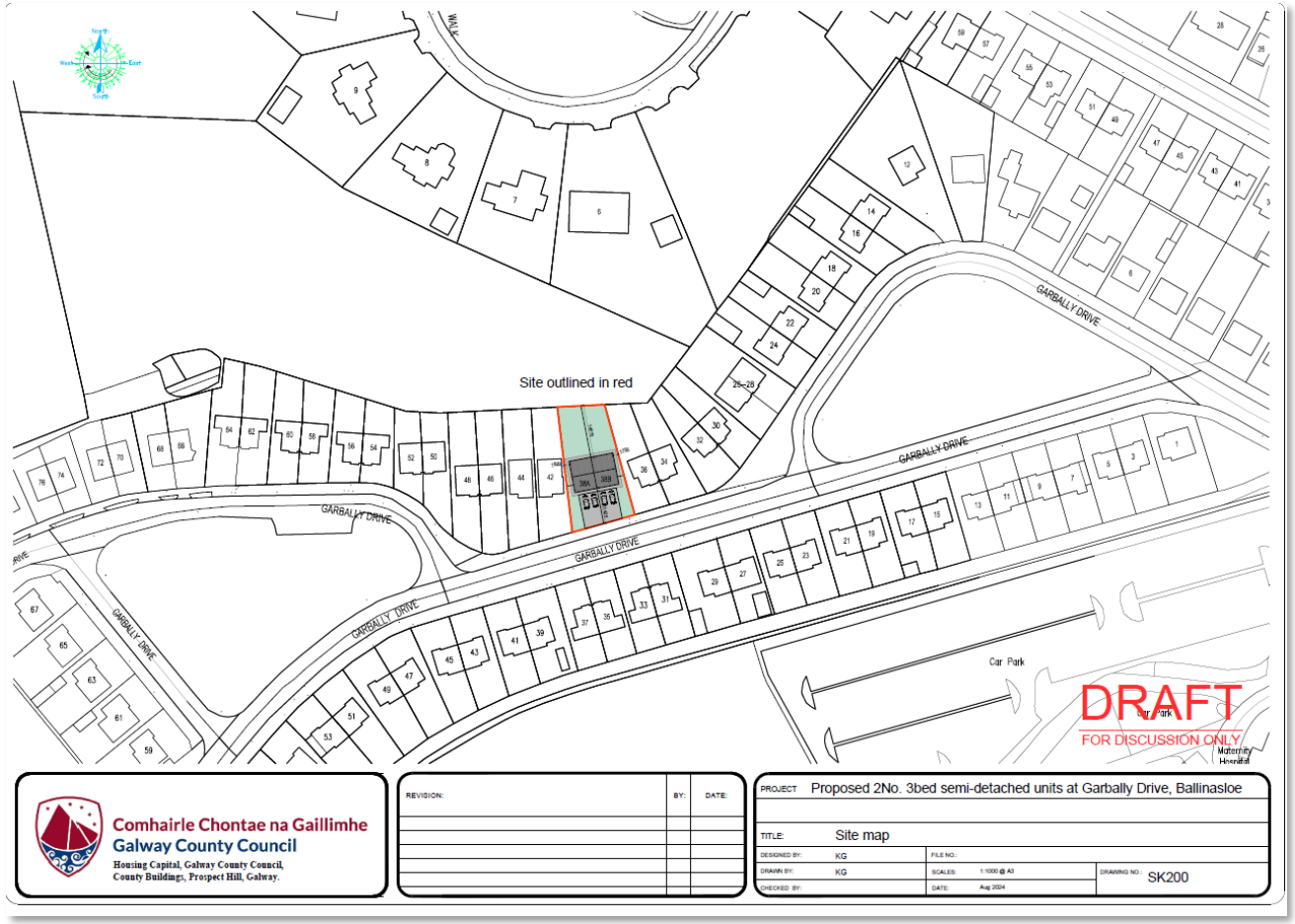


Figure 1-1: Site Layout & Boundary

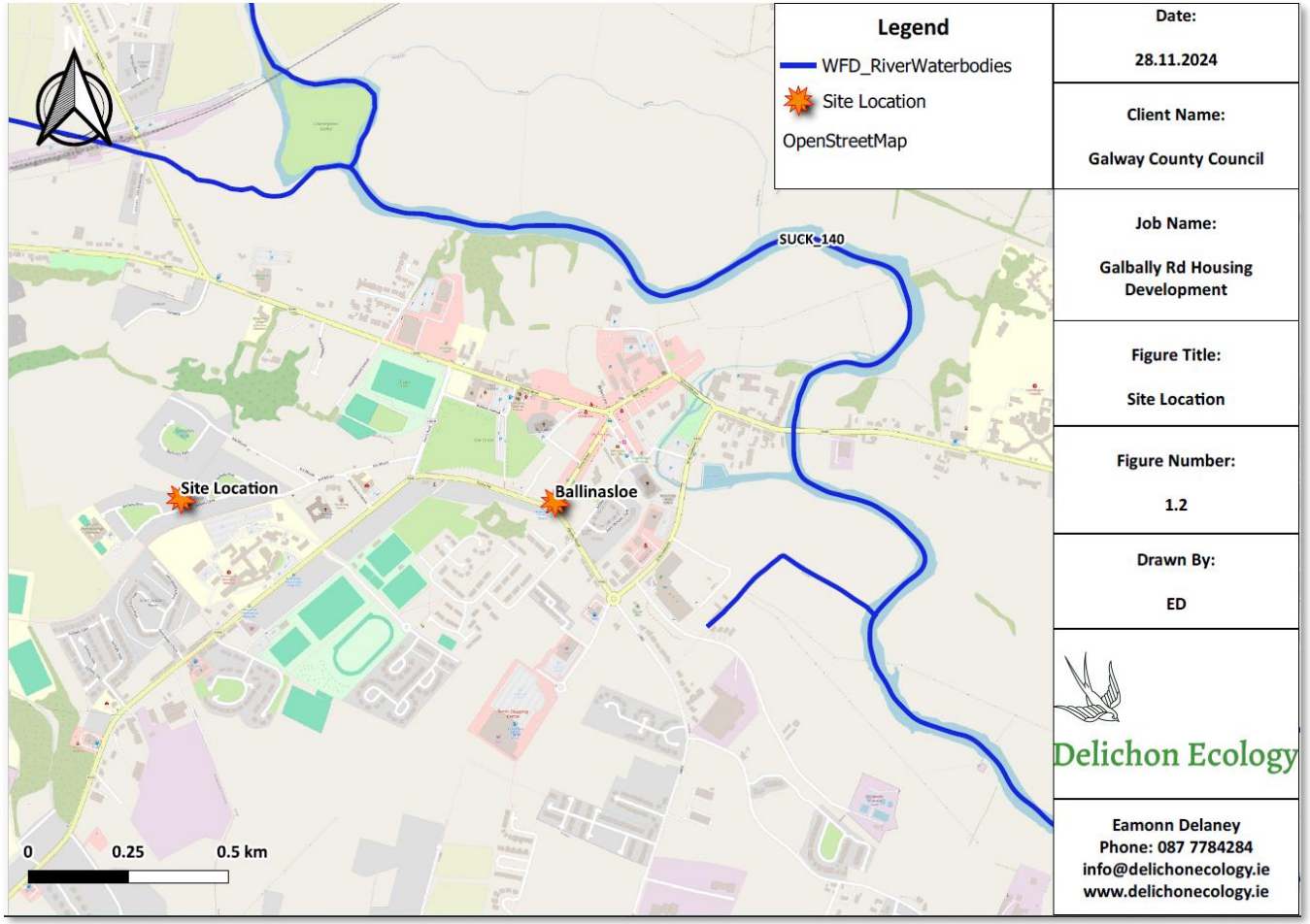


Figure 1-2: Site Location

2 METHODOLOGY

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines (DEHLG, 2009, rev. 2010) outlines the European Commission's methodological guidance (EC, 2002) promoting a four-stage process to complete the AA, and outlines the issues and tests at each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required.

The four stages are summarised diagrammatically in **Figure 2-1**. Stages 1-2 deal with the main requirements for assessment under Article 6(3). Stage 3 may be part of the Article 6(3) Assessment or may be a necessary precursor to Stage 4. Stage 4 is the main derogation step of Article 6(4).

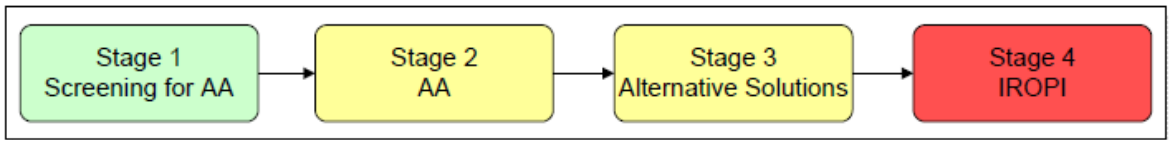


Figure 2-1: Four Stages of Appropriate Assessment

2.1.1 Stage 1 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Screening is the process that addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3):

Whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site, and whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European site in view of its conservation objectives.

If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overly complicated, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 (AA). Screening should be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation, unless potential impacts clearly can be avoided through the modification or redesign of the plan or project, in which case the screening process is repeated on the altered plan. The greatest level of evidence and justification will be needed in circumstances when the process ends at screening stage on grounds of no impact.

2.1.2 Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement)

The aim of Stage 2 of the AA process is to identify any adverse impacts that the plan or project might have on the integrity of relevant European sites. As part of the assessment, a key consideration is 'in combination' effects with other plans or projects. Where adverse impacts are identified, mitigation measures can be proposed that would avoid, reduce or remedy any such negative impacts and the plan or project should then be amended accordingly, thereby avoiding the need to progress to Step 3.

This stage considers whether the plan or project, alone or in combination with other projects or plans, will have adverse effects on the integrity of a European site, and includes any mitigation measures necessary to avoid, reduce or offset negative effects. The proponent of the plan or project will be required to submit a Natura Impact Statement, i.e. the report of a targeted professional scientific examination of the plan or project and the relevant European sites, to identify and characterise any possible implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives, taking account of in-

combination effects. This should provide information to enable the public authority to carry out the AA.

The information required in a Natura Impact Statement, is outlined in Regulation 42(5) (a) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011) as amended, as follows:

A Natura Impact Statement shall, in addition to addressing the issues referred to in the interpretation contained in Regulation 2(1), include such information or data as the public authority considers necessary, and specifies in a notice given under paragraph (3), to enable it to ascertain if the plan or project will affect the integrity of the site.

Where appropriate, a Natura Impact Statement shall include, in addition—

i. the alternative solutions that have been considered and the reasons why they have not been adopted,

ii. the imperative reasons of overriding public interest that are being relied upon to indicate that the plan or project should proceed notwithstanding that it may adversely affect the integrity of a European site,

iii. the compensatory measures that are being proposed.

If the assessment is negative, i.e. adverse effects on the integrity of a site cannot be excluded, then the process must proceed to Stage 3, or the plan or project should be abandoned. The competent authority must make a determination to that effect before proceeding to the next stage.

2.1.3 Guidance

This Screening for AA and NIS report has been prepared with regard to the relevant provisions of the EU Council Directive 92/43/EEC and Ireland's EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

The methodology followed for this assessment has had regard to the following guidance and legislation:

- DoEHLG (2009, rev. 2010) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government;
- European Commission (EC) (2018), Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission;
- EC (2002) Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission;
- EC (2021) Assessment of Plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;

- EC (2007a) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission. European Commission;
- EC, (2007b), Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission;
- EC (2013) Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. European Commission;
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Version 1.1 (September 2019), Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland;
- NPWS (2019). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 2: Habitat Assessments. Unpublished NPWS report;
- NPWS (2019). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 3: Species Assessments. Unpublished NPWS report;
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021) Practice Note PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.
- The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended;
- The Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended;
- The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended; and
- Recent Irish and European case law on the Habitats Directive.

2.1.4 Information Consulted for this Report

This assessment has been informed by the following sources of data:

- Information on the location, nature and design of the proposed project as provided by the client;
- Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (DHPCLG) online land-use mapping (www.myplan.ie/en/index.html);
- Office of Public Works (OPW) National Flood Hazard Mapping website (www.floodmaps.ie);
- Review of the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) webmapper https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Map
- Geological Survey of Ireland - National Draft Bedrock Aquifer map;
- Geological Survey of Ireland - Groundwater Database (www.gsi.ie);
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) geoportal mapping tool (https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/);
- National Parks and Wildlife Service protected site and species information and data (https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites);
- Spatial data in respect of Article 17 reporting, available online at https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data/habitat-and-species-data/article-17.
- Spatial data in respect of Article 12 reporting, available online at https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data/habitat-and-species-data/article-12-data.
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (www.biodiversityireland.ie); and
- Ordnance Survey of Ireland mapping and aerial photography (www.osi.ie).

3 PROJECT DESCRIPTON AND EUROPEAN SITES

This section provides the information required for the competent authority (Galway City Council) to undertake a Screening for AA and determine in view of best scientific knowledge, whether the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have a significant effect on the European site. Specifically, it aims to:

- Provide information on, and assess the potential for the proposed works to significantly impact on European sites; and
- Determine whether the activities proposed, alone or in combination with other projects, are likely to have significant effects on European sites in view of their Conservation Objectives.

This screening assessment provides information to address the following elements:

1. Description of the plan or project, and local site or plan area characteristics. The description covers the full scope of the proposed plan or project (i.e. construction and operational phases).

2. Description of the receiving environment setting of the proposed plan or project and its surrounds.

3. Identification of relevant European sites within the projects the potential zone of influence. A preliminary assessment to determine connectivity between the proposed works and receptors (i.e. European sites and/ or features for which the sites are designated). Where connectivity exists, the receptors in question are brought forward in the screening assessment process.

4. For receptors that exhibit potential connectivity to the proposed work a screening assessment is undertaken to establish whether the plan or project is likely to have a direct, indirect or cumulative effect on receptors based on a consideration of likely impacts (i.e. an assessment of significance of effect).

5. Screening statement with conclusions on whether or not an AA is necessary for the relevant a Qualifying Feature.

3.1 Proposed Development

It is proposed to construct and operate a housing development at Galbally Drive, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. The housing development will comprise 2 no. new housing units. Based on an average occupancy of 4-5 residents per housing unit the Population Equivalent (PE) will in a range of 8-10.

The proposed development will include an integrated Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) to effectively mitigate surface water runoff and enhance water quality. SUDS encompass a range of straight forward techniques that effectively minimise runoff and enhance the quality of water. By employing attenuation and filtration methods, SUDS efficiently regulates the flow of surface water, aiming to closely mimic the natural drainage patterns observed in the area.

The provision of the various SUDS techniques applicable to this site is to control discharge and improve water quality. The proposed development will comprise of the following drainage systems, attenuation measures, silt trap gullies, surface water pipes, access junctions, inspection chambers & manholes. Most of the proposed hard surfacing comprises of roofs, paths, roads and carparking and

all surface water from these areas will be collected into a drainage network before discharging via oil interceptors. Post development, the surface water runoff from the green areas will be similar to the predevelopment runoff. It will percolate through the shallow overburden of soils and flow between the rock and soil interface as evident during the site investigation.

A new foul water connection to the public drainage network is required for this development. The foul water discharge has been calculated with reference to EPA and Irish Water Guidelines for such services.

A Pre-connection enquiry was prepared and submitted to Irish Water (IW) with what is now an overestimation of the foul water discharge from the proposed Development i.e., for 8-10 Residential Units.

The layout of the proposed housing scheme is displayed in **Appendix A** below.

3.2 European Sites

3.2.1 Source-Pathway-Receptor Model

The likely effects of the proposed development on European sites has been appraised using a source-pathway-receptor model, where:

- A 'source' is defined as the individual element of the proposed development that has the potential to impact on a European site, its qualifying features and its conservation objectives;
- A 'pathway' is defined as the means or route by which a source can affect the ecological receptor; and
- A 'receptor' is defined as the Special Conservation Interests of Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Qualifying Interests (QI) of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) for which Conservation Objectives have been set for the European sites being screened.

A source-pathway-receptor model is a standard tool used in environmental assessment. In order for an effect to be likely, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism results in no likelihood for the effect to occur. The source-pathway-receptor model was used to identify a list of European sites, and their QIs/SCIs, with potentially links to European site.

3.2.2 Likely Significant Effect

The threshold for a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) is treated in the screening exercise as being above a de minimis level . The opinion of the Advocate General in CJEU case C-258/11 outlines:

> "the requirement that the effect in question be 'significant' exists in order to lay down a de minimis threshold. Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on a European site are thereby excluded. If all plans or projects capable of having any effect whatsoever on the site were to be caught by Article 6(3), activities on or near the site would risk being impossible by reason of legislative overkill."

In this report, therefore, 'relevant' European sites are those within the potential ZoI of activities associated with the proposed development, where LSE pathways to European sites were identified through the source-pathway-receptor model.

3.3 European Sites within the Project Zone of Influence

This stage of the screening for AA process describes European Sites within the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the proposed project.

Section 3.2.3 of the Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010) states that the approach to Appropriate Assessment screening can be different for different plans and projects depending on the scale of the plan, project or programme and the likely associated effects. The overriding criteria determining whether a European Site will be impacted and potentially consequently effected by a proposal is the distance between proposal and a European Site and whether there are pathways for effect linking the proposal to European Sites.

Both UK (Scott Wilson et al., 2006) and Irish guidance (DoEHLG, 2010) outline that a distance of 15km may suffice as a likely Zone of Impact (ZoI) in the case of plans on European Sites and may be sufficient to cover the geographic extent over which significant ecological effects are likely to occur. However for certain projects, the DoEHLG (2010) guidance recognises that the likely ZoI could be 'much less than 15km, and in some cases less that 100m, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects'.

Recent guidance from Office of the Planning Regulator (2021) indicates that the zone of influence for a proposal is 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. This guidance indicates that the zone of influence should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework. Using the Source » Pathway » Receptor approach and having regard for the location, the nature of the works, and the small size and scale of the works, it is considered for the purpose of this assessment that the likely ZoI on European Sites is the zone immediately around the proposed works, in addition to any sites with a hydrological or hydrogeological connection downstream or overlapping the project and/or with an ecological connection, where distance would be dependent on the qualifying interests of the site. To that end the following sites are potentially located within the Source» Pathway » Receptor zone of influence of the proposed housing development.

- River Suck Callows SPA (004097)

The assessment of connectivity between the European Sites and the proposed works follows the potential source-pathway-receptor model, which identifies the source of likely significant impacts, if any, the pathway (land, air, hydrological, hydrogeological pathways, etc) along which those impacts may be transferred from the source to the receiving environmental receptors (i.e. European Sites and/ or features for which the sites are designated).

Where it is evident that there is no connectivity between the proposed work and receptors (i.e. European Sites and/ or features for which the sites are designated), the receptors are excluded from the AA process. Similarly, where connectivity exists between the proposed work and receptors but is deemed not to result in likely significant effects to the receptor, the receptor can be screened out (i.e. likely significant effects to receptors excluded; receptor not considered further in AA process).

In contrast to the above, where it is not possible to exclude likely significant effects on the basis of best scientific knowledge, a more detailed scientific assessment of the proposed works is required which focuses on the European Sites likely to be affected and the relevant designated feature in question.

The integrity of a European Site (referred to in Article 6.3 of the EU Habitats Directive) is determined based on the Conservation Status of the features (habitats and/ or species) for which SACs and SPAs are designated. The Qualifying Interests (QI) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) for protected sites have been obtained through a review of the Conservation Objectives documents available from the NPWS website www.npws.ie.

Figure 3-1 shows the European sites within the zone of influence of the proposed development site. **Table 3-1** provides details on the distance and connectivity of European Sites within the zone of influence of the proposed works.

Table 3-1: European Sites within the proposed development's Zone of Influence

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Features / Special Conservation Interest Species[1]	Distance from Study Area[2]	S-P-R Connectivity
004097	River Suck Callows SPA	A038 Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* A050 Wigeon *Anas penelope* A140 Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* A142 Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* A395Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris* A999Wetlands	1.2km east	There is no hydrological or hydrogeological connectivity between the proposed development site and this European Site. There are no environmental vectors linking the proposed development site with the surrounding environment and consequently European Sites.

[1]*Indicates priority Annex I habitats
[2]Indicates the nearest straight-line distance unless otherwise quoted.

3.3.1 Summary of Connectivity Analysis

The proposed development site does not support connectivity with European Sites and there are no environmental or ecological vectors linking the proposed development site with the surrounding environment.

The River Suck Callows SPA is located in closest proximity to the proposed works, located 1.2km east / north-east. The lower sections of the River Suck catchment flows into the River Shannon catchment; which supports the Middle Shannon Callows SPA and the River Shannon Callows SAC (located >15km downstream). Given the nature and scale of the proposed works and the remote hydrological connectivity between the proposed works and these European Sites, potential for impacts and consequent likely significant effects to these European Sites are not possible.

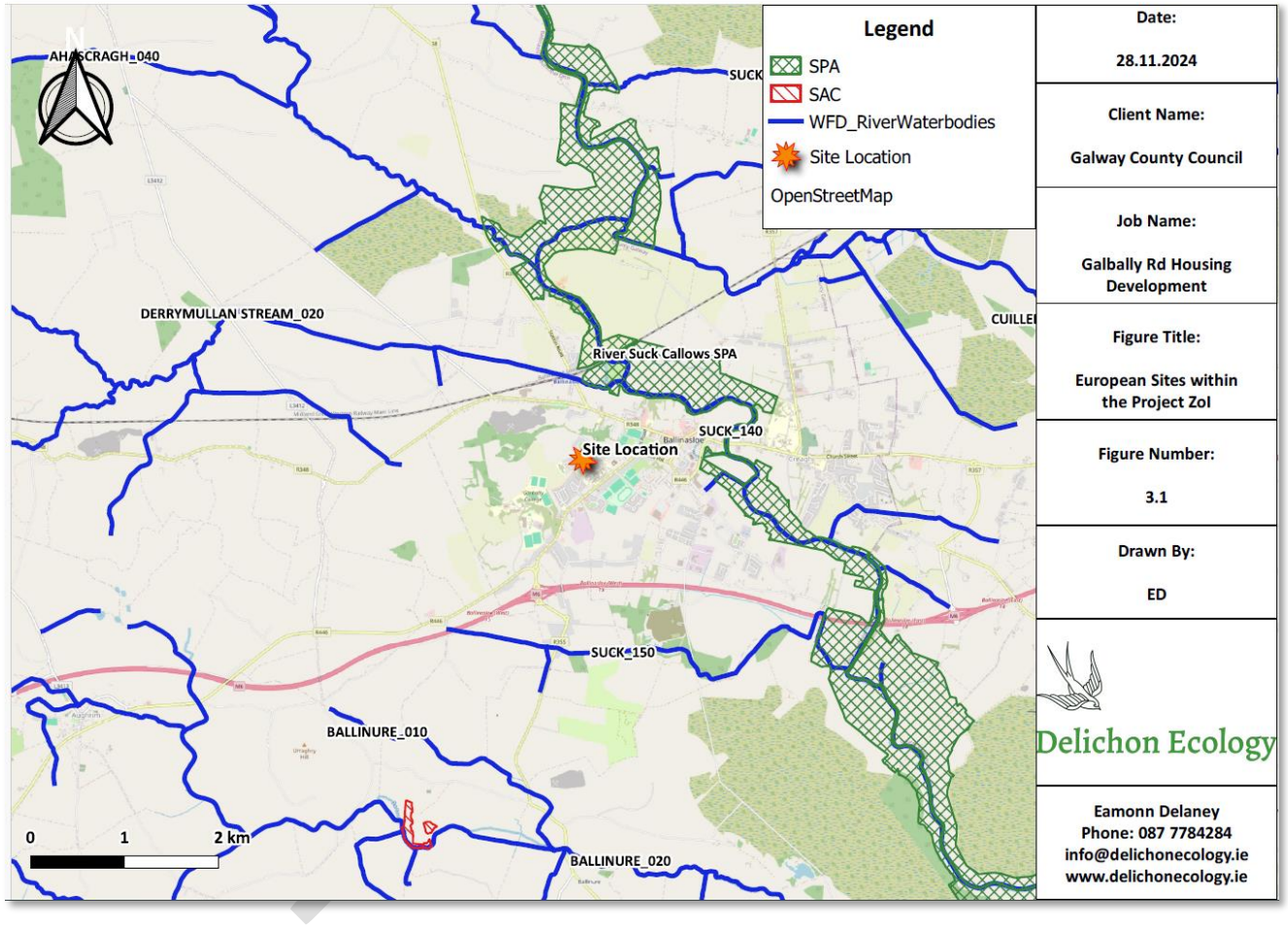


Figure 3-1: European Sites within the project Zone of Influence

3.3.2 European Site Descriptions

Site descriptions for European Sites within relative proximity are presented below.

3.3.3 River Suck Callows SPA (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 70km 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 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. (NPWS, 2014)[3].

3.3.4 Conservation Objectives of European Sites

European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain at favourable conservation status areas designated as SAC and SPA. 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, are stable or increasing; and
- The specific structure and functions which 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 dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is 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.

The integrity of a European site (referred to in Article 6.3 of the EU Habitats Directive) is determined based on the conservation objectives and of the site. The Qualifying Interests (QI) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) are obtained through a review of the most recently published (web-published or otherwise) Conservation Objective supporting documents and Site-Specific Conservation Objectives documents (where available) for the European site.

[3] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY004097.pdf

3.3.4.1 Conservation Objectives of proximal European Sites

The features of Qualifying Interest for European Sites within the project Zone of Influence are listed in **Table 3-1**. Further details on Conservation Objectives for this European Site are provided below.

River Suck Callows SPA (004097)

The detailed conservation objectives for River Suck Callows SPA are provided in the Conservation Objectives document available on the NPWS website, as follows:

https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004097.pdf

4 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Ecological Receptors

4.1.1 Habitats

The findings of the Phase 1 habitat survey are described below.

The proposed development site comprises a small, localised area of open, recently unused ground, that is located between existing semi-detached dwellings associated with the Galbally Drive housing estate. Topography within the proposed residential dwelling site is level throughout. The proposed residential dwelling site supports an area of recolonising ground (ED3)[4] that has developed follow historical disturbance associated with nearby and adjoining areas of residential dwelling. The proposed dwelling site is bound along the north, west and east by concrete block walls. The proposed residential dwelling site supports small mounds of aggregate material that have recolonised with ruderal calcicole species and rough grasses and now corresponds with recolonising bare ground (ED3). Plant species composition include common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), common bird's foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), broadleaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) and the mosses *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus* and *Calliergonella cuspidata*. The corners of the site support occasional localised growths of gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and young sapling sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees. The southern margins of the proposed dwelling site are served by an existing footpath with linear adjoining areas of amenity grassland (GA2).

Habitats within the proposed dwelling site are considered to be of negligible to low local ecological importance.

4.1.2 Birds

Bird species that were seen or heard along the site bounds or overflying the site during the site walkover survey were as follows:

- Wren
- Blackbird
- Song Thrush
- Chaffinch
- Woodpigeon
- Rook
- Jackdaw
- Robin

4.1.3 Mammals

No underground mammal dwellings including badger setts or fox dens were encountered during the survey. In addition, no signs of ongoing foraging activity or territory marking (through sprainting, scats etc.) was identified during the site walkover survey. There are no watercourses within the proposed

[4] Alphanumeric codes are presented in accordance with 'A Guide to Habitats in Ireland' (Fossitt, 2000)

development site or its immediate environs and therefore no suitable foraging, commuting or breeding habitat for otter. The site may be used as a foraging route or commuting route for mammals, such as fox or local domesticated animals.

4.1.4 Bats

All bats and their roosting sites are legally protected under the EU Habitats Directive as transposed by the Habitats Regulations. With the exception of Lesser Horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), which is an Annex II species, the remainder are classified as Annex IV species. They are also protected under the Wildlife Act (as amended). Across Europe, bats are further protected under the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention 1982), which, in relation to bats, exists to conserve all species and their habitats. The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention 1979, enacted 1983) was instigated to protect migrant species across all European boundaries. The Irish government has ratified both of these conventions.

The desk and field-based assessments undertaken of the habitats at the proposed development site revealed limited potential for bat roosting features. Pastoral lands do not provide optimal habitats for foraging bats and no suitability for roosting bats (Lundy *et al*., 2011). A review of the bat 'habitat suitability' index for the site presented on www.maps.biodiversityireland.ie was undertaken. The bat 'habitat suitability' index is the research outcome of a study by (Lundy *et al*. 2011) examining the relative importance of landscape and habitat associations across Ireland for bats. The 'habitat suitability' index ranges from 0 to 100 with 0 being least favourable and 100 most favourable for various bat species. The habitat / landscape within the site and surrounding area has a 'Moderate' bat suitability index (35.22).

Lesser horseshoe bat is unlikely to occur on site, although the site is located within its current known range and distribution in Ireland (NPWS, 2019c). However, the proposed development site does not support suitable roosting habitats for this species; i.e. continuous tree and woodland cover to support commuting and foraging.

4.1.5 Amphibians and Reptiles

Amphibians and reptiles were not identified during the site walkover survey. The NBDC hold records for common frog from tetrad (2km x 2km square) M83K (which supports the proposed project site). There are no watercourses or waterbodies or areas of standing water within the proposed development site that are suitable to support key breeding stages of amphibians such as smooth newt and common frog.

4.1.6 Invasive Species

Invasive plant species listed on the Third Schedule of the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (as amended) were not identified within the proposed development site or its immediate environs. In addition to the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 - Annex 2 (Part 1) list, the NBDC supports a list of 'non-native' invasive alien species classifying the impact and risk posed by non-native species in Ireland as 'high risk' and 'medium risk' together with an additional 'watch list'. None of these species were identified within the proposed development site or its immediate environs.

4.1.7 Surface Watercourses

A review of EPA river routes data (https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/) and the findings of the site walkover survey, confirms that the proposed development site does not support permanent or ephemeral watercourses. A review of EPA river routes data (https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/) and the findings of the site walkover survey, confirms that the proposed development site does not support permanent or ephemeral watercourses. The nearest watercourse to the proposed development site is the Suck_140 watercourse (IE_SH_26S071400) located 960m north-east of the proposed development site via the nearest straight line distance. There is no connectivity between the proposed development site and this watercourse. The Suck_040 watercourse is attributed 'Moderate' status by the EPA, under the WFD monitoring programme (2016-2021) and 'At Risk' of not achieving its favourable status under the Water Framework Directive.

Photos of the Study Area

Photographs of the proposed development site and environs are presented below.

Image 4.2: View of the proposed development site from the southern boundary

Image 4.3: View of the proposed development site from the southern boundary

	
Image 4.4: View of the proposed development site's northern boundary	**Image 4.5: Overview of the proposed development site from the southern boundary**

4.2 Flooding

The Flood Info database (www.floodinfo.ie) was also consulted to identify Predictive Flood Risk Areas (PFRA) mapped as part of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme for the study area. Interrogation of the mapping database confirms that the study site and its environs are not identified as being prone to flooding. OPW developed the Flood Hazard Mapping website floodmaps.ie in 2004-2006 which provided information about the location of known flood events in Ireland and showed supporting information in the form of reports, photos, and press articles about those floods. In late 2017 this data was migrated across to the newly developed website FloodInfo.ie. This website was consulted to find any instances of flooding in the proximity of the proposed works. The mapping shows zero instances of single past flood events nor recurring flood events within the proposed development boundary. Historic mapping from OSI indicate the site was an open parkland site with no indication of historical flooding.

4.3 Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) online database[5] was consulted for available edaphic, geological and hydrological information of the site and its environs. The underlying bedrock of the study site include Visean Limestones which comprise undifferentiated limestone. The groundwater vulnerability within the footprint and environs of the study site is classified as Moderate 'M' and High 'H'. Bedrock aquifer maps published on the GSI website provide a detailed classification of bedrock aquifer types and indicate the bedrock aquifer beneath the site is classified as a Rkc Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (conduit). There are no karst features within the proposed development site or its immediate environs.

The study site is located within the 'Suck South' GroundWater Body (GWB) (IE_SH_G_0225). The main aquifer type within this groundwater body is Regionally important karstified aquifer dominated by conduit flow. This GroundWater Body was classified as Good Status in 2013 - 2018 and 'not at risk' of meeting its objectives under the Water Framework Directives. Groundwater and surfacewater interactions of this GroundWater Body is described as follows:

> '*There is a high degree of interconnection between groundwater and surface water in this GWB. Numerous karst features such as turloughs, swallow holes, sinking streams, sparse or intermittent streams, limestone pavements, caves and large springs are evident. Surface streams sink frequently, draining through karst features into the groundwater system, providing rapid recharge to groundwater. Streams re-emerge as springs, after flowing as groundwater for some distance, to once again form significant surface streams. Many turloughs (seasonal lakes which are fed by groundwater as the watertable rises in winter) occur in this body. These turloughs support sensitive ecosystems which are highly dependant on groundwater. Because of the close interaction between surface water and groundwater in karstified aquifers, surface water and groundwater quality are also closely linked. Any contamination of surface water is rapidly transported into the groundwater system, and vice versa. There are a large number of terrestrial ecosystems within this GWB, many of which are highly dependant on groundwater*[6]'.

[5] GSI Online database: https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/data-and-maps/Pages/default.aspx
[6] https://gsi.geodata.gov.ie/downloads/Groundwater/Reports/GWB/SuckSouthGWB.pdf

5 SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

Table 5-1 presents Screening Assessment Criteria considering the proposed development.

Table 5-1: Screening Assessment Criteria

Screening Assessment Criteria Screening Questions	Impacts
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 proposed housing development is not located within the bounds of a European Site. The proposed works do not support direct connectivity to European sites within the project ZoI. Therefore, there will be no direct impacts to European Sites as a result of the proposed works. There are no ground or surfacewater features or other environmental vectors linking the proposed development site with the surrounding environment. EPA online mapping displays the Suck_140 watercourse (IE_SH_26S071400) located 960m north-east of the proposed development site via the nearest straight line distance. There is no connectivity between the proposed development site and this watercourse. There is no surface expression of watercourses or drainage channels within the proposed development site or conduits linking the proposed development site to this watercourse. The proposed development site is located within the 'Suck South' GroundWater Body (GWB) (IE_SH_G_0225). The main aquifer type within this groundwater body is Regionally important karstified aquifer dominated by conduit flow. This GroundWater Body was classified as Good Status in 2013 - 2018 and 'not at risk' of meeting its objectives under the Water Framework Directives. Nonetheless, there will be no discharge to or abstraction from groundwater as a result of the proposed development, during the project's construction of operational phases. A new foul water connection to the public drainage network is required for this development. A Pre-connection enquiry was prepared and submitted to Irish Water (IW) with what is now an overestimation of the foul water discharge from the proposed Development i.e., for 2 Residential Units and a PE of ca. 8-10. Surfacewater attenuation will align with SUDS design principles. All other European Sites do not support connectivity to the proposed development site via surfacewater, groundwater or other environmental vectors.
Likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project on the European Sites:	

Screening Assessment Criteria Screening Questions	Impacts
• Size and Scale	The size and scale of the proposed works are small when compared with the surrounding environment and the size of European Sites within the project Zone of Influence.
• Land Take	The proposed development will not result in land-take to European Sites. The most proximal European Site is the River Suck Callows SPA located 1.2km east / north-east of the proposed development site. The proposed development site does not support habitats or species for European Sites within the project Zone of Influence.
• Distance from European Sites or Key Features of the Site	The proposed development site will not result in land-take to European Sites. The most proximal European Site is the River Suck Callows SPA located 1.2km east / north-east. The proposed development site does not support connectivity with the surrounding environment via surfacewater, groundwater or other environmental vectors.
• Resource Requirements	The proposed development will require use of standard construction methods, including wet cement, pre cast concrete, aggregates and water. Limited volumes of cement and aggregate materials may also be required. Given the absence of viable ecological and environmental vectors on site, it is not considered that the proposed works would result in the release of construction related materials from the proposed site to the receiving and surrounding environment and by extension European Sites.
• Emissions	There are potential dust (to air) and washwater (potential overland flow to the receiving environment) emissions as a result of the proposed works. However there are no vectors linking the proposed development site to the receiving environment and by extension European Sites. Wastewater generated on site will be connected to the public wastewater mains in accordance with the criteria outlined in **Section 3.1.1**.
• Excavation Requirements	Localised excavations will be required for the proposed development. Potential impacts associated with excavations include run-off of silt laden water to the receiving environment and to nearby European sites. Excavation requirements could result in the production of mounded aggregate, soils and subsoils. However there are no vectors, such as watercourses, drainage channels or preferential flow patterns linking the proposed development site to the receiving environment and by extension European Sites and therefore no risk of impact to European Sites as a result of excavation requirements.
• Transport Requirements	Transport requirements as part of the proposed development will utilise the existing roads serving the proposed

Screening Assessment Criteria Screening Questions	Impacts
	development site; i.e. the R446 and the local access road serving the Galbally Drive housing estate.
• Duration of construction, operation and decommissioning	Duration of construction will be short term, i.e. 12-24 months. The project's operational phase will be long term, i.e. 50+ years. There will be no impacts and consequent likely significant effects as a result of the proposed project duration.
• Cumulative impact with other plans and projects in the area	As part of the AA, in addition to the proposed development, other relevant projects and plans in the area must also be considered at this stage. These plans and projects are considered further in this respect in **Table 5-2** below.

Table 5-2: In-combination Effects associated with the proposed development.

Programmes, Plans and Projects	Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to the Conservation of the Natura 2000 Network	Potential for In-combination Effects
Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	**NHB 1 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species** Protect and where possible enhance the natural heritage sites designated under EU Legislation and National Legislation (Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and Wildlife Acts) and extend to any additions or alterations to sites that may occur during the lifetime of this plan. Protect and, where possible, enhance the plant and animal species and their habitats that have been identified under European legislation (Habitats and Birds Directive) and protected under national Legislation (European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011), Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 and the Flora Protection Order (SI 94 of 1999). Support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves, Wild Fowl Sanctuaries (and other designated sites including any future designations) and the promotion of the development of a green/ ecological network. **NHB 2 European Sites and Appropriate Assessment** To implement Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects likely to impact on European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. All such projects and plans will also be required to comply	A number of strategies, policies and objectives are set out in the ***Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028*** with the aim of protection of the counties natural heritage and biodiversity. A number of policies and objectives provide for the protection of the integrity of sites designated under European and National legislation and ecological works. The Natural Heritage objective (NHB-1) highlights the council's policy to support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European sites. The adherence and implementation of this plan within the Development Plan area will ensure that European Sites are protected, and that Appropriate Assessment is undertaken for all plans, projects or programmes that have the potential for significant effects to European Sites.

Programmes, Plans and Projects	Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to the Conservation of the Natura 2000 Network	Potential for In-combination Effects
	with statutory Environmental Impact Assessment requirements where relevant. **NHB 3 Protection of European Sites** No plans, programmes, or projects etc. giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource 198 requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects.	
River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022 – 2027	The Third Cycle Draft River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 Consultation Report has been published. This report presents a summary of the issues raised in the submissions reviewed from the public consultation on the draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027. The 3rd cycle of River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for the period of 2022-2027 is currently being prepared by Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) in line with the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC). Key issues raised as part of the consultation process within the ten most prominent themes are as follows. - Water Quality / Pollution - Agricultural Practices - Public Engagement and Awareness - Local Authority - Level of ambition	The implementation of the RBMP seeks compliance with the environmental objectives set under the plan, which will be documented for each water body. This includes compliance with the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations S.I. No. 272 of 2009 (as amended). The implementation of the RBMP and achievement or maintenance of environmental objectives which will be set for the receiving water bodies will have a positive impact on water dependent habitats and species within European Sites.

Programmes, Plans and Projects	Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to the Conservation of the Natura 2000 Network	Potential for In-combination Effects
	- Sewage Pollution - Department / Agency - Co-ordination - Funding - Forestry - Peat - Shellfish waters / aquaculture - Other Following review of the submissions, the DHLGH will commence a review and where necessary update the draft RBMP with a view to finalisation and publication in Q3/Q4 of 2022. The SEA and AA processes will continue in parallel until finalisation and will be completed prior to adoption of the 3rd cycle plan.	
Inland Fisheries Ireland Corporate Plan 2021 -2025	IFI's Corporate Plan details the Inland Fisheries Ireland's, Vision, Mission and Values across seven strategic objectives for the period 2021 to 2025. Under each of the seven objectives a series of actions required to achieve the objectives are described, with the intended outcomes outlined. The strategic objectives outline where Inland Fisheries Ireland will focus their efforts between 2021 and 2025. Inland Fisheries Ireland will secure stakeholder feedback on the implementation of the Strategy mid-2023.	The implementation and compliance with key environmental issues and objectives of this corporate plan will result in positive in-combination effects to European sites. The implementation of this corporate plan will have a positive impact for biodiversity of inland fisheries and ecosystems. It will not contribute to in-combination or cumulative negative impacts with the proposed development.
4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030	**Objective 2 - Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs** **Outcome 2A:** The protection of existing designated areas and species is strengthened and conservation and restoration within the existing protected are network are enhanced.	This Plan together with the proposed development will not add to cumulative impacts to the receiving or surrounding environment. This plan supports a number or objectives and policies which seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity

Programmes, Plans and Projects	Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to the Conservation of the Natura 2000 Network	Potential for In-combination Effects
	Outcome 2B: Biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside are conserved. **Outcome 2C:** All freshwater bodies are of at least 'Good Ecological Status' as defined under the EU Water Framework Directive. **Outcome 2D:** Genetic diversity of wild and domesticated species is safeguarded. **Outcome 2E:** A National Restoration Plan is in place to meet EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 nature restoration targets. **Outcome 2F:** Biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine environment are conserved and restored. **Outcome 2G:** Invasive alien species (IAS) are controlled and managed on an all-island basis to reduce the harmful impact they have on biodiversity and measures are undertaken to tackle the introduction and spread of new IAS to the environment.	and as such its implementation will improve features of biodiversity throughout the plan area.
EPA Licenced Facilities	There are no EPA Licenced facilities located within the environs of the site or the study area's receiving or downstream environment.	EPA licenced facilities are subject to conditions and parameters associated with licencing requirements, restricting the release of polluted or contaminated materials to the receiving or surrounding environment. Therefore, these facilities will not contribute towards significant negative effects to European Sites.

Programmes, Plans and Projects	Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to the Conservation of the Natura 2000 Network	Potential for In-combination Effects
Local Planning Applications	A search of Galway County Council's online planning enquiry database[7] was undertaken to identify other projects and plans consented within the past five years that are proximal or within the proposed development area. Numerous applications for dwellings, dwelling extensions and associated structures and commercial buildings, warehouses and facilities with granted planning permission were noted within the environs of the proposed development site. These small-scale projects are not likely to cause effects to European sites when considered in combination with the current proposal under examination, either during the construction or operational phase. There is therefore no potential for significant in-combination effects of these developments with proposed development.	Adherence to the policies and objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 ensure that local planning applications and subsequent grant of planning comply with the core strategy of proper planning and sustainability and with the requirements of relevant EU Directives and environmental considerations, there is no potential for adverse in-combination effects on European Sites.

[7] https://galwaycoco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=3570e45b0e354cf0b740ecbc7505adb2

5.1.1 Conclusion of Cumulative Impact Assessment

Provided adherence to the overarching policies and objectives of the plans and programmes and best practice and mitigation measures are implemented for individual projects, there is no potential for the mentioned plans and projects to have a cumulative impact to European sites, in combination with the proposed development.

In particular, the adherence and implementation of the policies and objectives within the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 will ensure that European Sites are protected, and that Appropriate Assessment is undertaken for all plans, projects or programmes that have the potential for significant effects to European Sites.

Screening Assessment Criteria is further assessed in **Table 5-3** below.

Table 5-3: Screening Assessment Criteria

Screening Assessment Criteria **Screening Questions**	
Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of the following	
Reduction of Habitat	The proposed development site footprint primarily supports recolonising ground with adjoining residential dwellings associated with the Galbally Drive housing estate. The proposed dwelling site does not support habitats or species of European Sites within the project Zone of Influence. The proposed development site does not support connectivity to European Sites via hydrological, hydrogeological or other environmental vectors and will not contribute indirect impacts and consequent effects to European Sites.
Disturbance to Key Species	The proposed development site footprint primarily supports recolonising ground with adjoining residential dwellings associated with Galbally Drive. The proposed dwelling site does not support habitats or species of European Sites within the potential project Zone of Influence. The proposed development site does not support suitable foraging habitat for features of Qualifying Interest for which the River Suck Callows SPA has designated; i.e. over-wintering waders and wildfowl. Therefore, there will be no ex-situ disturbance to this species as a result of the proposed development.
Habitat or Species Fragmentation	The proposed development site does not support habitats of Qualifying Interest or suitable supporting wetland habitat for species of Qualifying Interest for the River Suck Callows SPA and will not contribute to habitat or species fragmentation.
Reduction in Species Diversity	The proposed development site supports recolonising ground with adjoining residential dwellings associated with the Galbally Drive housing estate. The proposed development site does not support habitats or species of European Sites within the potential project Zone of Influence. In addition, the habitats within the proposed development site are not suitable to support species of Qualifying Interest associated
Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value	

Screening Assessment Criteria Screening Questions	
	with European Site within the project Zone of Influence; i.e. the River Suck Callows SPA. The proposed development site will not result in the reduction in species diversity to European Sites within the project Zone of Influence.
Climate Change	The proposed development site will not result in significant negative effects contributing to climate change that could in turn affect the conservation objectives of those European Sites within the project ZoI.
Describe any likely impacts on the European Sites as a whole in terms of Interference with key relationships that define the structure and function of the site;	The proposed development site does not support connectivity with European Sites. Therefore the proposed works will not impact the integrity or structure and function of European Sites within the project Zone of Influence.
Provide Indicators of Significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of;	
Loss	The footprint of the proposed works do not directly overlap with any European sites. Therefore, there will be no potential effects to European Sites resulting from direct loss. The proposed development site does not support connectivity with European Sites and will therefore not contribute towards indirect habitat or species loss.
Fragmentation	The footprint of the proposed works do not directly overlap with any European sites. Therefore, there will be no potential for fragmentation to habitats and species of conservation interest associated with European Sites as a result of the proposed development.
Disruption	Due to the separation distance and lack of connectivity between the proposed development site and the River Suck Callows SPA, the proposed works will not result in direct or indirect disturbance or disruption impacts to features of qualifying interest for this European Site. In addition, the proposed development site does not support suitable habitats to support features of Qualifying Interest associated with these European Sites. Therefore, ex-situ disturbance or disruption is unlikely.
Disturbance	
Changes to Key Elements of the Site	Changes to key elements of European Sites within the project Zone of Influence are highly unlikely. There is no connectivity between the proposed development site and European Sites. Therefore, the proposed development will not contribute changes to key elements of 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 proposed development site does not support connectivity with European Sites. There are no vectors linking the proposed development site with the surrounding environment and by extension European Sites. The proposed development site supports recolonising ground with adjoining residential dwellings associated with the Galbally Drive housing estate.

Screening Assessment Criteria Screening Questions	
the scale or magnitude of impacts are not known	These habitats do not correspond with habitats of Qualifying Interest for European Sites and do not provide suitable habitat for mobile species for European Sites within the potential project zone of influence. Therefore, the proposed development will not contribute direct, indirect or ex-situ impacts and consequent effects to European Sites.

5.2 Screening for AA Conclusion

The proposed project has been assessed taking into account:

- The nature, size and location of the proposed project and the associated works and possible impacts arising from same;
- The Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs), Conservation Objectives (COs) and conservation status of any European Sites within the project zone of influence;
- The potential for likely significant effects impacts arising from the project on any European Sites; and
- The potential for cumulative impacts.

The Appropriate Assessment Screening process considered the potential for likely significant effects which may arise during the construction and operational phases of the proposed housing development at Galbally, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.

The closest European Site to the proposed housing development is the River Suck Callows SPA, located 1.2km east / north-east. However, there is no connectivity identified in relation to the sensitivities of the features of Qualifying Interest for this European Sites, in view of the Conservation Objectives.

This Screening for Appropriate Assessment comprised an evaluation of the pathways for effects on the qualifying interests of designated European Sites, with reference to the location, size, scale, and duration (construction and operation) associated with the proposal. Pathways for impacts on any European Site were evaluated with regard to the lack of environmental vectors and the distance of separation between European Sites in the wider study area, leading to a determination that there are no likely significant effects on the Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests of any designated European Site, with regard to their conservation objectives.

A new foul water connection to the public drainage network is required for this development. The foul water discharge has been calculated with reference to EPA and Irish Water Guidelines for such services. A Pre-connection enquiry was prepared and submitted to Irish Water (IW) with what is now an overestimation of the foul water discharge from the proposed Development i.e., based on an average occupancy of 4-5 residents per housing unit the Population Equivalent (PE) will in a range of 8-10. Surfacewater attenuation will align with SUDS design principles as outlined in **Section 3.1.**

In particular, no potential for likely significant effects are identified with respect to River Suck Callows SPA, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. There are no impact pathways arising from the proposed project which could interact with the features of Qualifying Interest of the SAC with the potential to give rise to significant effects. Therefore, taking account of the nature of the proposed works, the potential for significant effects via hydrological impact pathways or other environmental vectors are excluded.

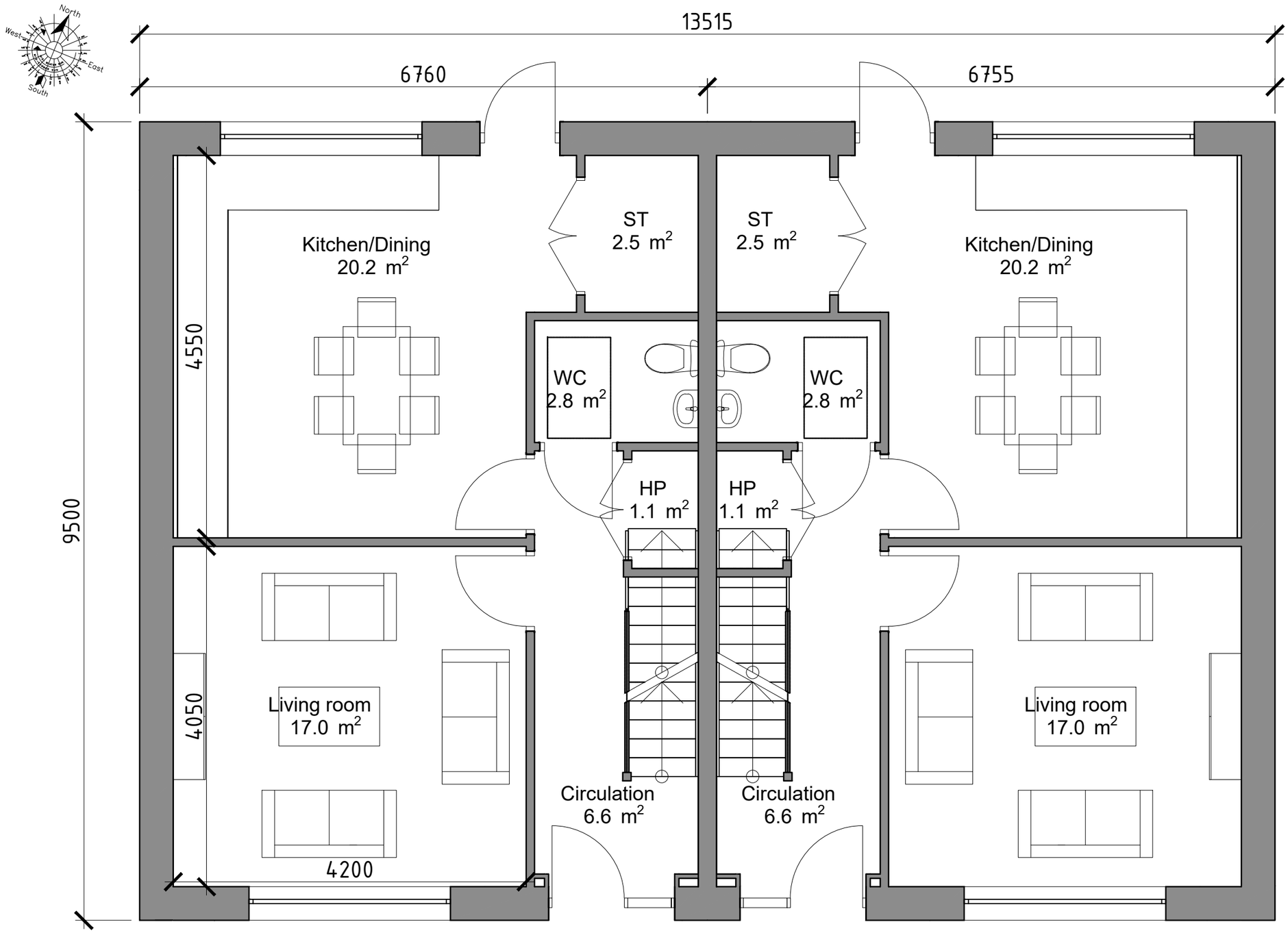
It is concluded that there are no likely potential impacts, whether direct, indirect or cumulative/in-combination, which could give rise to significant effects on the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of any designated European Site, in view of their conservation objectives. Consequently, this proposal does not require Appropriate Assessment process and can be screened out.

APPENDIX A – PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT LAYOUT

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council
Housing Capital, Galway County Council,
County Buildings, Prospect Hill, Galway.

REVISION:	BY:	DATE:

PROJECT	Proposed 2No. 3bed semi-detached units at Garbally Drive, Ballinasloe
TITLE:	Site map
DESIGNED BY:	KG
DRAWN BY:	KG
CHECKED BY:	
FILE NO.:	
SCALES:	1:1000 @ A3
DATE:	Aug 2024
DRAWING NO.:	SK200



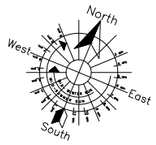
DRAFT

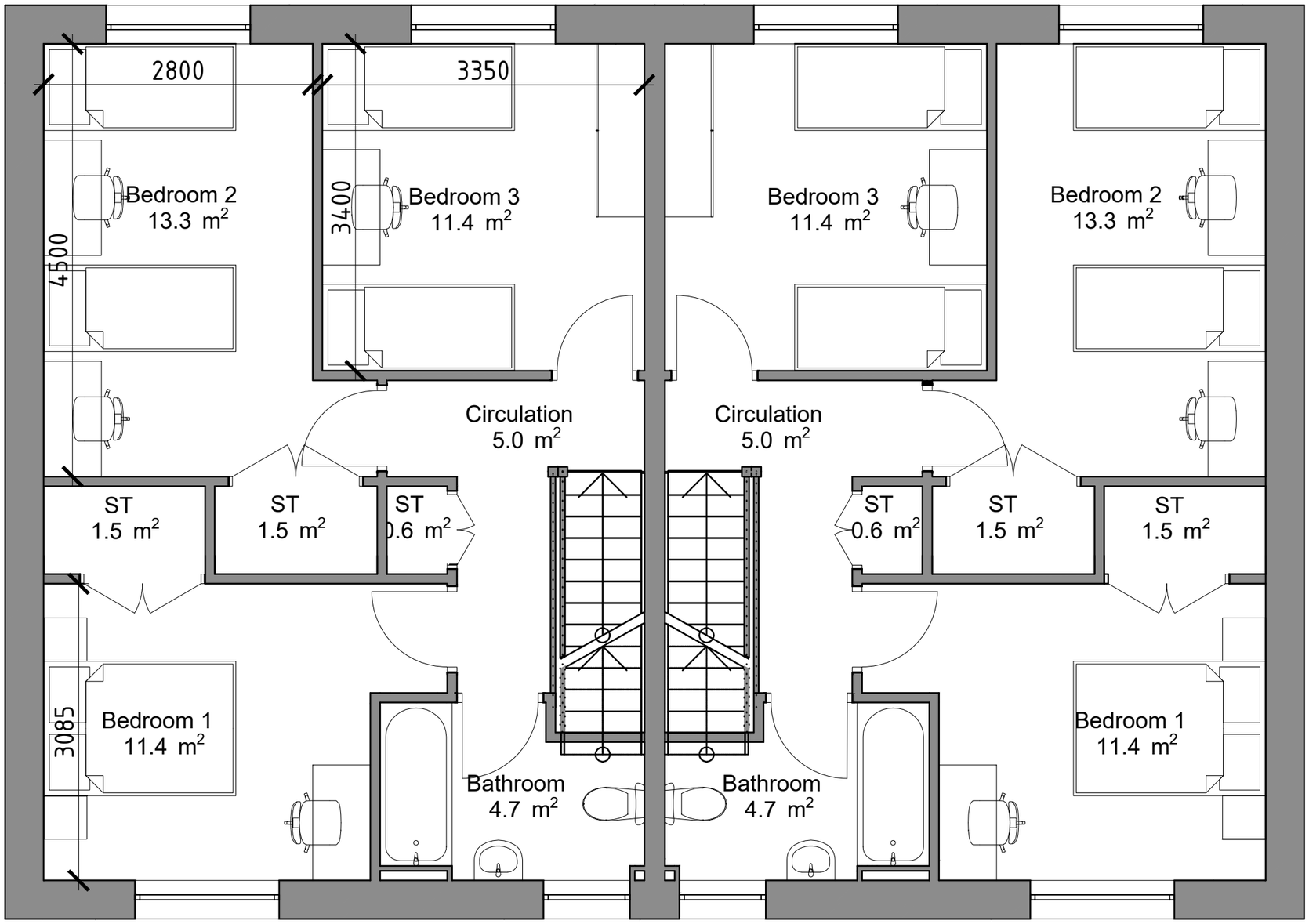
FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council
Housing Capital, Galway County Council,
County Buildings, Prospect Hill, Galway.

REVISION:	BY:	DATE:

PROJECT	Proposed 2No. 3bed semi-detached units at Garbally Drive, Ballinasloe		
TITLE:	Proposed Ground Floor Plan		
DESIGNED BY:	KG	FILE NO.:	
DRAWN BY:	KG	SCALES: 1:50 @ A3	DRAWING NO.: SK200
CHECKED BY:		DATE: Aug 2024	





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FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Housing Capital, Galway County Council,
County Buildings, Prospect Hill, Galway.

REVISION:	BY:	DATE:

PROJECT	Proposed 2No. 3bed semi-detached units at Garbally Drive, Ballinasloe		
TITLE:	Proposed First Floor Plan		
DESIGNED BY:	KG	FILE NO.:	
DRAWN BY:	KG	SCALES: 1:50 @ A3	DRAWING NO.: SK201
CHECKED BY:		DATE: Aug 2024	