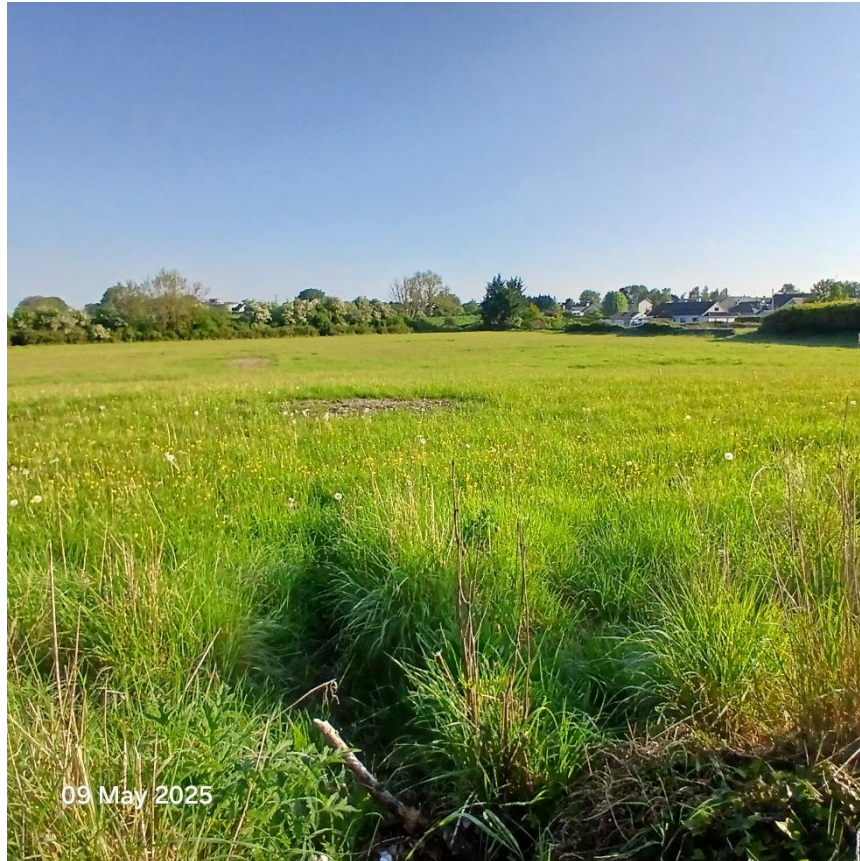


# Portumna Housing Development



## Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

**Prepared By:**



**Delichon Ecology**

**Prepared For:**

**Simon J Kelly Architects / Galway County Council**

# **Portumna Housing Development Environmental Impact Assessment Screening**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Project Description & Study Area

The proposed housing development site is located in Portumna adjoining the west of the town centre, and accessed to the north of St Joseph's Road, with 127-meter road frontage. An existing single storey dwelling is to the east of the site on the town side, and the eastern boundary is generally the rear boundary of this house and properties at St Bendan's Road. There is an existing two storey dwelling and garden along the western boundary. An Aldi supermarket is located west of the site. To the north of the site, and in a small pocket to the east, are potentially future development lands. The site is 1.53 hectares in area.

The proposed housing development provides for 38 dwellings as briefed following design development and refinement of the brief with Galway County Council during a 6-month design and consultation period November 2024 – May 2025, and consists of:

- 2 bedroomed houses – 10 no;
- 3 bedroomed houses – 26 no;
- 4 bedroomed houses – 2 no; and
- TOTAL Bedrooms - 38 no.

The design response to this site to provide the GCC brief for 38 new dwellings is as follows:

- 1) Propose a street-front of new 2-storey houses so that the new housing feels part of Portumna town, in alignment with the established building line to the east, with a continuous linear park green amenity between the houses and the existing St. Joseph's Road and step the scale down with a special house type that steps down to a single storey element adjoining the neighbouring context to the east;
- 2) Align new houses to the west with the building line established by existing 2-storey house to the west;
- 3) Reconcile the two building lines at an open space that provides pedestrian access to and from the new scheme to the footpath leading to the supermarket to the west;
- 4) Propose new terraces of houses fully overlooking a central open space amenity at the heart of the new housing scheme;
- 5) Provide 7no. single storey terraced houses facing the central park (4 to the north, 3 to the south as a "mews terrace" behind the street front to St Joseph's Road;
- 6) Provide 3 smaller "home zone" area that also serve as potential future linkages to the identified possible future housing development sites to north and east;
- 7) Propose a design strategy that the new houses follow traditional and vernacular rural Irish townhouses principles of vertically proportioned windows, 47-degree roof gables over ca. 6m deep buildings, traditional render finish and all corners turned so that there are no dead spaces not overlooked by neighbours;



8) Provide a single vehicular entrance and multiple pedestrian linkages and open visibility to and from St Joseph's road to assist the new housing integrate visually and socially with Portumna's existing context.

A new foul water connection to the public drainage network is required for this development. Correspondence with Uisce Eireann has confirmed that foul water connection proposals are feasible and do not require any infrastructure upgrades. Surface water will be managed via soakaways, with a partial outfall to the Galway County Council surface water network. Lighting proposed for the project will be hooded, targeted and downward facing.

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](http://www.myplan.ie/en/index.html));
- Office of Public Works (OPW) National Flood Hazard Mapping website ([www.floodmaps.ie](http://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](http://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](http://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 sixteen 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 field visits to the proposed dwelling site in December 2024 and May 2025. Eamonn's initial years in ecological consultancy involved botanical and habitat surveys for the purposes of EIA, EclA 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.

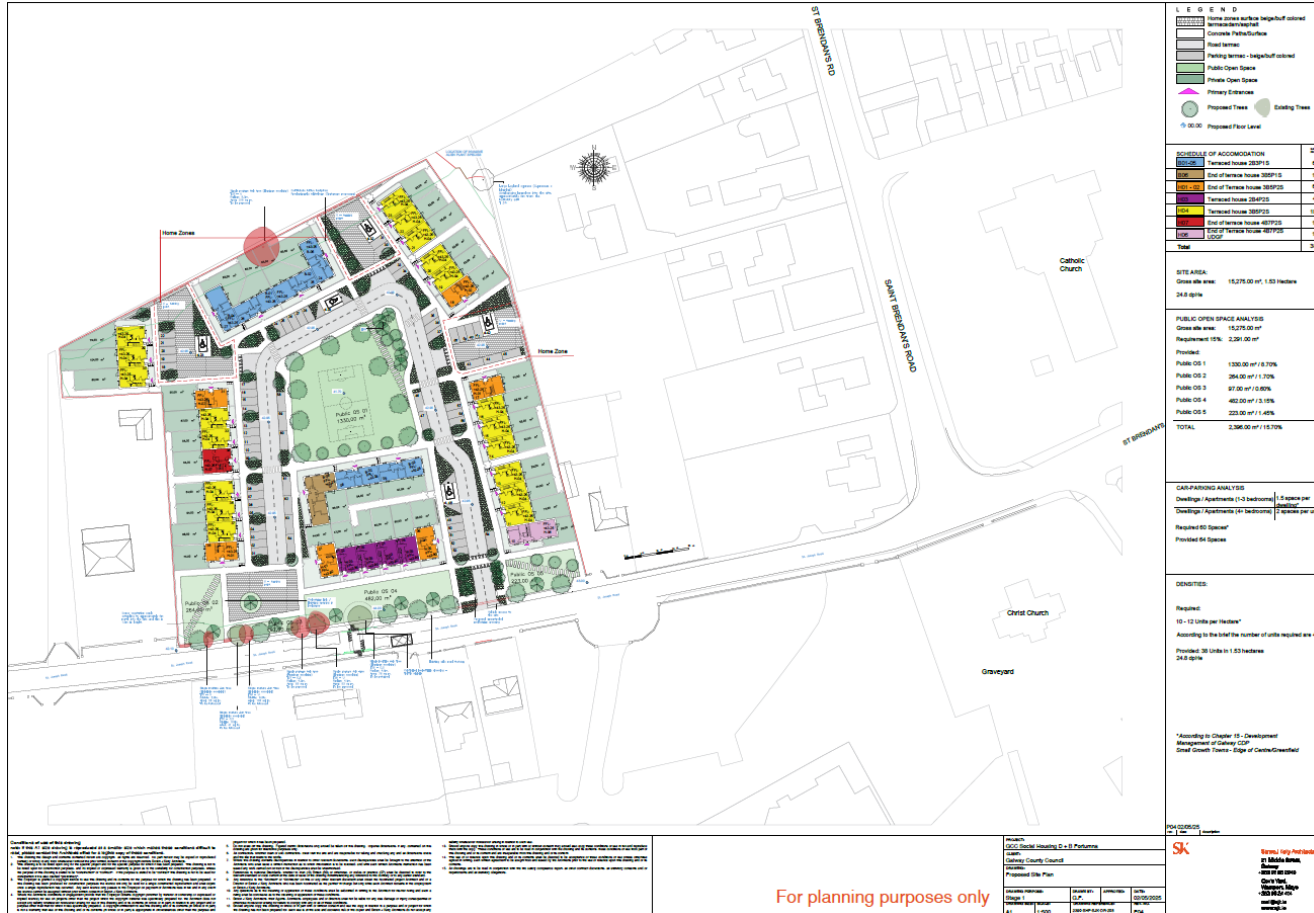


Eamonn has extensive experience in the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) role for Flood Relief Schemes, roads and pipeline developments which requires weekly site visits, monitoring of mitigation measures, reviewing contractors method statements in addition to ongoing liaison with site operational staff 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 Site Location**



**Figure 1-2: Proposed Development Layout & Site Boundary**

## 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 findings of the Phase 1 habitat survey are described below, while a habitat map showing the extent of habitats within the proposed development site are presented in **Figure 3-1**. Site walkover surveys were undertaken on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2024 and May 09<sup>th</sup> 2025.

The proposed development site comprises a large expansive improved agricultural grassland (GA1)<sup>1</sup> field, fringed by a hedgerow (WL1) along its northern boundary. Topography within the proposed development site boundary is generally flat throughout. The improved agricultural grassland habitat (GA1) shows no signs of recent or ongoing grazing, but is likely to receive at least annual mowing. Plant species composition of the improved grassland habitat indicates that the grassland is semi-improved with past but not recent reseeding or fertilisation. Plant species composition includes sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), occasional cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.) and smooth hawk's beard (*Crepis capillaris*). The southernmost extent of the grassland area supports occasional cowslip (*Primula veris*) scattered throughout the grassland sward. Areas of rough improved grassland are located along the field boundary margins / headlands. These linear grassland areas have not been subject to recent management activities such as mowing or grazing. This lack of management has resulted in the proliferation of a dense grassy sward, corresponding to dry meadows and grassy verge grassland (GS2), comprising cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*).

The northern boundary of the site supports a long-established, unmanaged hedgerow (WL1) habitat comprising maturing hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) shrubs with occasional semi-mature ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees and with spreading blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and dense bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) scrub (WS1) extended along the southern face of the hedgerow.

#### Evaluation of Habitats

Habitat evaluation within the proposed housing scheme and the surrounding area are presented in **Table 3-1** below.

**Table 3-1 - Evaluation of habitats within the proposed housing scheme**

| Habitat                               | Evaluation                     | Evaluation Rationale                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Improved Agricultural Grassland (GA1) | Local Importance – Lower Value | A routinely maintained grassland habitat with poor floristic diversity. The margins of the grassland habitat may provide suitable foraging habitat for small mammal species and passerine birds. |

<sup>1</sup> Alphanumeric codes follow 'A Guide to Habitats in Ireland' (Fossitt, 2000)



| Habitat         | Evaluation                     | Evaluation Rationale                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hedgerows (WL1) | Local Importance – Lower Value | A habitat located along the northern margins of the proposed development site. This habitat provides suitable habitat for roosting and nesting birds and may provide suitable foraging habitat for foraging.       |
| Scrub (WS1)     | Local Importance – Lower Value | A linear habitat located along the northern margins of the proposed development site. This habitat provides suitable habitat for roosting and nesting birds and may provide suitable foraging habitat for mammals. |

### **Birds**

Bird species that were seen or heard along the site bounds, within the wider study area or overflying the site during the site walkover survey were as follows:

- Wren
- Blackbird
- Song Thrush
- Chaffinch
- Woodpigeon
- Goldfinch
- Goldcrest
- Great Tit
- Chiffchaff
- Blue Tit
- Rook
- Jackdaw
- Robin
- House Sparrow
- House Martin
- Swallow
- Blackcap

### **Mammals**

Non-volant mammal field surveys at the study area comprised of a thorough walkover of the proposed development site, targeting the site boundaries and any areas of scrub or woody cover.

No underground mammal dwellings including badger setts or fox dens were encountered during the survey. Signs of foraging fox (hairs snagged on barbed wire fence) were noted along the northern boundary of the site. There are no watercourses within the proposed 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 as evidenced through the identification of localised mammal trails along the northern and eastern boundaries.



### 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](http://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 to High' bat suitability index (49.11). This high rating for the study area is likely to be due to the proximity of Portumna Forest Park and Lough Derg to the south of the proposed housing development site. Both the woodland and open water habitats of the forest park and Lough Derg provide suitable foraging and roosting habitat for bats. The open pastoral habitats within the footprint of the proposed housing development footprint are considered to be unsuitable for foraging and roosting bats, given the lack of linear woodland features and buildings with suitable crevices or apertures to support roosting bats. The hedgerow located along the northern boundary of the site provides suitable foraging habitat for bats.

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.

### Amphibians and Reptiles

Amphibians and reptiles were not identified during the site walkover survey. The NBDC hold records for common frog (*Rana temporaria*) from tetrad (2x2km square) M80M (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 common frog.

### 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 footprint. However, the north-eastern corner of the field supporting the proposed development site, supports a stand of Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*). This is a well-established stand of Japanese knotweed measuring 4m (N-S axis) & 4m (E-W axis) and ca. 3m high. This stand is located outside of the proposed



development footprint and boundary and has been avoided, with appropriate buffer zones and setbacks, by the proposed site design and development layout.

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.

### 3.2 Designated Sites within the Zone of Influence of the Site

There are six European sites located within the potential Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) dynamic from the proposed development (See **Figure 3-2**). These European Sites are as follows:

- Lough Derg North-east Shore SAC (002241);
- Lough Derg SPA (004058);
- Middle Shannon Callows SPA (004096);
- River Shannon Callows SAC (000216);
- Lower River Shannon SAC (002137)
- River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (004077).

**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 are no proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) or Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) located within the S-P-R of the proposed project.

### 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 waterbody to the proposed development site is Lough Derg located >700m south of the proposed development site. There is no connectivity between the proposed development site and this waterbody, while the nearest watercourse is the Shannon (Lower)\_040 located >600m west. There is no connectivity between the proposed development site and this watercourse.

### 3.4 Flooding

The Flood Info database ([www.floodinfo.ie](http://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. OPW developed the Flood Hazard Mapping website [floodmaps.ie](http://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](http://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 is greenfield with no indication of historical flooding within the site boundary.

### 3.5 Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) online database 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 Lucan Formation which comprise dark limestone and shale. The groundwater vulnerability within the footprint of the study site is classified Groundwater Vulnerability as 'High'. 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 LI Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zone. There are no karst features within the proposed development site or its immediate environs.

The study site is located within the 'Tynagh' GroundWater Body (GWB) (IE\_SH\_G\_0236). This GroundWater Body was classified as Good Status under the Water Framework Directive (2016-2021) and considered to be 'Not at Risk' of meeting its objectives under the Water Framework Directive.

### 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.

Table 3-2 - 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028</b> | <p><b>NHB 1 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species</b><br/>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.</p> <p><b>NHB 2 European Sites and Appropriate Assessment</b><br/>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)</p> | <p>A number of strategies, policies and objectives are set out in the <b>Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028</b> with the aim of protection of the counties natural heritage and biodiversity.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> |



| Programmes, Plans and Projects                            | Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to the Conservation of the Natura 2000 Network                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Potential for In-combination Effects                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                           | <p>Regulations 2011. All such projects and plans will also be required to comply with statutory Environmental Impact Assessment requirements where relevant.</p> <p><b>NHB 3 Protection of European Sites</b><br/>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).</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Inland Fisheries Ireland Corporate Plan 2021 -2025</b> | <p>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.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>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.</p> |
| <b>EPA Licenced Facilities</b>                            | <p>There is one EPA Licenced Facilities (IPPC Licenced Facility within the potential zone of influence of the proposed housing development site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- P0816 Portumna Pastry Limited</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>EPA licenced facilities are subject to conditions and parameters associated with licencing requirements (including wastewater discharge licencing for Portumna WwTP), restricting the release of polluted or contaminated materials to</p>                                                                                                                                                                    |

| Programmes, Plans and Projects                                    | Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to the Conservation of the Natura 2000 Network                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Potential for In-combination Effects                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                   | <p>Uisce Eireann also operate a wastewater treatment facility for Portumna town; Portumna WwTP. This facility discharges treated wastewater to Lough Derg to the south.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>the receiving or surrounding environment. Therefore, these facilities will not contribute towards significant negative effects to European Sites.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022 – 2027</b></p> | <p>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).</p> <p>Key issues raised as part of the consultation process within the ten most prominent themes are as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water Quality / Pollution</li> <li>- Agricultural Practices</li> <li>- Public Engagement and Awareness</li> <li>- Local Authority</li> <li>- Level of ambition</li> <li>- Sewage Pollution</li> <li>- Department / Agency</li> <li>- Co-ordination</li> <li>- Funding</li> <li>- Forestry</li> <li>- Peat</li> </ul> | <p>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.</p> |

| Programmes, Plans and Projects                               | Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to the Conservation of the Natura 2000 Network                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Potential for In-combination Effects                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shellfish waters / aquaculture</li> <li>- Other</li> <li>- 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.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Draft 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2027</b> | <p><b>Objective 2 - Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs</b></p> <p><b>Outcome 2A:</b> The protection of existing designated areas and species is strengthened and conservation and restoration within the existing protected areas network are enhanced.</p> <p><b>Outcome 2B:</b> Biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside are conserved.</p> <p><b>Outcome 2C:</b> All freshwater bodies are of at least 'Good Ecological Status' as defined under the EU Water Framework Directive.</p> <p><b>Outcome 2D:</b> Genetic diversity of wild and domesticated species is safeguarded.</p> <p><b>Outcome 2E:</b> A National Restoration Plan is in place to meet EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 nature restoration targets.</p> <p><b>Outcome 2F:</b> Biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine environment are conserved and restored.</p> | <p>Following the implementation of mitigation as set out in Section 7, there will be no adverse impacts on designated sites or biodiversity as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will not impact on connectivity within the wider area and will maintain watercourses within and adjacent to the development site in good condition.</p> <p>An Invasive Species Management Plan (ISMP) has been prepared with respect to invasive plants recorded during the ecological surveys. Following implementation of the measures specified in the ISMP, no potential for significant residual impacts have been identified as a result of the proposed development.</p> |

| Programmes, Plans and Projects     | Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to the Conservation of the Natura 2000 Network                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Potential for In-combination Effects                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                    | <b>Outcome 2G:</b> 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Local Planning Applications</b> | A search of Galway County Council's online planning enquiry database <sup>2</sup> 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. |

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

<sup>2</sup> <https://galwaycoco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=3570e45b0e354cf0b740ecbc7505adb2>



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

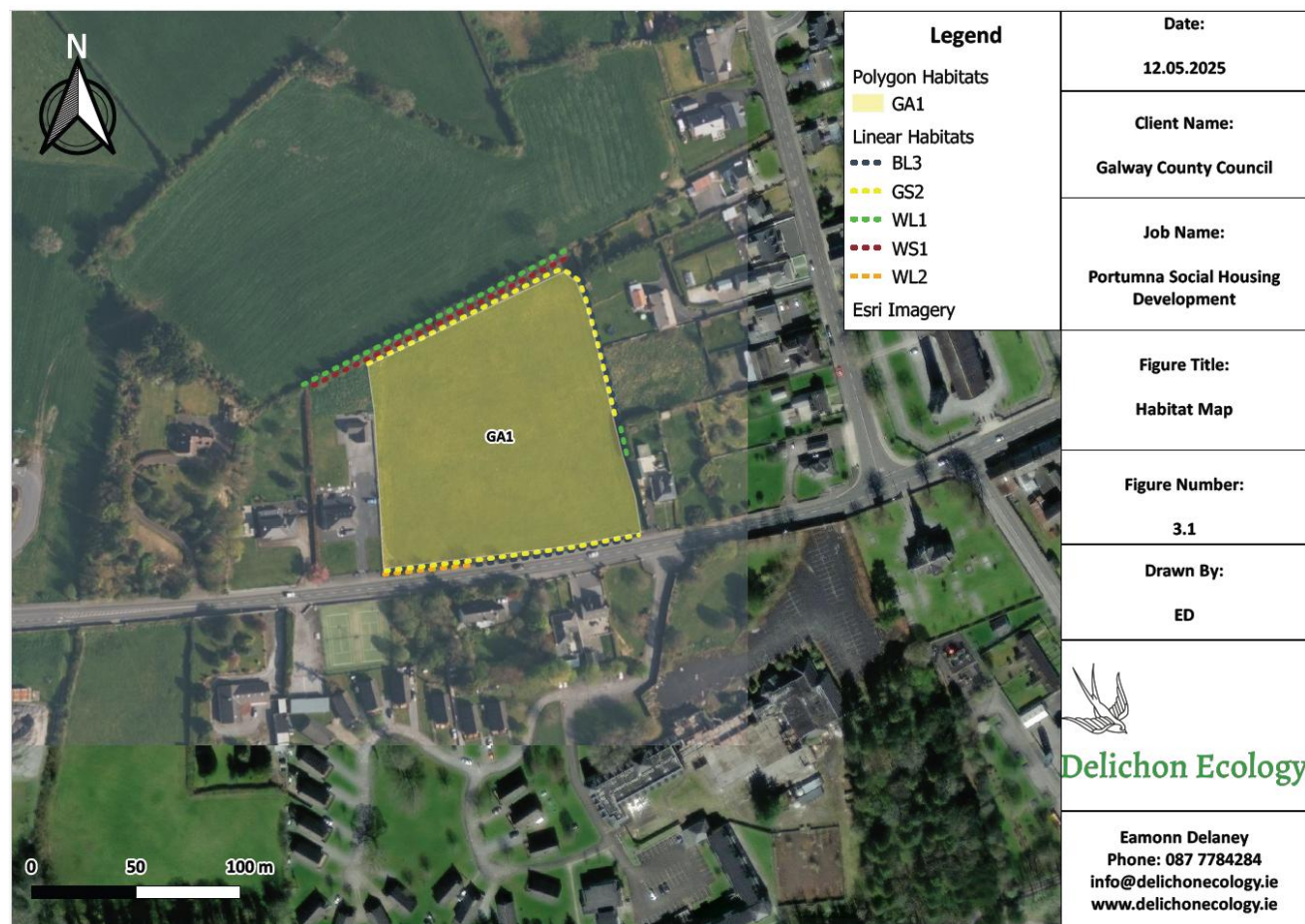


Figure 3-1: Habitat Map

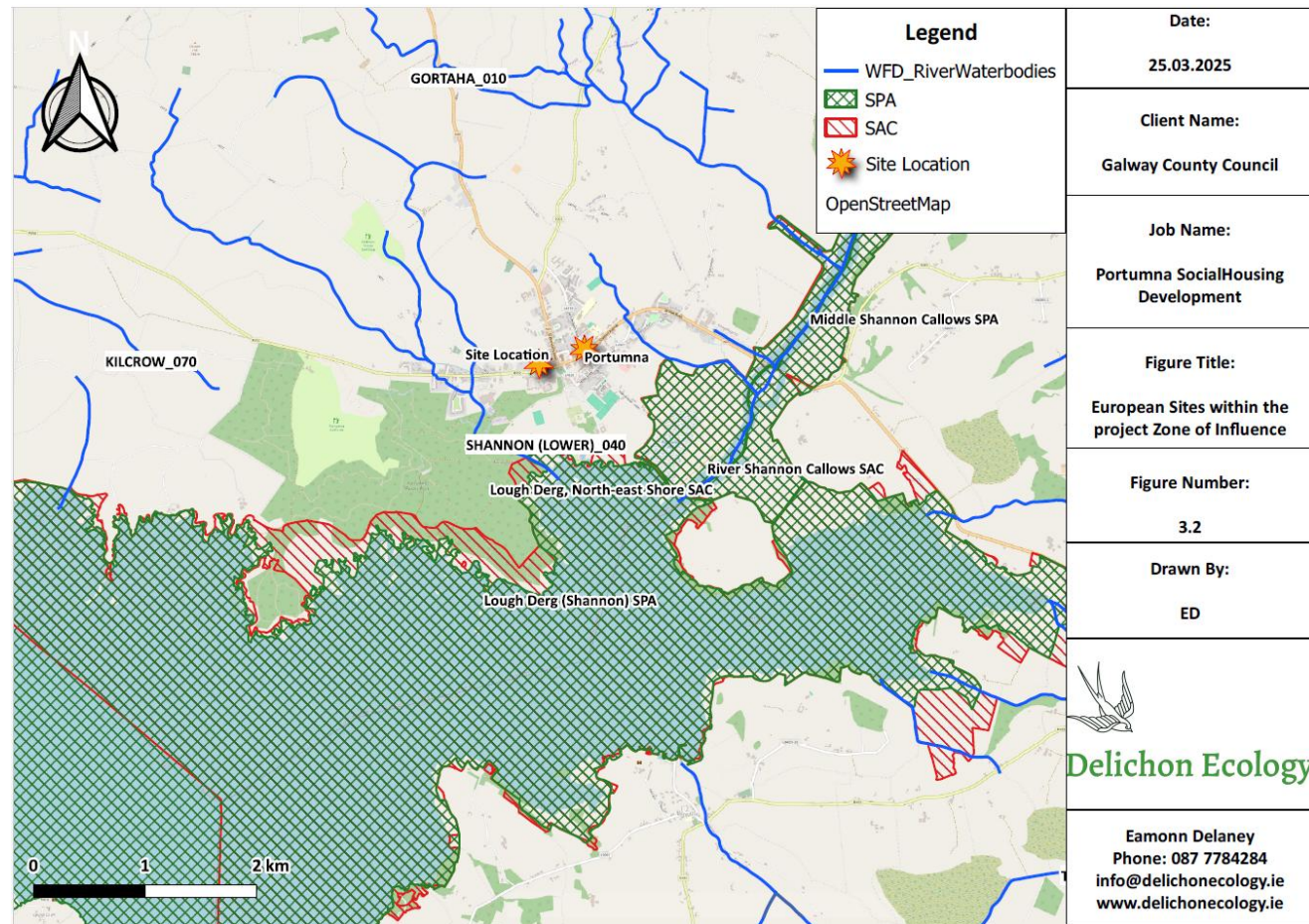


Figure 3-2: European Sites within the zone of influence of the proposed works

## 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 application site consist of the construction of 38 new housing units serviced by open green spaces internal access roads. The scale of the works is not considered significant and is located within the curtilage of Portumna 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 development (see <b>Section 3.6</b> ) 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 health 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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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 accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance including the Waste                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

| Screening Questions                                                                   | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                       | <p>Management Acts (1996, as amended) and Waste Management Permit Regulations.</p> <p>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.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Will the proposed works create a significant amount or type of pollution or nuisance? | <p>During any construction project, there is potential for water, noise, air and traffic pollution. However, the relatively small scale 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.</p> <p>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. Generally, noise levels of 120dB at source have been shown to have the capacity to impact on waterbirds within a range of 300m (Cutts et al., 2013). The proposed works are not located within the footprint of a European Site. The nearest European Site is Lough Derg North-east Shore SAC and Lough Derg SPA, both of which are located 715m south. This separation distance is considered to be sufficient to remove in-situ noise disturbance as a potential vector / pathway to European Sites and their features of Qualifying Interest.</p> <p>The Construction Phase of the proposed housing development could introduce dust, and noise impacts transferable via air and land pathways, as well as increased lighting and anthropogenic activity at the housing development within the site and in proximity to the site particularly during the project's construction phases. As per the guidelines on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction (Holman et al. 2014) , screening criteria required dust impact assessment is generally as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An ecological receptor within 50m of the boundary of the site;</li> <li>- An ecological receptor within 50m of the routes used by construction vehicles on public highway, and 500m of the site entrance.</li> </ul> <p>The most proximal European Sites include Lough Derg SPA and Lough Derg North-east Shore SAC, which are located 715m south via the nearest straight line distance. This separation distance is considered to be adequate to</p> |

| Screening Questions                                                                                             | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                 | <p>screen out a dust deposition from the proposed housing development on the features of Qualifying Interest for these European Sites.</p> <p>A new foul water connection to the public drainage network is required for this development. Correspondence with Uisce Eireann has confirmed that foul water connection proposals are feasible and do not require any infrastructure upgrades. Surface water will be managed via soakaways, with a partial outfall to the Galway County Council surface water network. Lighting proposed for the project will be hooded, targeted and downward facing.</p> |
| Will there be a risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used?                            | <p>The project is of a scale that is not likely to result in a major accident or disaster.</p> <p>The proposed development works is a typical 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.</p> <p>No potential significant impacts are envisaged as a result of the materials or technologies used.</p>                                               |
| Would any combination of the above factors be considered likely to have significant effects on the environment? | <p>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.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## 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 receiving environment due to the localised scale and the nature 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 application site consist of the construction of 38 new housing units serviced by open green spaces internal access roads. The scale of the works is not considered significant and is located within the curtilage of Portumna town and associated residential areas. The land use is currently classified as pastoral land / improved agricultural grassland (GA1) under Fossitt's habitat classification system. The site is zoned under "Residential (Phase 1)" as per the Portumna Local Area Plan 2016-2021. Therefore, the proposed project aligns with zoning classification as outlined in the Portumna Local Area Plan 2016-2021.                                                                                                                                                            |
| The relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area (including soil, land and water) in the area.                         | <p>The project does not involve the significant use of natural resources. The land use comprises pastoral land adjoined by existing residential dwellings on the urban fringe of Portumna town.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| <p>The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:</p> <p>i. wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;</p> | <p>The proposed development works are located on the western margins of Portumna, Co. Galway. The study area is located on pastoral lands fringed by a hedgerow to the north, existing residential dwellings to the west and east and the R352 regional road to the south.</p> <p>There are six European sites within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development; i.e. Lough Derg North-</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

| Screening Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. coastal zones and the marine environment;</li> <li>iii. (mountain and forest areas;</li> <li>iv. nature reserves and parks;</li> <li>v. areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive and;</li> <li>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;</li> <li>vii. densely populated areas;</li> <li>viii. landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.</li> </ul> | <p>east Shore SAC (002241); Lough Derg SPA (004058); Middle Shannon Callows SPA (004096); River Shannon Callows SAC (000216); Lower River Shannon SAC (002137) and River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (004077).</p> <p>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, either individually or in combination with other projects and plans, are not likely to have a significant effect on any European site.</p> <p>The proposed development works has potential to positively impact Portumna Town with the provision of housing requirements for the area and is accordance with the current demand for housing.</p> <p>The site is located in Landscape Character Area characterised as Urban Environs Landscape Type and is classified as having Low Landscape Sensitivity Rating, as per the Landscape Assessment Study of County Galway (Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028) and of Local significance to resident community. 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.</p> <p>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.</p> |

#### 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Population and Human Health</b> | This proposed development works will provide further housing services / resources for the Portumna area and surrounds. Therefore the proposed works will provide positive social and economic impact to the local population and surrounds.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Biodiversity</b>                | <p>There are six European sites within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development; i.e. Lough Derg North-east Shore SAC (002241); Lough Derg SPA (004058); Middle Shannon Callows SPA (004096); River Shannon Callows SAC (000216); Lower River Shannon SAC (002137) and River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (004077).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The proposed development works supports an open expansive improved grassland field with fringing linear woodland and with localised linear dry meadows and grassy verge grassland and bramble scrub. Habitats on site support poor botanical diversity and are of local importance.</p> |
| <b>Land, Soils and Geology</b>     | As per <b>Section 3.5</b> above, the works area is located within the 'Tynagh' GroundWater Body (GWB) (IE_SH_G0236). The groundwater vulnerability within the footprint of the study site is classified Groundwater Vulnerability as '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 LI Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zone. There are no karst features within the proposed development site or its immediate environs. The proposed development will not require deep excavations or                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

| Screening Questions           | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                               | <p>groundworks. Therefore, the transfer between surface and groundwater is not considered to be a functional pathway.</p> <p>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 relatively shallow nature for the excavations required.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Water</b>                  | <p>A review of EPA river routes data (<a href="https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/">https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/</a>) and the findings of the site walkover survey, confirms that the proposed development site does not support permanent or ephemeral watercourses. The nearest waterbody to the proposed development site is Lough Derg located &gt;700m south of the proposed development site. There is no connectivity between the proposed development site and this waterbody. The nearest watercourse is the Shannon (Lower)_040 located &gt;600m west. There is no connectivity between the proposed development site and this watercourses.</p> <p>A new foul water connection to the public drainage network is required for this development. Correspondence with Uisce Eireann has confirmed that foul water connection proposals are feasible and do not require any infrastructure upgrades. Surface water will be managed via soakaways, with a partial outfall to the Galway County Council surface water network. Lighting proposed for the project will be hooded, targeted and downward facing.</p> <p>There will be no negative impacts associated with the proposed works on the natural environment and or habitats listed.</p> |
| <b>Air, Climate and Noise</b> | <p>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.</p> <p>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 associated with this is immaterial due to the short-term scale of the works. Similarly, increased traffic movements during</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

| Screening Questions         | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                             | <p>the operational phase are not expected to have a significant adverse impact.</p> <p>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.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Landscape and Visual</b> | <p>The site is located in Landscape Character Area characterised as Urban Environs Landscape Type and is classified as having Low Landscape Sensitivity Rating, as per the Landscape Assessment Study of County Galway (Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028) and of Local significance to resident community. The works are taking place in an existing urban and peri-urban setting and is adjoined by existing residential dwellings and a regional road. Given the nature of the proposed development and its setting within the existing environment, it is not anticipated for impacts to occur to the visual landscape.</p>                                                                                 |
| <b>Cultural Heritage</b>    | <p>The Galway County Development Plan has assigned areas of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) to towns and villages, including Portumna.</p> <p>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 site is located outside the Portumna ACA.</p> <p>There are no sites of archaeological or archaeological significance within, adjoining or in close proximity of the site.</p> |
| <b>Material Assets</b>      | <p>There is potential for temporary minor impacts related to traffic inconvenience in the area (particularly the adjoining regional road R352) during the construction works. However, such works are very localised to the project environs and will be short term and temporary.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

**Table 4-4: Characteristic of Potential Impacts**

| Screening Questions                                                                             | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population).               | <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| Outline the nature of the impact.                                                               | The proposed development works is expected to have a minor, 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.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 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 an open improved grassland field on free draining soils and the absence of receiving watercourses in the immediate environment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.                        | <p>The proposed development works will result in minor construction phase impacts that will be temporary in nature. The proposed development will result in the construction of 38 no. of housing units in which have an estimated life-span of 50 years plus.</p> <p>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.</p>                   |
| Outline the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects | See <b>Section 3.6</b> for the assessment of cumulative impacts with other plans and projects.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |



| Screening Questions                                         | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Outline the possibility of effectively reducing the impact. | <p>The design of the project has been optimised to ensure that environmental impacts are minimised as much as possible.</p> <p>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.</p> |



## **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**





**L E G E N D**

- Home zones surface beige/buff colored tarmacadam/asphalt
- Concrete Paths/Surface
- Road tarmac
- Parking tarmac - beige/buff colored
- Public Open Space
- Private Open Space
- Primary Entrances
- Proposed Trees
- Existing Trees
- 00.00 Proposed Floor Level

| SCHEDULE OF ACCOMODATION |                                  | sq. m proposed |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| B01-05                   | Terraced house 2B3P1S            | 6              |
| B06                      | End of terrace house 3B5P1S      | 1              |
| H01 - 02                 | End of Terrace house 3B5P2S      | 6              |
| H03                      | Terraced house 2B4P2S            | 4              |
| H04                      | Terraced house 3B5P2S            | 19             |
| H07                      | End of terrace house 4B7P2S      | 1              |
| H06                      | End of Terrace house 4B7P2S UDGF | 1              |
| Total                    |                                  | 38             |

**SITE AREA:**  
Gross site area: 15,275.00 m², 1.53 Hectare  
24.8 dpHe

| PUBLIC OPEN SPACE ANALYSIS |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Gross site area:           | 15,275.00 m²         |
| Requirement 15%:           | 2,291.00 m²          |
| Provided:                  |                      |
| Public OS 1                | 1330.00 m² / 8.70%   |
| Public OS 2                | 264.00 m² / 1.70%    |
| Public OS 3                | 97.00 m² / 0.60%     |
| Public OS 4                | 482.00 m² / 3.15%    |
| Public OS 5                | 223.00 m² / 1.45%    |
| TOTAL                      | 2,396.00 m² / 15.70% |

| CAR-PARKING ANALYSIS                  |                         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Dwellings / Apartments (1-3 bedrooms) | 1.5 space per dwelling* |
| Dwellings / Apartments (4+ bedrooms)  | 2 spaces per unit*      |
| Required 60 Spaces*                   |                         |
| Provided 64 Spaces                    |                         |

**DENSITIES:**

Required:

10 - 12 Units per Hectare\*

According to the brief the number of units required are 41

Provided: 38 Units in 1.53 hectares  
24.8 dpHe

\*According to Chapter 15 - Development Management of Galway CDP  
Small Growth Towns - Edge of Centre/Greenfield

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**PROJECT:**  
GCC Social Housing D + B Portumna

**CLIENT:**  
Galway County Council

**DRAWING:**  
Proposed Site Plan

**DRAWING PURPOSE:**  
Stage 1

**DRAWING SIZE:**  
A1

**DRAWN BY:**  
G.P.

**SCALE:**  
1:500

**APPROVED:**

**DATE:**  
02/05/2025

**DRAWING REFERENCE:**  
2390-SHP-SJK-DR-205

**REV. NO.:**  
P04

**Simon J Kelly Architects**  
**21 Middle Street, Galway**  
**+353 91 56 2949**  
**Cox's Yard, Mayo**  
**+353 98 24 414**  
**mail@sjk.ie**  
**www.sjk.ie**

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