Galbally Drive, Ballinasloe

Housing Development

Environment Impact Assessment Screening

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Prepared For:

Galway County Council

Galbally Drive, Ballinasloe

Housing Development

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Description & Study Area

It is proposed to construct and operate a housing development at Galbally Road, 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 regulate 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 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 **Figure 1.1** and **Appendix A** below while the site location is presented in **Figure 1.2**.

1.2 Information Consulted for this Report

A desk study was undertaken as part of this assessment. This 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);
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) geoportal mapping tool (https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/);
- EPA Catchments interactive online mapping and data (https://www.catchments.ie/);
- National Parks and Wildlife Service protected site and species information and data (https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites);
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (www.biodiversityireland.ie);

- Geohive online environmental sensitivity mapping tool (https://airomaps.geohive.ie/ESM/);
- Ordnance Survey of Ireland mapping and aerial photography (www.osi.ie);
- Geological Survey Ireland online mapping and data (https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/Pages/default.aspx); and,
- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

1.3 Statement of Authority

Eamonn Delaney BSc, MSc, MCIEEM, CECOL prepared this Environmental Impact Assessment Screening 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.

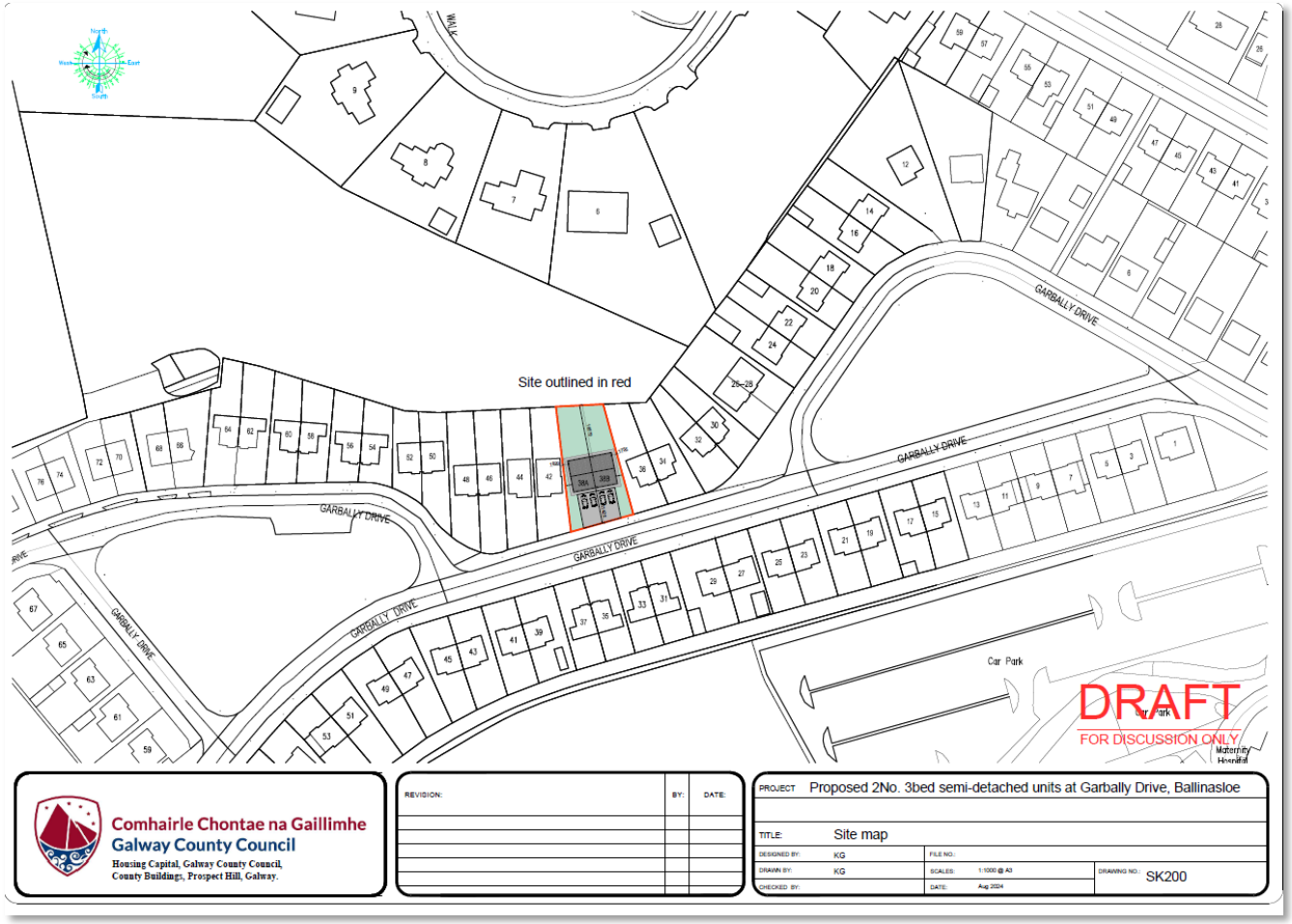


Figure 1-1: Proposed Development Layout

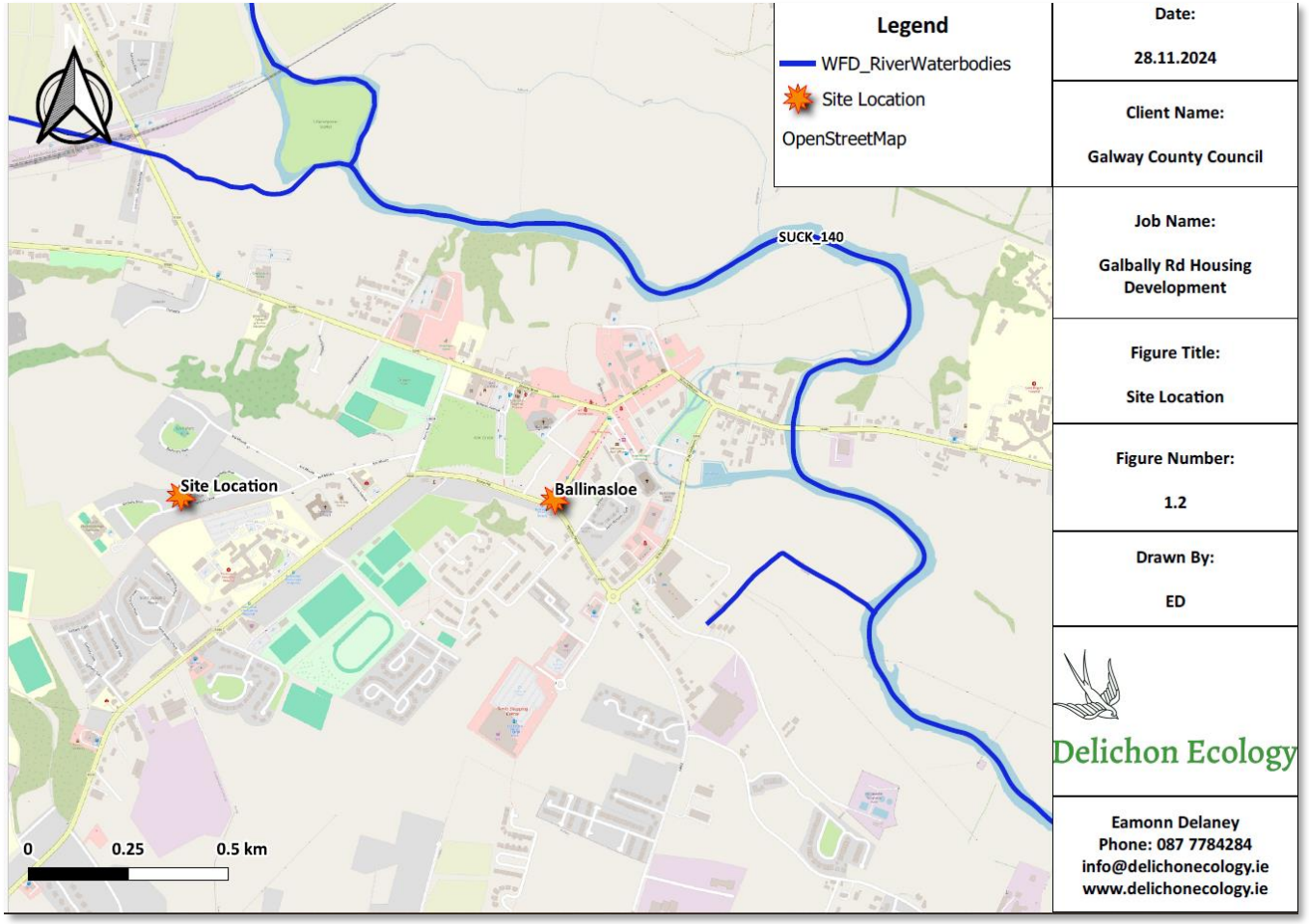


Figure 1-2: Site Boundary and Location

2 EIA Legislative Context

The primary objective of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 2014/52/EU is to ensure that projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment are subject to an assessment of those impacts.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requirements derive from Council Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directives 97/11/EC, 2003/35/EC and 2009/31/EC) and as codified and replaced by Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU).

In determining the requirement for EIA, the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended differentiates between projects where an EIA is mandatory as listed within Schedule 5 Part 1 and those for which an EIA may be required, listed within Schedule 5, Part 2.

The requirements of the EIA Directives apply only in relation to projects listed in Annex I and II of the Directive 2011/92/EU. That is clear from Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Directive which provides that "before consent is given, projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue, inter alia, of their nature, size or location are made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects. Those projects are defined in Article 4".

Article 4 provides that projects listed in Annex I shall be subject to a mandatory EIA, and that projects listed in Annex II shall be subject to a determination as to whether EIA is required, either by way of a case-by-case examination (screening) or subject to thresholds or criteria set by national law.

The proposed development does not match any of the projects, or exceed any of the thresholds (including 'changes' or 'extensions' to development) set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) that would trigger a mandatory requirement to undertake EIA. The project is under the threshold for mandatory EIA. Consideration thus turns to examination of a potential 'sub-threshold' requirement for EIA.

2.1 Sub-Threshold Assessment

Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, sets out the information to be provided by the applicant or developer for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for environmental impact assessment. Information is as follows:

1. A description of the proposed development, including in particular—
    a. a description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works, and
    b. a description of the location of the proposed development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.
2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.

3. A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the proposed development on the environment resulting from—

    a. the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant, and b) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.

4. The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7.'

Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 refers to criteria for determining whether a development listed in Part 2 of Schedule 5 would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, and as a result subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Schedule 7 criteria is as follows:

1. Characteristics of proposed development

The characteristics of proposed development, in particular—

a) the size and design of the whole of the proposed development,

b) cumulation with other existing development and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment,

c) the nature of any associated demolition works,

d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity,

e) the production of waste,

f) pollution and nuisances,

g) the risk of major accidents, and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge, and

h) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).

2. Location of proposed development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, with particular regard to—

a) the existing and approved land use,

b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,

c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:

(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;

(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;

(iii) mountain and forest areas;

(iv) nature reserves and parks;

(v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive and;

(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;

(vii) densely populated areas;

(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

3. Types and characteristics of potential impacts

The likely significant effects on the environment of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in paragraph (b)(i)(I) to (V) of the definition of 'environmental impact assessment report' in section 171A of the Act, taking into account—

(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),

(b) the nature of the impact,

(c) the transboundary nature of the impact,

(d) the intensity and complexity of the impact,

(e) the probability of the impact,

(f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact,

(g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment, and

(h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact'.

2.2 Guidance

The EIA Screening has been prepared with regards to the following guidance documents:

- Communication from the Commission on the Precautionary Principle. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg EC (2000);
- Environmental Impact Assessment - Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (2018);
- Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Protection Agency (2022);
- European Commission guidance documents on the implementation of the EIA Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU);
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on Screening, European Commission, 2017.
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on Scoping, European Commission, 2017 (not considered relevant at Screening Stage).
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, European Commission, 2017 (not considered relevant at Screening Stage).
- Circular Letter PL 1/2017, Implementation of Directive 2014/52/EU on the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA Directive), Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, May 2017;
- Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements, EPA, Draft, September 2015;
- Guidance on EIA Screening (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU), European Commission, 2017
- EIA, Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2003;
- Key Issues Consultation Paper - Transposition of 2014 EIA Directive (2014/52/EU) in the Land Use Planning and EPA Licencing Systems, Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, May 2017;
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2009;
- Office of the Planning Regulator Practice Note PN02 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening; and
- The Planning and Development Acts 2000, as amended and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Existing Environment

The proposed development site comprises a small localised area of 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 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 support small mounds of aggregate material that have now recolonised with ruderal calcicole species and rough grasses and now corresponds with recolonising bare ground (ED3)[1]. 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 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 low local ecological importance.

3.2 Designated Sites within the Zone of Influence of the Site

There is one European site located witin the potential Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) dynamic from the proposed development (See **Figure 3-1**). This European Site is as follows:

- River Suck Callows SPA (004097).

Table 3-1 provides details on the distance and connectivity of European Sites within the S-P-R of the proposed works.

A separate Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been completed and considered the European Sites (SACs and SPAs) within the Zone of Influence of the proposed housing development. This assessment concluded that the Proposed project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on a European site.

There is one proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) and one Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) located within the potential S-P-R of the proposed project. These designated sites are as follows

- Ballinasloe Esker pNHA (001779) located 231m north-east; and
- Suck River Callows NHA (000222) located 766m north-east

There are no viable Source-Pathway-Receptor dynamic between the proposed housing development and these designated sites due to the absence of viable ecological vectors on site and the localised, small scale nature of the works.

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

3.3 Surface Water

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)[2] 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.

3.4 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.

3.5 Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) online database[3] was consulted for available edaphic, geological and hydrological information of the site and its environs. The underlying bedrock of the study site is part of the Visean Limestones which comprise undifferentiated limestone. The groundwater vulnerability within the footprint of the study site is classified Groundwater Vulnerability 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*

[2] The main channel of the River Suck watercourse which flows through Ballinasloe town
[3] GSI Online database: https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/data-and-maps/Pages/default.aspx

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[4]*'*.

3.6 Cumulative Impact and In-combination Effects

In-combination and cumulative impacts of the project and plans within the project Zone of Influence are considered in **Table 3.1** below.

[4] https://gsi.geodata.gov.ie/downloads/Groundwater/Reports/GWB/SuckSouthGWB.pdf

Table 3-1 - 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)	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
	Regulations 2011. All such projects and plans will also be required to comply 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.	
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 adjoining or within the receiving environment of the proposed development site.	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
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 - 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	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
	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.	
Local Planning Applications	A search of Galway County Council's online planning enquiry database[5] 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 in addition to developments associated with the Portiuncula HSE campus to the south 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.

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 features of biodiversity interest, in combination with the proposed development. All proposed developments considered in the Zone of Influence of the proposed development are subject to the statutory planning process and where required are accompanied by the requisite planning and environmental assessment documentation, including Appropriate Assessment, Ecological Impact Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment reporting. To that end, other projects, programmes and plans within the project zone of influence have been developed under the consideration of potential impacts and effects to their receiving and surrounding environment and are tasked with avoiding and minimising such impacts, through the Appropriate Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment processes

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

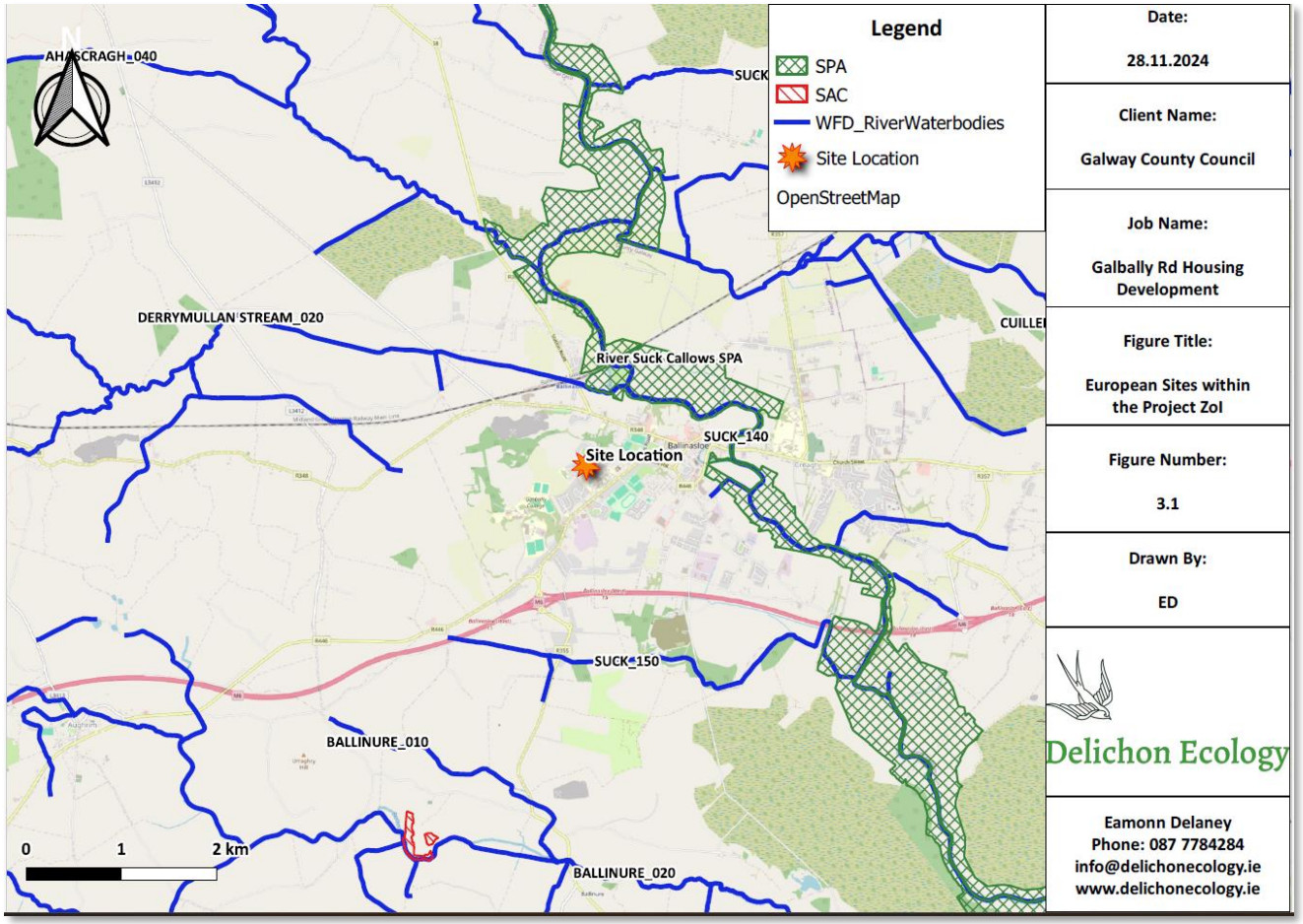


Figure 3-1: European Sites within the zone of influence of the proposed works

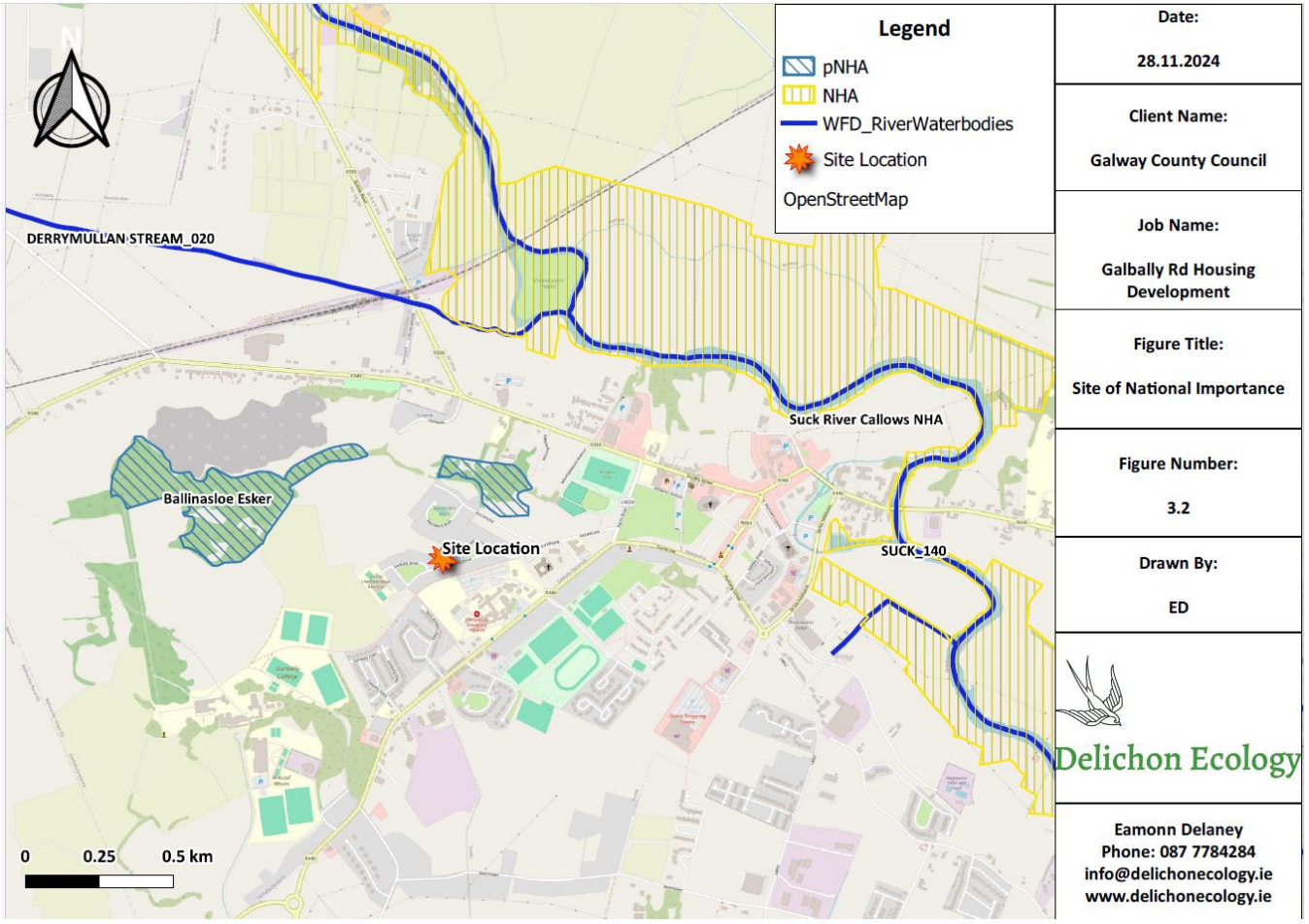


Figure 3-2: Sites of National Importance within the zone of influence of the proposed works

4 EIA Screening Assessment

4.1 Characteristic of the Proposed Development

A description of the project's likely impacts on the environment are presented in **Table 4-1** below, as per criteria outlined in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 600/2001).

Table 4-1: Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Screening Questions	Comment
Could the scale of the proposed works be considered significant?	The housing development will comprise 2 no. new housing units. Base on an average occupancy of 4-5 residents per housing unit the Population Equivalent (PE) will be ca. 8-10. The scale of the works is not considered significant and is located within the curtilage of Ballinasloe town and associated residential areas.
Considered cumulatively with other adjacent proposed developments would the size of the proposed works be considered significant?	No. The proposed works have been assessed cumulatively with other adjacent proposed developments (see **Section 3.6**) and it has been concluded that there are no projects within the zone of influence of the proposed development which could potentially lead to cumulative impacts, provided adherence to the overarching policies and objectives of the plans and programmes and best practice and mitigation measures are implemented for individual projects.
Is the nature of the proposed works significant?	The proposed works are not considered significant in terms of scale or variance from landuse in the surrounding environment and will be carried out in-line with existing construction methodologies and heath and safety regulations.
Will the proposed works utilise a significant quantity of natural resources, including soil, land, water and biodiversity?	No. The construction phase of the development works will not require the use of a significant quantity of natural resources. The construction phase of the proposed development will use standard materials including aggregate, cement, etc. There are secondary impacts associated with off-site activities, such as quarrying, which are the subject of separate consenting procedures in considering the impacts arising at those off-site locations. No adverse significant impacts are expected to occur on the site or in the vicinity of the site through the use of resources owing to the scale of the development.
Will the proposed works produce a significant quantity of waste?	There will be a limited volume of waste produced as a result of the development works. During construction, solid waste will be generated. However, volumes requiring off-site management will not be significant. On site materials that cannot be used for construction and reinstatement will be disposed of in

Screening Questions	Comment
	accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance including the Waste Management Acts (1996, as amended) and Waste Management Permit Regulations. No potential significant impacts are envisaged within the site or in the vicinity of the site as a result of the production of any waste associated with the proposed development.
Will the proposed works create a significant amount or type of pollution or nuisance?	During any construction project, there is potential for water, noise, air and traffic pollution. However, the relatively small scale nature of the project and the application of standard best practice construction methods during construction will readily eliminate the risk of such impacts arising. Therefore the proposed development works will not cause significant pollution or nuisance during the construction and operational phase. Noise impacts may occur due to construction activities on a temporary basis, and through operation activities, such as changes in traffic levels. The temporary nature of noise impacts associated with construction activity are not expected to be significant and can be appropriately controlled through planning conditions. Similarly, increased traffic movements during the operational phase are not expected to have a significant adverse impact and are not expected to far exceed baseline traffic movements. Surface water run-off from the building's hard surfaces will be directed to a storm water soakaway area within the proposed residential site. Wastewater from the site will be directed to the local public wastewater treatment plant (Ballinasloe WwTP) facilities and the wastewater generated during the project operational phase will be treated appropriately.
Will there be a risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used?	The project is of a scale that is not likely to result in a major accident or disaster. The proposed development works is a typical small scale residential development, utilising established building materials and technologies typical of the nature and scale of such development. The proposed works and construction methods to be used are well established and will be subject to contractor's safety statements and risk assessments. No potential significant impacts are envisaged as a result of the materials or technologies used.
Would any combination of the above factors be considered likely to have	Given that there is no potential for significant effects for the development works, there are no factors (which when combined) would result in the development works, due to its characteristics, having a significant effect on the environment.

Screening Questions	Comment
significant effects on the environment?	

4.2 Conclusion

It is concluded that the proposed construction works, and operational phase of the project will not have significant effect on the surrounding environment due to the localised nature and small scale of the proposed works.

4.3 Location of the Proposed Development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development works with regards to the criteria outlined in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 600/2001) are outlined in **Table 4-2** below.

Table 4-2: Location of the Proposed Development

Screening Questions	Comment
The existing land use	The housing development will comprise 2 no. new housing units. Base on an average occupancy of 4-5 residents per housing unit the Population Equivalent (PE) will be ca. 8-10. The land use is currently classified as recolonising bare ground (ED3) as classified under Fossitt 2000 '*A Guide to Habitats in Ireland* (2000)'. The site is zoned under "Residential Existing" as per the Ballinasloe Local Area Plan 2022-2028. Therefore, the proposed project aligns with zoning classification as outlined in the Ballinasloe Local Area Plan 2022-2028.
The relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area (including soil, land and water) in the area.	The project does not involve the significant use of natural resources. The land use comprises disturbed and recolonising ground adjoined by existing residential dwellings within Ballinasloe town. The proposed development works will not have a significant effect on the abundance, quality or regenerative capacity of soil, land and or water within the vicinity of the proposed development works. The proposed development works have been subject to a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) Report. On the basis of objective scientific information presented in the Screening for AA, it finds that the proposed development works, either individually or in combination with other projects and plans, are not likely to have a significant effect on any European site.
The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas: i. wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;	The proposed development works are located in Galbally Rd, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. The study area is located on a small plot of disturbed and recolonising ground surrounded by existing residential developments. There is one European site within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development; i.e. River Suck Callows SPA. The

Screening Questions	Comment
ii. coastal zones and the marine environment; iii. (mountain and forest areas; iv. nature reserves and parks; v. areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive and; vi. areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure; vii. densely populated areas; viii. landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.	proposed works do not support connectivity to European sites, including the River Suck Callows SPA (004097). The proposed development works have been subject to a Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report. On the basis of objective scientific information, it finds that the proposed development works, either individually or in combination with other projects and plans, are not likely to have a significant effect on any European site. There is one proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) and one Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) located within the S-P-R of the proposed project. These designated sites are as follows: - Ballinasloe Esker pNHA (001779); and - Suck River Callows NHA (000222) There are no viable Source-Pathway-Receptor dynamic between the proposed housing development and these designated sites due to the absence of viable ecological vectors on site and the localised, small scale nature of the works. The proposed development works have the potential to positively impact Ballinasloe Town with the provision of housing requirements for the area and is accordance with the current demand for housing. The site is located in Landscape Character Area No. 5 – Urban Environs Landscape and is classified as having Low Landscape Sensitivity Rating, as per the Landscape Character Assessment Study of County Galway (Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028). The proposed development site will not alter the landscape of the study area or its environs as it is adjoined by, and in proximity with, similar residential dwellings There are no sites of archaeological significance within, adjoining or in close proximity of the site. Therefore there will be no impacts to known archaeological features.

4.4 Characteristics of the Potential Impacts

The proposed development works are considered in the context of potential impacts. The topic areas which may potentially be impacted upon are outlined below with reference to Section 171A of the Act (as amended by the EIA Regulations). The assessment draws on the results of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA). See **Table 4-3** below for significant of impacts according to theme as per EIA and **Table 4-4** for the characteristics of potential impacts.

Table 4-3: Significance of Impacts in the Context of EIA Headings

Screening Questions	Comment
Population and Human Health	This proposed development works will provide further housing services / resources for the Ballinasloe area and surrounds. Therefore the proposed works will provide positive social and economic impact to the local population and surrounds.
Biodiversity	There is one European site within the potential project Zone of Influence; River Suck Callows SPA (004097) and two sites of national importance located within the potential project Zone of Influence; Ballinasloe Esker pNHA (001779) located 231m north-east; and Suck River Callows NHA (000222) located 766m north-east. The proposed works do not support connectivity to these designated sites. The proposed housing development has been subject to a Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report. On the basis of objective scientific information, it finds that the proposed development works, either individually or in combination with other projects and plans, are not likely to have a significant effect on any European site. The proposed development works supports a small localised area of recolonising bare ground that is adjoined by existing residential dwellings. Habitats on site support poor botanical diversity and are of local importance.
Land, Soils and Geology	As per **Section 3.5** above, the works area is located within the 'Suck South' GroundWater Body (GWB) (IE_SH_G_0225). 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 Vulnerability of the proposed dwelling site and its environs are 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)'.

Screening Questions	Comment
	The development will be carried out in accordance with standard construction methods and environmental management systems. Excavations will be localised and retained to the project footprint and will be reinstated as required. There will be no significant negative impact on lands, soils and geology associated with the development. Excavations will be required to facilitate housing development footprint, in addition to associated services. Groundwater encountered during any excavation works are unlikely given the absence of karst features on site and the High / Moderate groundwater vulnerability of the site and environs.
Water	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. 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. At the Draft Plan Layout stage, it was decided to prepare a Pre-Connection enquiry and submit same to Irish Water as it can take up to 16 weeks to get a reply. 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. 2 no. new housing units. Based on an average occupancy of 4-5 residents per housing unit the Population Equivalent (PE) will be ca. 8-10. There will be no negative impacts associated with the proposed works on the natural environment and or habitats listed.
Air, Climate and Noise	Due to the scale and nature of the proposed development, there are no significant impacts foreseen as regards air quality. There will be no significant negative impacts associated with the development for which further extension of duration is being applied for.

Screening Questions	Comment
	Plant and equipment utilised during construction and as part of the operational phase will use fossil fuels, but the potential air, climate and noise impacts will not significant due to the nature and short-term scale of the works. Similarly, increased traffic movements during the operational phase are not expected to have a significant adverse impact. Noise impacts may occur due to construction activities on a temporary basis, and through operation activities, such as changes in traffic levels. The temporary nature of noise impacts associated with construction activity are not expected to be significant and can be appropriately controlled through planning conditions. Noise levels generated during the project's operational phase are unlikely to exceed baseline noise levels.
Landscape and Visual	The site is located in Landscape Character Area No. 5 – Urban Environs Landscape and is classified as having Low Landscape Sensitivity Rating, as per the Landscape Character Assessment Study of County Galway (Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028). The proposed development site will not alter the landscape of the study area or its environs as it is adjoined by and in proximity with similar residential dwellings. The works are taking place in an existing urban and peri-urban setting and is adjoined by existing residential dwellings. Given the nature of the proposed development and its setting within the existing residential peri-urban environment, it is not anticipated for impacts to occur to the visual landscape.
Cultural Heritage	The Galway County Development Plan has assigned areas of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) to towns and villages, including Ballinasloe. An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, an area, a group of structures or part of a townscape which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures; and which is listed as such an area in the County Development Plan. The proposed residential dwelling site is located outside the Ballinasloe ACA. There are no sites of archaeological significance within, adjoining or in close proximity of the site.
Material Assets	There is potential for temporary minor impacts related to traffic inconvenience in the area (particularly the Galbally housing estate

Screening Questions	Comment
	and its surrounds) during the construction works. However, such works are very localised to the project environs and will be short term and temporary.

Table 4-4: Characteristic of Potential Impacts

Screening Questions	Comment
The extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population).	It is not anticipated that a large geographical area will be impacted by the proposed works. Potential environmental impacts during the construction and operational phase of the proposed development will be localised to the application site. It is expected that the proposed development will not have any significant environmental impact beyond the application site boundaries. The population of the Ballinasloe settlement area as per the 2022 census was 7,378, a increase from 6,662 in 2016, an overall 9.7% population increase within the area. The development of additional housing has potential to have a positive impact on the on-going economic and social development of the town and region.
Outline the nature of the impact.	The proposed development works are expected to have an imperceptible, localised, and temporary negative effect on the receiving environment primarily during the construction phase. This is associated with disruption to local residents and commuters from noise and additional traffic. Thereafter, there is expected a permanent positive effect during the operational phase of the development as it will provide additional housing capacity to the Ballinasloe residential area.
The transboundary nature of the impact.	There are no transboundary or trans-frontier impacts associated with the proposed development.
The intensity and complexity of the impact.	The potential construction impacts are not considered to be significantly complex or intense due to the nature of the development and the receiving environment, which supports a small localised area of recolonising bare ground that is adjoined by existing residential dwellings. Habitats on site support poor botanical diversity and are of local importance.
The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.	The proposed development works will result in minor construction phase impacts that will be temporary in nature. The housing development will comprise 2 no. new housing units. Based on an

Screening Questions	Comment
	average occupancy of 4-5 residents per housing unit the Population Equivalent (PE) will be ca. 8-10. It is expected that the implementation of the proposed project will result in permanent positive impacts by providing additional housing needs and requirements to the town. No significant impacts have been identified as a result of the proposed development.
Outline the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects	See **Section 3.6** for the assessment of cumulative impacts with other plans and projects.
Outline the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.	The design of the project has been optimised to ensure that environmental impacts are minimised as much as possible. The proposed development works have been subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment, on the basis of objective scientific information, if finds that the proposed development works, either individually or in combination with other projects and plans, is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site.

4.5 Conclusion

It is concluded that impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed development are not considered to be significant in the context of Directive 2014/52/EU nor Schedule 7 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2017*, as amended.

Based on the findings of this report, the context and character of the site and the receiving environment, as well as the nature, extent, form, and character of the proposed development, the proposed development works are not considered likely to have significant effects on the environment and consequently do not require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report as prescribed under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU.

APPENDIX A – SITE LAYOUT DRAWING

DRAFT

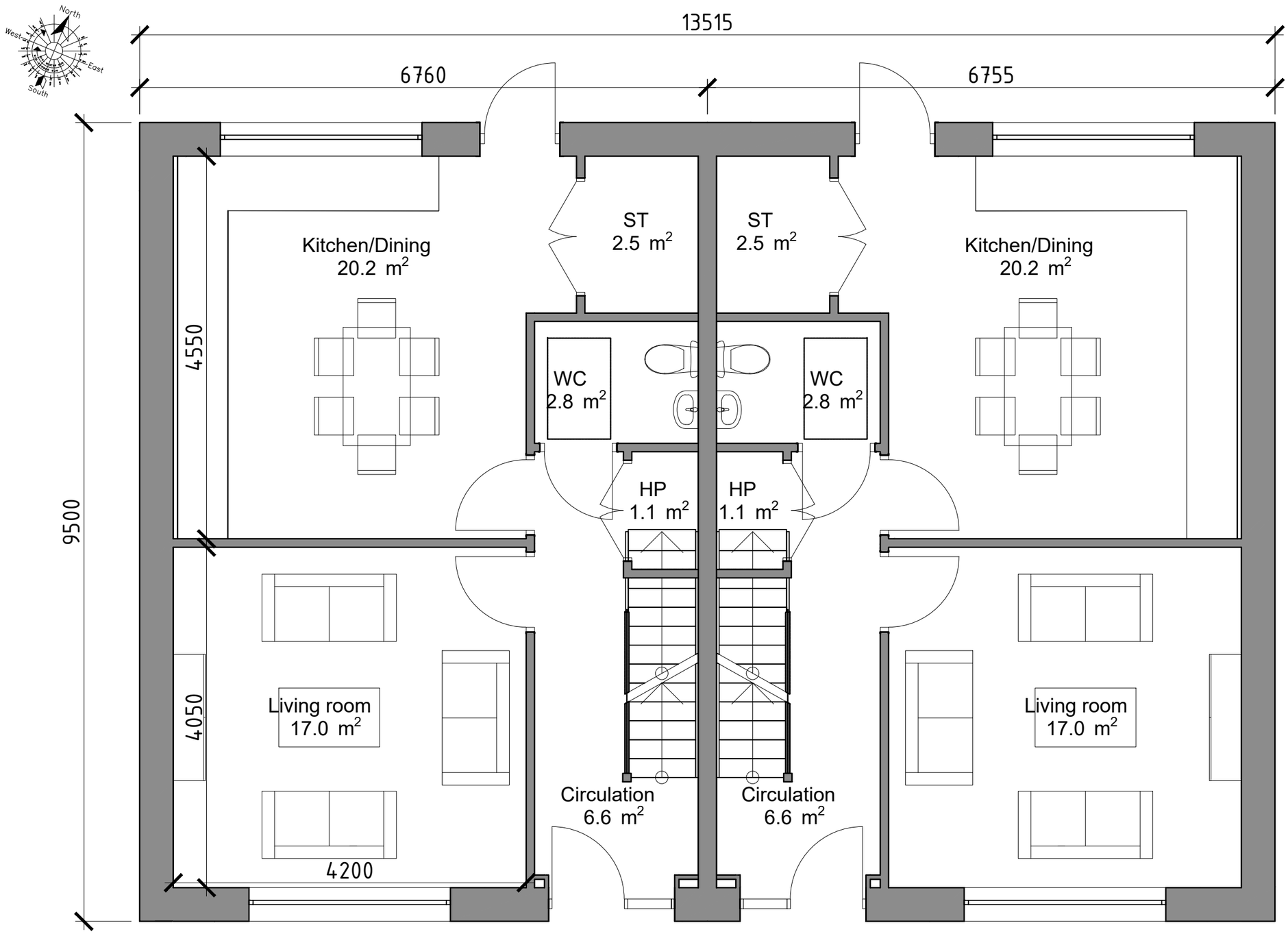
FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

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:	Site map		
DESIGNED BY:	KG	FILE NO.:	
DRAWN BY:	KG	SCALES: 1:1000 @ A3	DRAWING NO.: SK200
CHECKED BY:		DATE: Aug 2024	



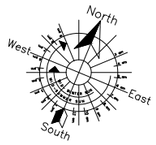
DRAFT

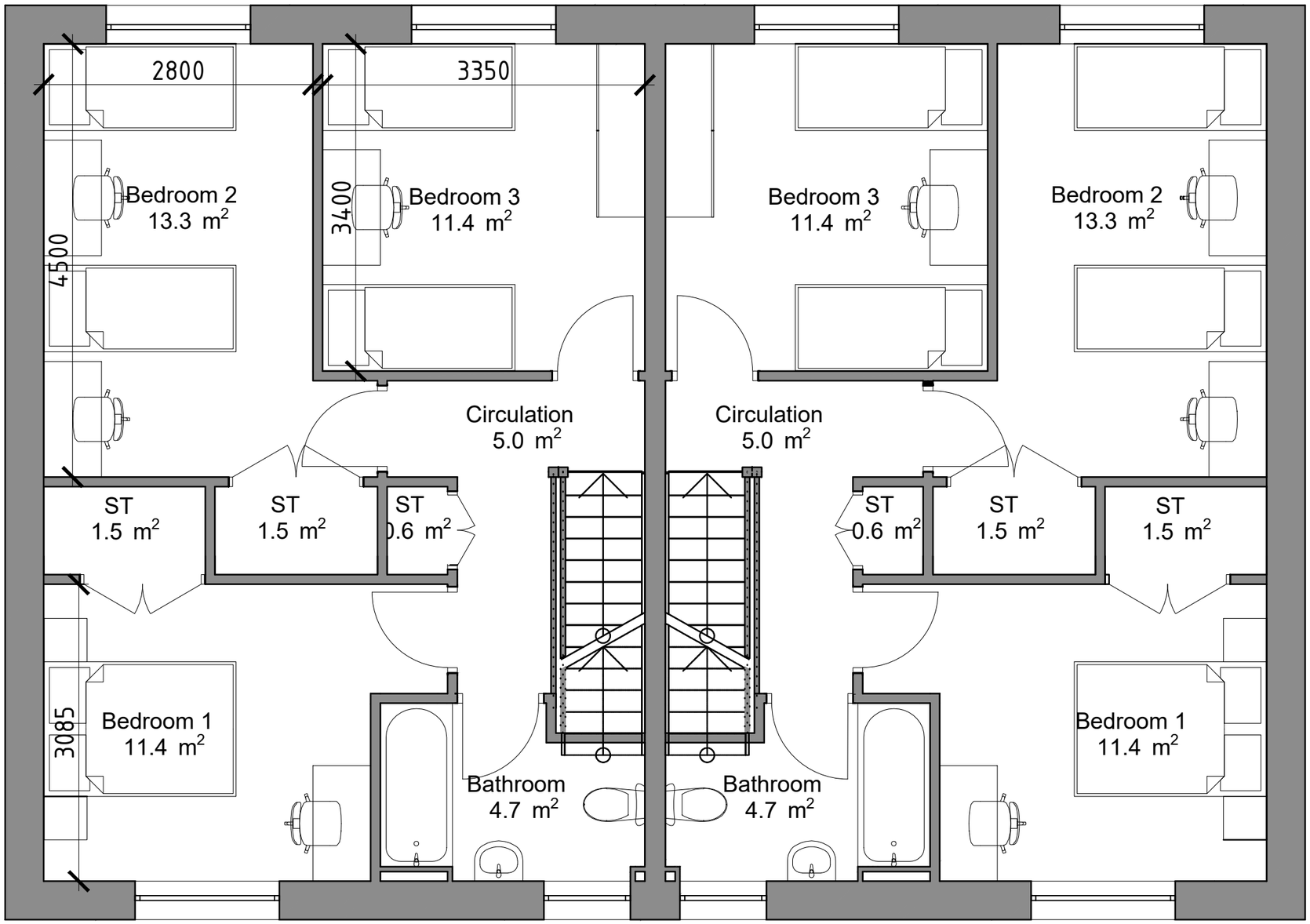
FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

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	





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 First Floor Plan		
DESIGNED BY:	KG	FILE NO.:	
DRAWN BY:	KG	SCALES: 1:50 @ A3	DRAWING NO.: SK201
CHECKED BY:		DATE: Aug 2024	