OCSC

O'CONNOR · SUTTON · CRONIN

MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONSULTING ENGINEERS

G467: N83 BRIDGE STREET DUNMORE

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

For

Galway County Council

27 June 2025

NOTICE

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DOCUMENT CONTROL & HISTORY

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

This Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) Report has been prepared by O'Connor Sutton Cronin & Associates Ltd. (OCSC) at the request of their Client, Galway County Council as part of a part 8 planning application. This project aims to promote village revitalisation and improve quality and reliability of traffic with facilities for pedestrians. The proposed project involves the demolition of several existing buildings east of Bridge Street to allow for the widening of the road. This route is designed to facilitate an upgrade of the junction of the N83 and the R360 at Sion Hill – Gater Street. The new junction will facilitate improved pedestrian facilities, improved visibility and better junction legibility. The regulatory authority for the site is Galway County Council. The site location is shown in Figure 1.1.

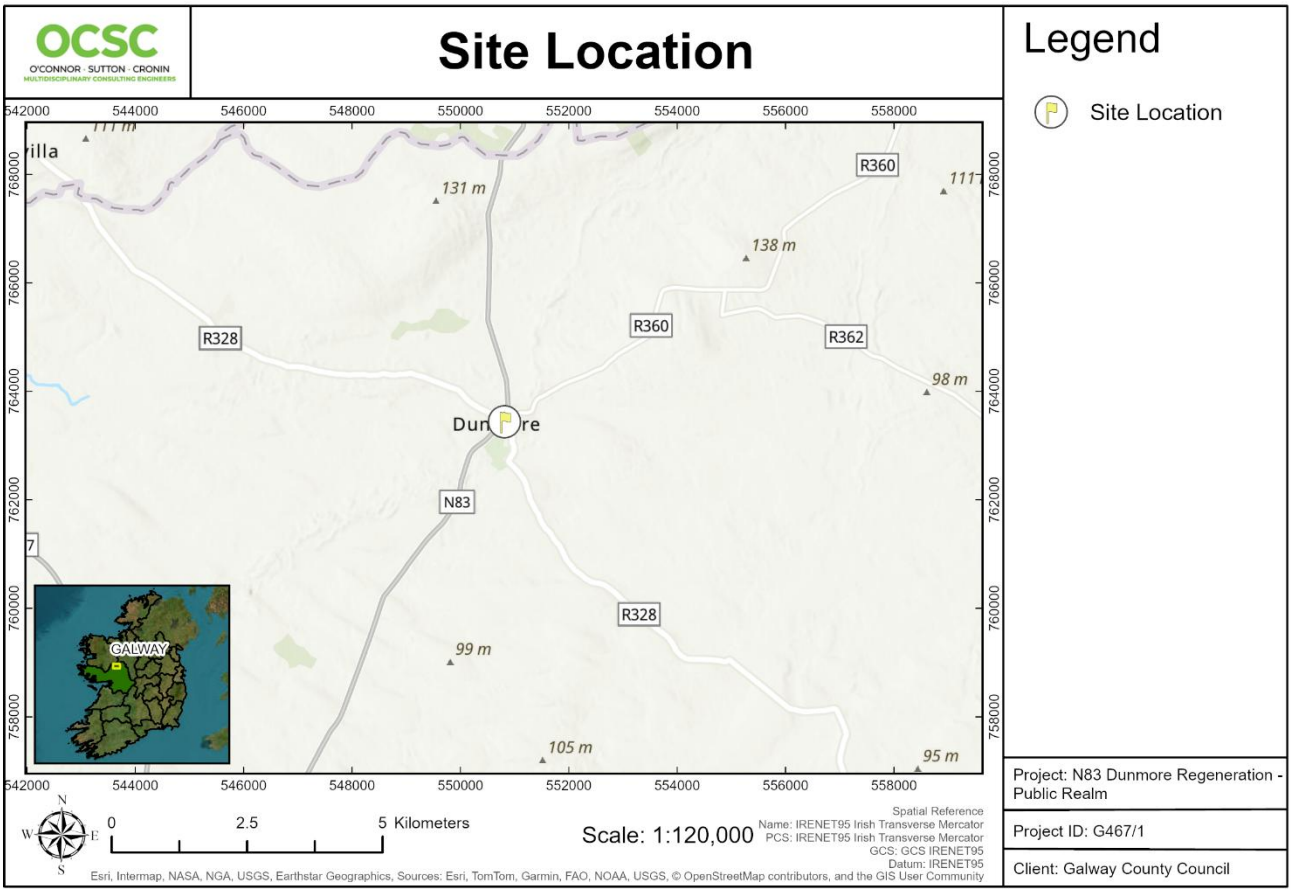

Figure 1.1: Site location (Source : OCSC, 2025)

1.2 AIMS AND APPROACH

The overall purpose of this report is to assess the status of known potential ecological constraints to the construction and/or operation of the completed and proposed works and to identify mitigation requirements to ensure compliance with relevant national and European statutory requirements for ecological protection.

The report provides an assessment of the estimated potential impacts of the completed and proposed development on the ecological environment, i.e., flora and fauna, collectively known as biodiversity. The Assessment follows Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2024) and guidelines for ecological report writing (CIEEM, 2017). This EcIA process follows the tasks set out in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: EcIA process, as detailed in CIEEM (2016)

Task	Description
Scoping	Determining the matters to be addressed in the EcIA, including consultation to ensure the most effective input to defining the scope. Scoping is an ongoing process – the scope of the EcIA may be modified following further ecological survey/research and during impact assessment.
Establishing the baseline	Collecting information and describing the ecological conditions, in the absence of the proposed project, to inform the assessment of impacts.
Important ecological features	Identifying important ecological features (habitats and species) that may be affected, with reference to a geographical context in which they are considered important.
Impact assessment	An assessment of whether important ecological features may be subject to potential impacts and characterisation of these impacts and their effects. Assessment of potential residual ecological impacts of the project remaining after mitigation and the significance of their effects, including cumulative effects.
Avoidance, mitigation, compensation, and enhancement	Incorporating measures to avoid, reduce, and/or compensate for potential ecological impacts and the provision of ecological enhancements.
Monitoring	Monitoring impacts of the development and evaluation of the success of proposed mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures.

1.3 LIMITATIONS

This Ecological Impact Assessment Report has been prepared for the sole use of Galway County Council ("the Client"). No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report or any other services provided by OCSC.

This assessment is based on a review of available historical information, environmental records, site visits, consultations, relevant guidance information, and reports from third parties. All information received has been taken in good faith as being true and representative.

This report has been prepared in line with best industry standards. The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by OCSC in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The assessment undertaken

and described by OCSC was completed in April 2025 and is based on the information available during that period. The scope of this Report and the services are accordingly factually limited by these circumstances.

OCSC disclaim any undertaking or obligation to advise any person of any change in any matter affecting the Report which may come or be brought to OCSC's attention after the date of the Report. The conclusions presented in this report represent OCSC's best professional judgement based on a review of the relevant information available at the time of writing. The opinions and conclusions presented are valid only to the extent that the information provided was accurate and complete.

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 OVERVIEW

This EcIA Report has been prepared by OCSC at the request of their Client, Galway County Council. The study area for the proposed N83 Dunmore Regeneration – Public Realm. The N83 is a strategic National link in Galway which is a locally and regionally important route as it provides connectivity between regional centres. N83 Bridge Street in Dunmore is presently between 3.4 and 4.5 metres wide at Bridge Street, Dunmore. There is a necking effect which leads to an informal STOP/GO arrangement and occasional mounting of the footpath by vehicles. The constraints on this section of N83 has identified the need for the road to be improved for continuation of two-way traffic including Heavy Goods Vehicles. This upgrading is fundamental to facilitate the through traffic and maintaining the vibrancy of Dunmore.

As part of the project, five different options have been proposed, with Option 2 chosen as the final design. The works for Option 2 includes:

This is a short option with no additional length or additional material needed to facilitate the works in comparison to existing route. The works would include the demolition of the existing buildings, however construction of a new bridge over the Sinking River will not be required. This route is designed to facilitate an upgrade of the junction of the N83 and the R360 at Sion Hill – Gater Street. The new junction will facilitate improved pedestrian facilities, improved visibility and better junction legibility.

The brief works involved:

- Acquisition and Demolition of 5 no. derelict/vacant properties in the centre of Dunmore town on Bridge Street
- Relocation of one set of tenants from one property to another via the Galway County Council Housing Department, then acquisition and demolition of this 1 no. property also
- Setting back of boundaries to widen Bridge Street
- Widening of the Street via widening of the road carriageway, construction of wide footpaths, addition of public lighting – improvement of the public realm aspect of the street, new street furniture and planting
- The installation of broadband infrastructure along Bridge Street

The aims of this project:

- To remove all properties immediately abutting the N83 along Bridge Street, south of the Bridge, thereby removing an extensive length of dereliction in the town centre
- The widening of the N83/R328 junction to accommodate turning HGVs, thereby eliminating the need to 'do a loop of the town centre'.
- The creation of wide footpaths to accommodate pedestrian traffic.

- To aesthetically improve the street and therefore part of the town centre and public realm
- The introduction of new public lighting to improve mobility along the street for all users.
- To improve the potential of the western side of the street for new business
- To increase the attractiveness for commercial suppliers to roll out broadband on this street.
    - Potential Increase in the rates of engagement of e-comers.
    - Members of the Public would be able to avail of internet connectivity.
    - Dunmore has the benefits of a number of tourist attraction and public amenities; free Public Wi-Fi would complement these amenities.
    - Local Authority would have access to a Wi-Fi network if they wished to roll out smart street future (e.g. Smart Bins, Smart parking Meters, IP Camera network).

2.2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The proposed development site is approximately centred at the Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM) coordinates 150871 E 263439 N and is located within Dunmore, County Galway.

The site is located on Bridge Street, in the centre of Dunmore; a small town located within the Tuam Municipal District of Co. Galway. Dunmore has a population of approximately 1,500 people. Bridge Street forms part of the N83 route, and the N83 is a regionally and nationally strategic route from Galway, through Tuam, towards Knock International Airport (terminating in Ballyhaunis in Mayo). Dunmore is located on the N83, and there is a junction between the N83 and the Regional Road R328 in the centre of the town. The study area is shown in Figure 2.1.

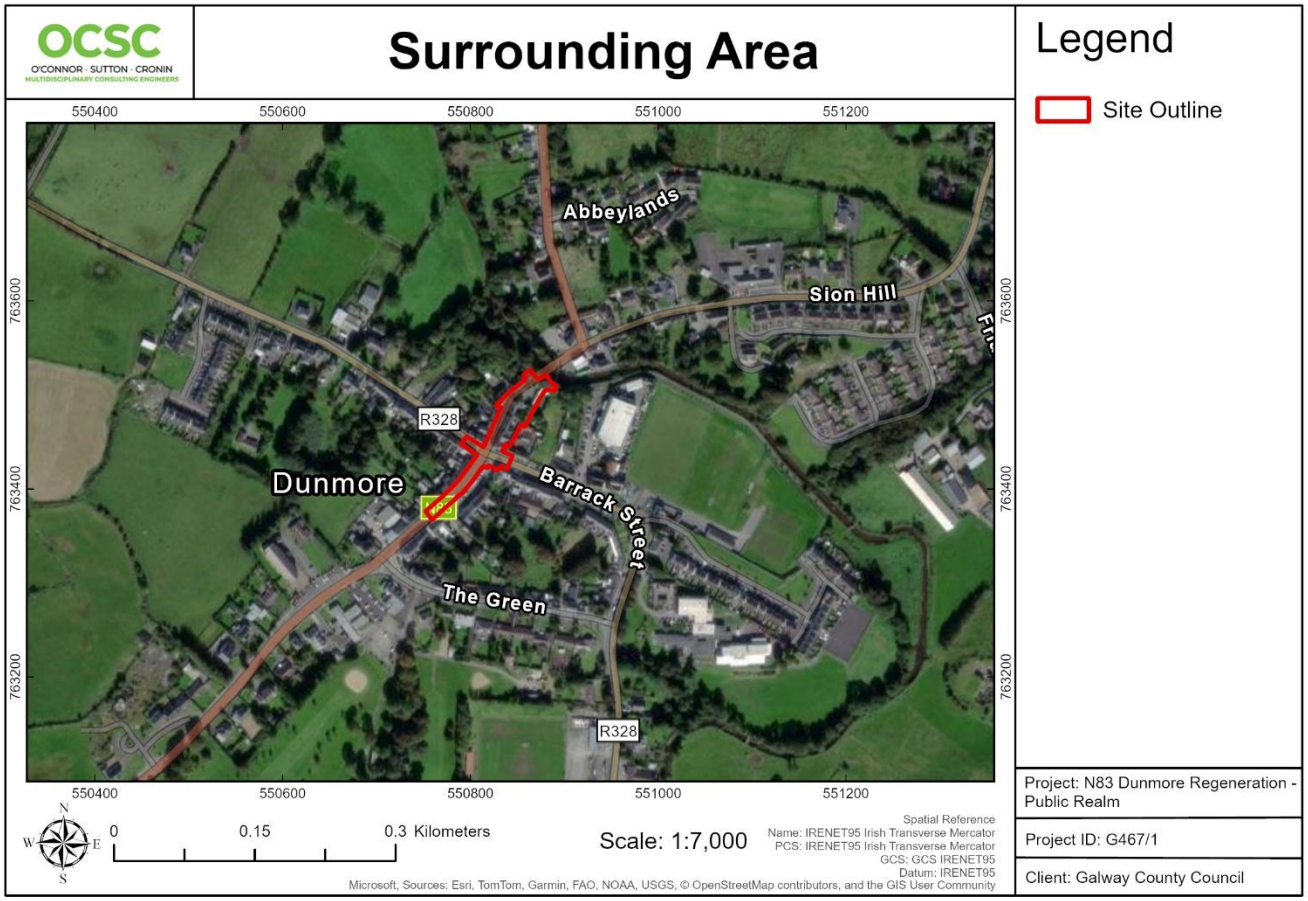

Figure 2.1: Study Area (Source: OCSC, 2025).

2.3 HYDROLOGY

The nearest surface waterbody is the River Sinking (Sinking_020) IE_WE_30S010300)), located directly 12m north of the site. The Sinking River flows in a westerly direction before merging into the Clare (Galway) River (IE_WE_30C010300) before discharging into Lower Lough Corrib. Lough Ree subsequently feeds the Corrib River which ultimately discharges into the Atlantic Ocean at Galway Harbour

Based on the most recent water quality information (2016-2021), the River Sinking has an overall Water Framework Directive (WFD) status of 'Good' as shown in Figure 2.2.

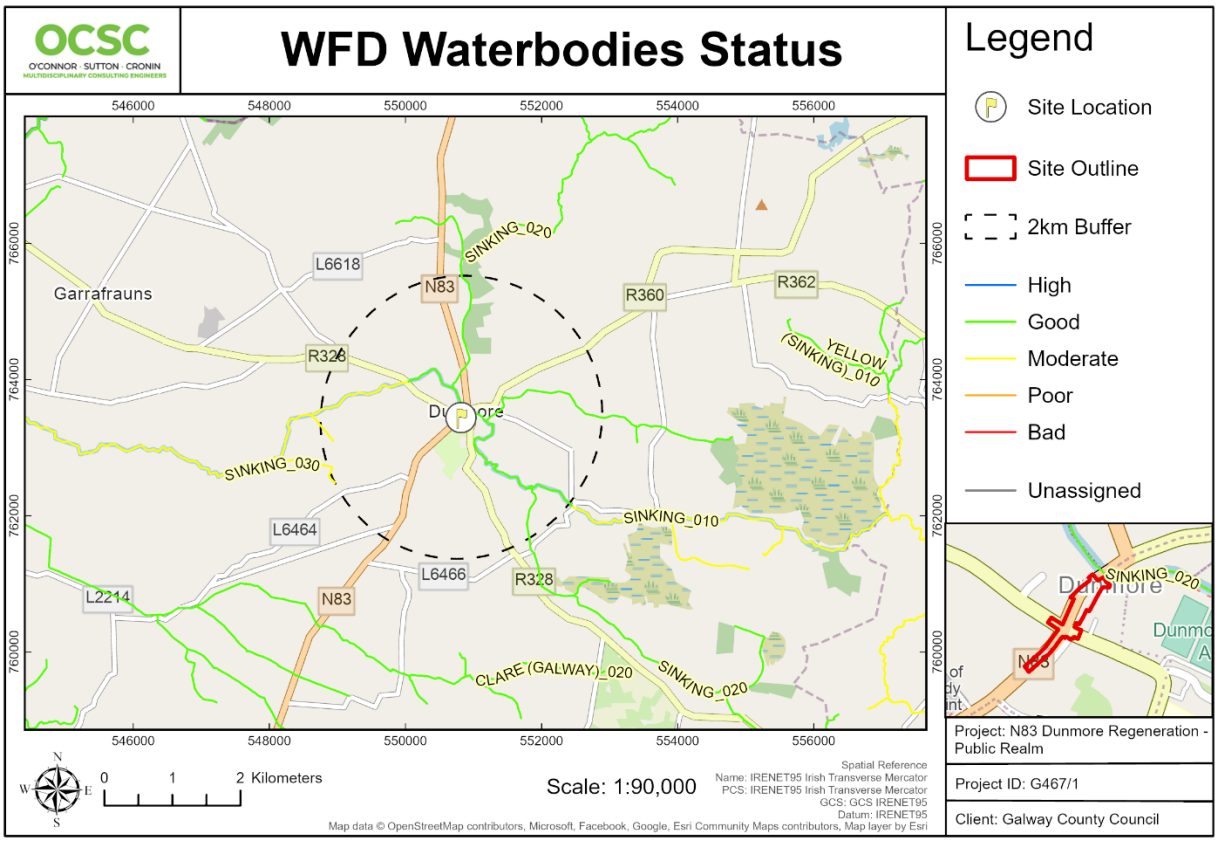

Figure 2.2: WFD River Status (Source: OCSC, 2025)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) spatial dataset indicates that the River Sinking is 'not at risk' of failing to meet its WFD objectives by 2027 (EPA, 2025) as shown in Figure 2.3. WFD information for this waterbody is summarised in Table 2.1.

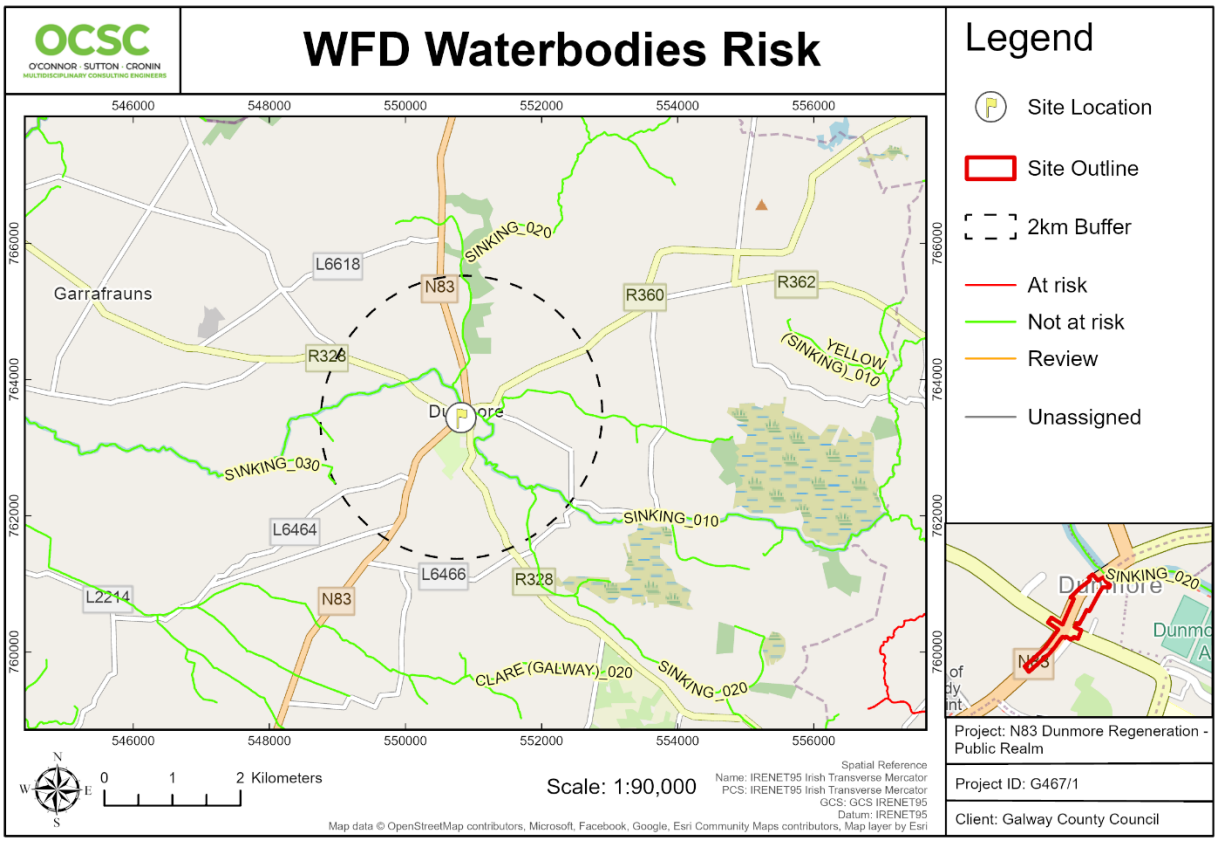

Figure 2.3: WFD River Risk (Source, OCSC, 2025)

Table 2.1: WFD summary information

WFD Summary Information	
Name	Sinking
Waterbody Code	IE_WE_30S010300
Waterbody Name	River
Waterbody Type	2016-2021
Status	Good
Risk	Not at Risk

2.4 DESIGNATED SITES

Figures 2.4 and 2.5, and Table 2.2 below present locations and details, respectively, of the key ecological features of designated sites located within 15km of the site.

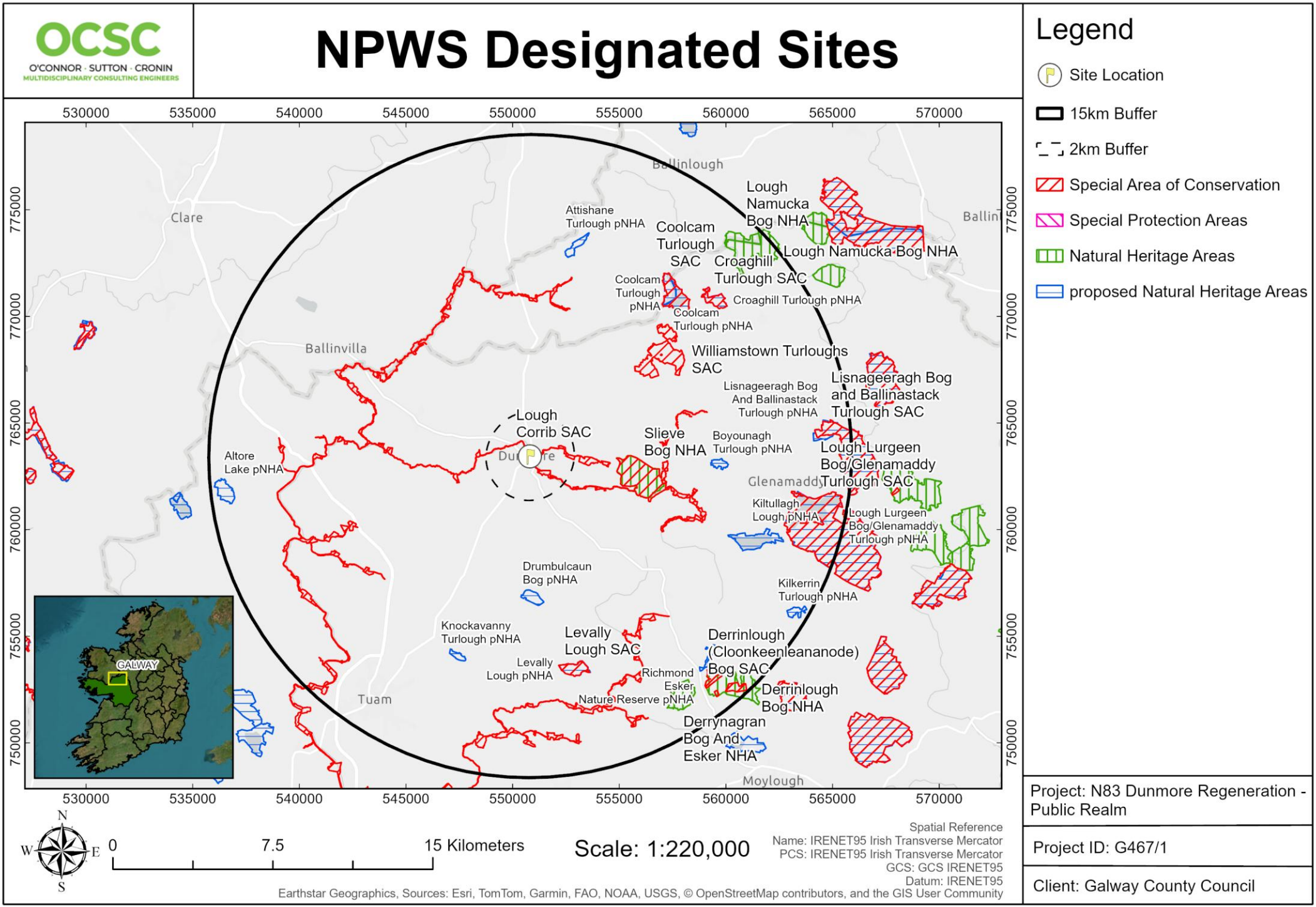

Figure 2.4: Designated sites within 15km of the development (Source: OCSC, 2025)

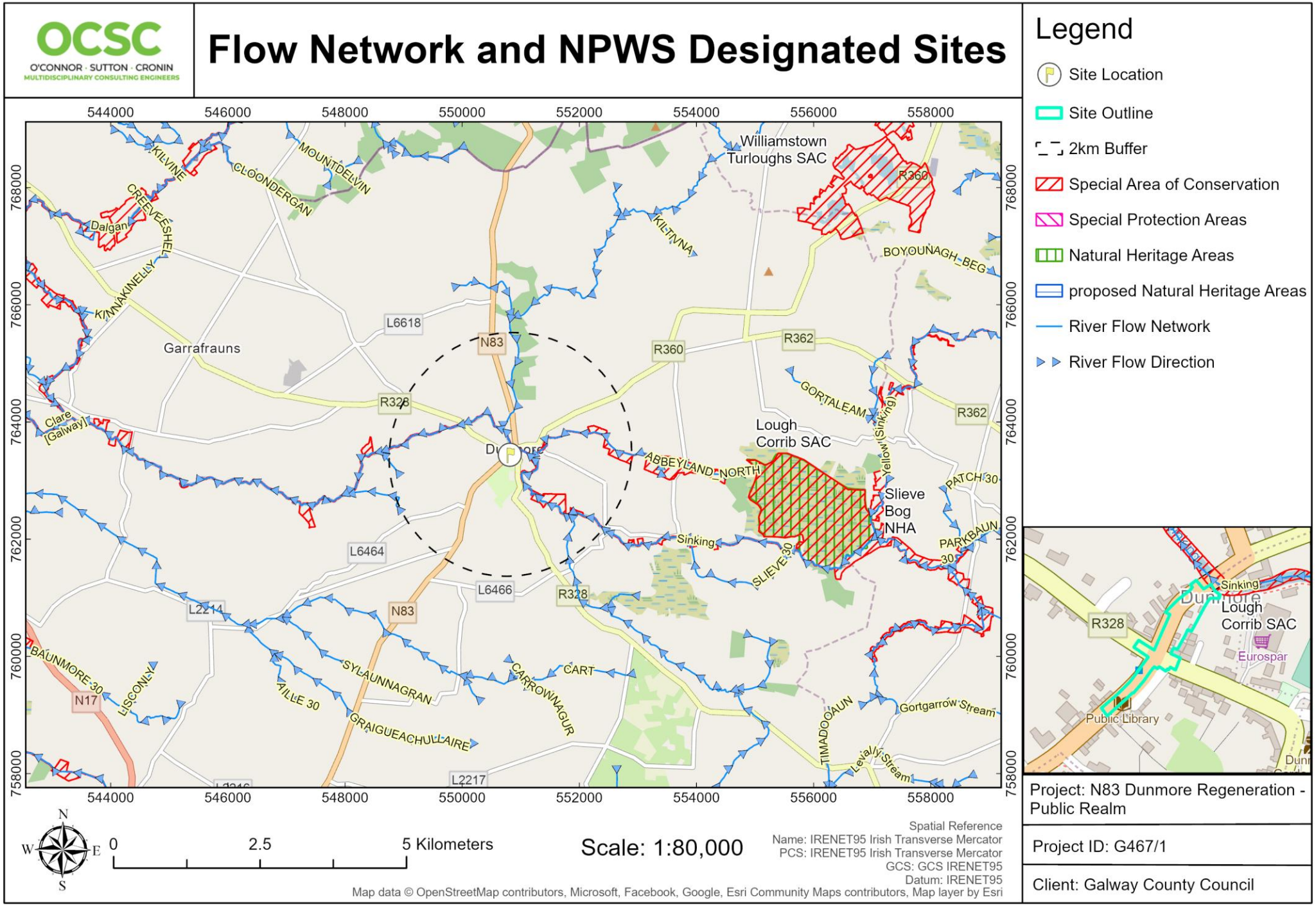

Figure 2.5: Flow Network and NPWS Designated Sites, (Source: OCSC, 2025)

Table 2.2: European Sites within 15 kilometres (ZOI) of the site

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Reasons for Designation (*=priority habitats)
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)			
000297	Lough Corrib SAC	Immediately adjacent	[3110] Oligotrophic Waters containing very few minerals [3130] Oligotrophic to Mesotrophic Standing Waters [3140] Hard Water Lakes [3260] Floating River Vegetation [6210] Orchid-rich Calcareous Grassland* [6410] Molinia Meadows [7110] Raised Bog (Active)* [7120] Degraded Raised Bog [7150] Rhynchosporion Vegetation [7210] Cladium Fens* [7220] Petrifying Springs* [7230] Alkaline Fens [8240] Limestone Pavement* [91A0] Old Oak Woodlands [91D0] Bog Woodland* [1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (Margaritifera margaritifera) [1092] White-clawed Crayfish (Austropotamobius pallipes) [1095] Sea Lamprey (Petromyzon marinus) [1096] Brook Lamprey (Lampetra planeri) [1106] Atlantic Salmon (Salmo salar) [1303] Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) [1355] Otter (Lutra lutra) [1833] Slender Naiad (Najas flexilis) [6216] Slender Green Feather-moss (Hamatocaulis vernicosus)
002296	Williamstown Turloughs SAC	6.23 NE	[3180] Turloughs*
000218	Coolcam Turlough SAC	9.3 NE	[3180] Turloughs*
000295	Levally Lough SAC	9.82 S	[3180] Turloughs*
000255	Croaghill Turlough SAC	10.86 S	[3180] Turloughs*
000301	Lough Lurgeen Bog/Glenamaddy Turlough SAC	12.29 E	[3180] Turloughs* [3270] Chenopodion rubri p.p. and Bidention p.p. vegetation [7110] Raised Bog (Active)* [7120] Degraded Raised Bog [7150] Rhynchosporion Vegetation
002197	Derrinlough (Cloonkeenleananode) Bog SAC	12.98 SE	[7120] Degraded Raised Bog
000296	Lisnageeragh Bog and Ballinastack Turlough SAC	13.32 E	[3180] Turloughs* [7110] Raised Bog (Active)* [7120] Degraded Raised Bog [7150] Rhynchosporion Vegetation
Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA)			
Site Code	**Site Name**		**Distance** (km)
000247	Slieve Bog NHA		3.87 E
000263	Drumbulcaun Bog pNHA		6.19 S

001237	Boyounagh Turlough pNHA	8.41 E
000218	Coolcam Turlough pNHA	9.30 NE
001618	Attishane Turlough pNHA	9.40 N
000289	Knockavanny Turlough pNHA	9.68 SSW
000295	Levally Lough pNHA	9.82 S
001282	Kiltullagh Lough pNHA	9.94 SE
000255	Croaghill Turlough pNHA	10.84 NE
000323	Richmond Esker Nature Reserve pNHA	12.15 SE
000301	Lough Lurgeen Bog/Glenamaddy Turlough pNHA	12.29 E
001255	Derrynagran Bog And Esker NHA	12.65 SE
000220	Lough Namucka Bog NHA	12.91 NE
001254	Derrinlough Bog NHA	12.98 E
000220	Lisnageeragh Bog And Ballinastack Turlough pNHA	13.23 E
000224	Altore Lake pNHA	13.90 W
001279	Kilkerrin Turlough pNHA	14.02 SE

3 METHODOLOGY

The methods used to carry out the survey of the site, to evaluate the habitats and species, and to prepare the report are outlined in this section. The assessment method for this report was developed using the standard professional impact assessment guidance published in 2024 by CIEEM.

3.1 SCOPE OF THE REPORT

The scope of this report is to set out the baseline ecology of the site using the findings of the desk and field studies. The extent of the study area is delineated by the site boundary. The scope of the baseline ecology survey is to classify the habitats present within the site and to evaluate their suitability to support protected species.

3.2 ZONE OF INFLUENCE

Due to the potential impact to runoff resulting from the proposed works, which may cause downstream impacts and alterations in stream flow dynamics, we have taken a precautionary approach by defining the Zone of Influence (ZoI) for this project to a 15km radius. The site location and the potential zone of influence are shown in Figure 3.1.

3.3 DESK STUDY

A desk study was carried out to collate the available existing ecological information on the Site and included information available on the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) websites. A literature review was also conducted of published information on flora and fauna occurring within the ZoI of likely significant ecological impacts. The site and the surrounding area were viewed using available satellite imagery. Key resources included:

- Information on nationally designated sites available in site synopses available from the NPWS online (www.npws.ie).
- Data on rare/protected/threatened species and designated sites held online by the NPWS (www.npws.ie) and the NBDC (www.biodiversityireland.ie).
- The Galway County Council website was accessed for information on relevant planning policy while the planning portal was accessed for information on other planning applications within the site and the immediate surrounding area.

The conservation status of mammals within Ireland and Europe was evaluated using one or more of the following documents:

- Wildlife Acts (1976 - 2012),
- The Red List of Terrestrial Mammals (Marnell et al., 2019), and

- The EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

3.4 FIELD SURVEYS

A site walkover was undertaken by OCSC Consultant Ecologist Rebecca Duane. BSc, and Consultant Ecologist Eoin Toomey, BSc. Wind speed was estimated as light breeze (Beaufort Wind Scale), temperature was 14°C, with good visibility and cloud cover of 3/8 oktas. The objective of the site visit was to undertake a walkover survey to better understand the ecology of the site and to determine its ecological value.

3.5 HABITATS

Habitats were identified, described, and classified during the walkover survey to level 3 (where possible) in accordance with 'A Guide to Habitats in Ireland' (Fossitt, 2000) produced by the Heritage Council (see Figure 5.1). Features of ecological interest, if present, were noted, and the dominant plant species present in each habitat type were recorded. This is not a comprehensive list of plant species but is sufficient to broadly describe the botanical interest of the site. Species nomenclature follows Parnell & Curtis (2012) for scientific and English names of vascular plants.

3.6 SPECIES

Mammal tracks, signs, or direct observations were recorded during the walkover survey of the site. Incidental sightings of birds, mammals, or amphibians were noted during the walkover survey. The habitats present were also evaluated in terms of suitability to support foraging bats. Trees with features such as areas of loose, flaking bark, splits, cavities, etc. that could provide suitable roost sites for bats, where present, were also noted during the ground-level survey. The suitability of the habitats for roosting, commuting, and foraging bats was evaluated using the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (Collins 2016).

3.7 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The ecological evaluation and impact assessment within this report has been undertaken following the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom and Ireland ("CIEEM guidelines").

3.8 IMPORTANCE OF FEATURES TO BE CONSIDERED

Ecological features should be evaluated within a defined geographical context (CIEEM, 2016). These are based upon criteria identified in the CIEEM (2016) and NRA (2009a) guidance, which categorise the geographic context of ecological importance as within one of the following:

- International and European
- National

- Regional
- County or local authority
- Local Importance (High or Low Value).

Only features deemed "important ecological features" (the term used in CIEEM, 2016) are carried forward into the assessment of potential impacts.

Ecological features valued at Local Importance (Low Value) or of negligible value, as per the valuation criteria in Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (Collins 2016), are not considered significant features and are scoped out of impact assessment. It is not necessary to carry out a detailed assessment of features that are sufficiently widespread, unthreatened, and resilient to project impacts and will remain viable and sustainable (CIEEM, 2016). In some cases, the data collected as part of the scoping process will be sufficient to inform the assessment of effects on a given feature. In other cases, additional surveys will need to be undertaken. Ecological features which are within the ZoI of development but not considered important ecological features can be 'scoped out' (excluded), with justification.

The impact assessment process involves the following steps:

- Identifying and characterising impacts
- Incorporating measures to avoid and mitigate (reduce) these impacts
- Assessing the significance of any residual effects after mitigation
- Identifying appropriate compensation measures to offset significant residual effects (if required)
- Identifying opportunities for ecological enhancement

When describing impacts, reference has been made to the following characteristics, as appropriate:

- Positive or negative
- Extent
- Magnitude
- Duration
- Timing
- Frequency
- Reversibility

The impact assessment process considers both direct and indirect impacts. Direct ecological impacts are changes that are directly attributable to a defined action, e.g., the physical loss of habitat occupied by a species during the construction process. Indirect ecological impacts are attributable to an action but affect ecological resources through effects on an intermediary ecosystem, process, or feature, e.g., the creation of roads which cause hydrological changes, which, in the absence of mitigation, could lead to the drying out of wet grassland.

3.9 SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

A significant effect, for the purposes of EcIA, is defined as an effect that either supports or undermines biodiversity conservation objectives for 'important ecological features' or for biodiversity in general. Conservation objectives may be specific (e.g., for a designated site), broad (e.g., national/local nature conservation policy), or more wide-ranging (enhancement of biodiversity). Effects can be considered significant at a wide range of scales from international to local.

The nature of the identified impacts on each assessed feature is characterised. Where it is concluded that an effect would be likely to reduce the importance of an assessed feature, it is described as significant. The degree of significance of the effect takes into account the geographic context of the feature's importance and the degree to which its interest is judged to be affected.

3.10 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Cumulative effects can result from individually insignificant but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time or concentrated in a location. Cumulative effects can occur where a proposed development results in individually insignificant impacts that, when considered in-combination with impacts of other proposed or permitted plans and projects, can result in significant effects.

3.11 MITIGATION

Where significant impacts have been identified, the mitigation hierarchy has been taken into account, as suggested in the 2018 CIEEM Guidelines which set out a sequential approach of avoidance of impacts where possible, application of mitigation measures to minimise unavoidable impacts, and then compensation for any remaining impacts. Once avoidance and mitigation measures have been applied, along with any necessary compensation measures, and opportunities for enhancement incorporated, residual impacts have then been identified.

4 RELEVANT PLANNING AND POLICY AND LEGISLATION

An EcIA is a process of identifying, quantifying, and evaluating potential effects of development or other actions on habitats, species, and ecosystems (CIEEM, 2016). When an EcIA is undertaken as part of an EIA process, it is subject to the EIA Regulations (under the EU Planning and Development [Environmental Impact Assessment] Regulations 2001-2018).

An EcIA is not a statutory requirement; however, it is a best-practice evaluation process. This EcIA has been undertaken to support and assess the proposed works as well as to assess the potential impact that the proposed works may have on the ecology of the site and its environs. Where a potential risk to the environment is identified, measures are proposed on the basis that, by deploying such measures, the risk is eliminated or reduced to an insignificant level.

4.1 PLANNING POLICY, GUIDELINE AND LEGISLATION

4.1.1 EUROPEAN UNION HABITATS DIRECTIVE

The "Habitats Directive" (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna) is the main legislative instrument for the protection and conservation of biodiversity within the European Union (EU). The Habitats Directive lists habitats and species that must be protected within Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) in Annexes I and II, respectively, identifies plant and animal species in Annex IV which are subject to strict protection anywhere they occur, and sets out the protocol for the protection and management of SACs.

The closest SAC to the site is the Lough Corrib SAC which is located within the site boundary. Due to the distance of these SACs from the site and the direct hydrological link to the site, SACs cannot be scoped out and require further consideration in this EcIA Report.

4.1.2 EUROPEAN UNION BIRDS DIRECTIVE

The "Birds Directive" (Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) provides a network of sites in all member states to protect birds at their breeding, feeding, or roosting areas. The Birds Directive identifies in Annex I species that are rare, in danger of extinction, or vulnerable to changes in habitat and which require special protection (so-called 'Annex I' species). Special Protection Areas (SPA) are designated under the Birds Directive to protect a range of bird populations including those of Annex I species.

There are no SPAs within the 15km zone of influence around the site. Therefore, SPAs can be scoped out and do not require further consideration in this EcIA Report.

4.1.3 NATIONAL LEGISLATION

The primary domestic statutes in the Republic of Ireland providing for wildlife protection are the Wildlife Acts of 1976 and 2000, as amended (hereafter 'The Wildlife Acts'). All bird species are protected under the Wildlife Acts from offences including intentional killing or injury and disturbance during the breeding season (to include eggs, young, and nests which are also protected). A range of mammal species, two amphibian species, one butterfly species, and one reptile species are all similarly protected from intentional killing or injury, whilst the breeding or resting sites of these species are also protected.

Unless specified otherwise, the term "invasive species" in this report refers to species scheduled to the European Communities (Bird and Natural Habitat) Regulations 2011 and 2015 (hereafter 'the effects Regulations'). The Regulations make it an offence to plant, disperse, allow or cause to disperse, spread, or otherwise cause to grow any of the scheduled species. A number of vascular (i.e., flowering plants) and non-vascular plant species (i.e., non-flowering or 'lower plants') are afforded legal protection under the Flora (Protection) Order, 2022 (hereafter 'The Flora Protection Order'). It is an offence to cut, pick, collect, uproot, or otherwise take, injure, damage, or destroy any specimens of the species listed under the Flora Protection Order.

The fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) (2023-2027) was launched in 2023 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature. Key considerations in the development of the draft NBAP are set out below:

- Build on the successes of previous NBAPs while addressing shortfalls and implementation challenges
- Expand the governance and oversight of the NBAP and develop a robust Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to track progress
- Achieve buy-in and ownership of the NBAP across all levels of government and society
- Embed biodiversity at the heart of climate action
- Achieve greater coherence between biodiversity policy and other policy areas
- Strengthen compliance and enforcement of existing legislation
- Increase focus on addressing the root causes and drivers of biodiversity loss rather than the consequences of biodiversity loss
- Determine biodiversity priorities, allocate financial and other resources, internalise the value of nature, and recognise the cost of inaction
- Significantly strengthen the science base and enhance data accessibility

The following policies designated at the county scale were also consulted:

- Galway County Local Economic and Community Plan 2024 - 2030

- Biodiversity Action Plan Revision 2025 to 2030. Galway County Council

There are 4 Natural heritage Areas and 13 proposed Natural Heritage Area within 15km of the proposed route. The Slieve Bog NHA (000247) is the nearest located 3.87km east of the site at its closest point. As such pNHAs can be scoped out of this assessment and must be included in further considerations.

5 SURVEY RESULTS (HABITAT, FLORA, FAUNA)

The habitats present within the site are described, classified, and evaluated in this section of the report and shown on Figures 5.1 to 5.4 include more detailed habitat maps for sections of the site. The site consists primarily of a mix of BL3 (Buildings and Artificial Surfaces), BL1 (Stone walls and other stonework), and FW2 (Depositing/lowland rivers), with small areas of WS1 (Scrub), ED3 (recolonising bare ground), GS2 (Dry meadows and grassy verges, and WL2 (Treelines).

5.1 HABITAT MAP

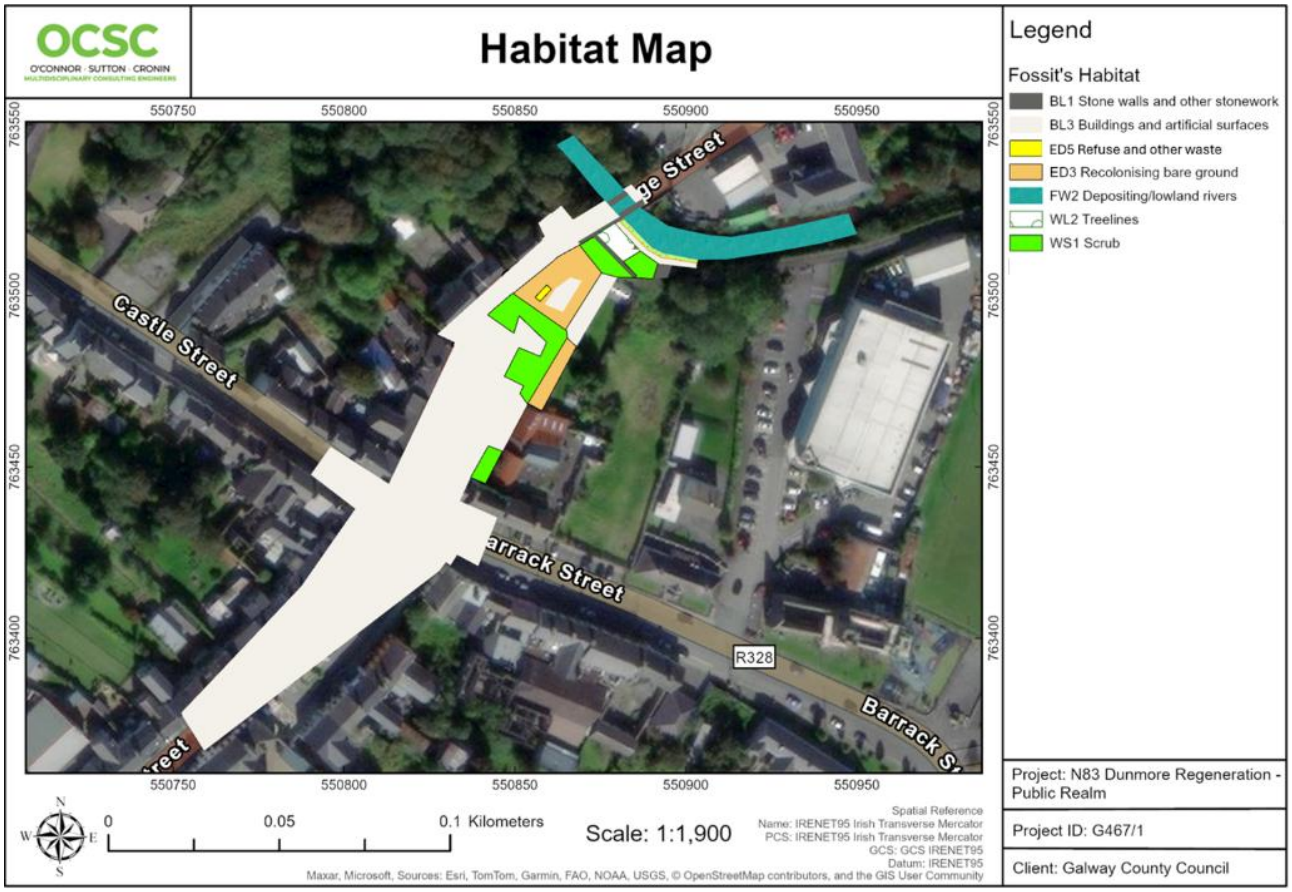

Figure 5.1: Habitat map showing the habitats found on site (Source: OCSC, 2025)

5.1.1 DEPOSITING/LOWLAND RIVERS FW2

The Sinking River is classified as a depositing or lowland river. The river flows through Dunmore, just north of the site from southeast to northwest. The banks of the river are heavily has vegetated and a stone bridge stands over the river where it intersects with the N83, north of the site. See Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2: Sinking River (Depositing/lowland rivers FW2).

5.1.2 BUILDINGS AND ARTIFICIAL SURFACES BL3

The N83 and R328, which both run through the site, are good examples of artificial surfaces (tarmacadam/asphalt). In addition to this, all buildings within the area, such as the housing, shops, pubs etc. along Bridge Street, High Street, Barrack Street and Castle Street, fall under this category. See Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: Dunmore town (Buildings and artificial surfaces BL3).

5.1.3 STONE WALLS AND OTHER STONEWORK BL1

This category incorporates stone walls and most other built stone structures in rural and urban situations, apart from intact buildings. The bridge over the Sinking River located to the north of the site is comprised of stonework. The wall is in good condition with no gaps in the mortar or missing stones in the wall and a good lichen and moss community (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Stone bridge (BL1) located north of the site.

5.1.4 SCRUB WS1

An area of scrub is located adjacent to the derelict buildings in the northern side of the site (Figure 5.5) and adjacent to the Sinking River. The predominant species in this area are bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Willow (*Salix Spp*.), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Cleavers (*Galium aparine*), and Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*).

Figure 5.5: Area of Scrub WS1 at the southern section of the site.

5.1.5 RECOLONISING BARE GROUND ED3

There are small sections of recolonised bare ground on the northern portion of the site at the end of the derelict buildings that are marked for removal (Figure 5.6). The most common species were Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Willow (*Salix Spp*.), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Common Figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*), Cleavers (*Galium aparine*), and Rosebay Willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*).

Figure 5.6: Rosebay Willowherb (Chamaenerion angustifolium) ED3.

5.1.6 REFUSE AND OTHER WASTES (ED5)

This is a small portion of refuse and waste within the recolonised bare ground section of the site. Discarded construction material such as sheet metal, timber and stone remain (See Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7: Refuse and other waste on the southern side of the site.

5.1.7 TREELINES WL2

Treelines are identified between the Sinking River and the recolonised bare ground habitat on the northern section of the site. Within the treelines, there was a mix of coniferous and deciduous species with Cedar (*Thuja spp*.) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) recorded (See Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8: Area of Treelines WL2.

5.1.8 HABITAT EVALUATION

Table 5.1: Potential impacts on Habitats identified on site.

Ecological features	Evaluation	Impacts	Significance of impacts	Duration & Likelihood
BL1 Stone walls and other stonework	Low Local	The entire habitat within the site will be removed	Negligible	Long term, certain.
BL3 Buildings and artificial surfaces	Low Local	The entire habitat within the site will be removed	Negligible	Long term, certain.
ED3 Recolonising bare ground	Low Local	The entire habitat within the site will be removed	Low	Long term, certain.
FW2 Depositing/lowland rivers	High Local	There will be no loss in habitat during construction	Negligible	Unlikely
WL2 Treelines	Low Local	The entire habitat within the site will be removed	Low	Long term, certain
WS1 Scrub	Low Local	The entire habitat within the site boundary will be removed	Low	Long term, certain
ED5 Refuse and other wastes	Low Local	The entire habitat within the site will be removed	Low	Long term, certain

There were 7 different habitats identified using Fossitt 2000 during the survey. The site is set in an urban environmental with majorly of the habitats being infrastructure. No listed or protected species or habitats were identified during the habitat survey. Although the proposed works have the potential to negatively impact on the habitats identified on and adjacent to the site, based on the results of this survey, these impacts will not result the reduction of rare species or habitat types. Therefore, habitats can be scoped out of this assessment and can excluded them from further consideration within this report.

5.2 FAUNA

5.2.1 BATS

A preliminary roost assessment (PRA) is an initial survey conducted to evaluate the potential presence of bat roosts within structures or trees that may be affected by proposed developments. This assessment is a critical component of the planning process, ensuring compliance with conservation regulations with guidance from Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (Collins, 2016) and the protection of bat populations.

The purpose of a PRA is to:

- Identify Potential Roosting Sites: Determine if buildings, trees, or other structures offer suitable conditions for bats to roost.

- Detect Signs of Bat Activity: Look for evidence such as droppings, feeding remains, grease marks, or actual sightings of bats.
- Assess Surrounding Habitat: Evaluate the quality of nearby foraging grounds and commuting routes that bats might use.

The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) provides a framework for this assessment, categorising structures and trees into four levels of suitability (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2; Bat Suitability Framework.

Suitability	Description	Examples	Survey Recommendations
Negligible	Features are absent or unlikely to be used by bats.	New buildings with solid, intact roofs and walls; young trees lacking cavities or peeling bark.	No further bat surveys are typically required.
Low	Structures or trees with limited features that could be used by individual bats opportunistically but are not optimal.	Buildings with a few small gaps or cracks; trees with minor features like sparse ivy cover or shallow bark fissures.	A single emergence or re-entry survey during the active season (May to September) is advised to confirm the presence or absence of bats
Moderate	Structures or trees with several features offering suitable conditions for roosting, such as shelter, protection, and appropriate microclimate.	Buildings with multiple access points and internal cavities; trees with significant features like dense ivy, substantial branch splits, or small cavities.	Two surveys (dusk emergence) between May and September, with at least one survey conducted during the optimal period (May to August).
High	Structures or trees with numerous, highly suitable features capable of supporting larger numbers of bats on a regular basis.	Buildings with extensive roof voids, large accessible cavities, and diverse entry points; veteran trees with multiple substantial cavities, thick peeling bark, or deep splits.	Survey Recommendations: At least three surveys (dusk emergence) between May and September, with two surveys conducted during the optimal period (May to August).

Table 5.3; PRA features and suitability.

Number	Structure	Location (ITM)	Features	Suitability
1	Red derelict building	550824 763448	 The roof contains opening as well as gaps between slates.	Low
2	Mature tree	550876 763517	 Moss covered tree trunk with crevices. Moderate connectivity to the surround area through treelines.	Low

3	Derelict house	550854 763488	 Derelict building with open roof and dense vegetation	Low

There were also multiple mature trees and walls present with the site that were graded as being negligible due to having no bat roosting features. During the survey of the site, there were no obvious signs of bats, no bat dropping (Guano) within or near any structures. Based on this, structures were graded accordingly.

The NBDC holds no records of bat species within the 2km square (M65B) in which the proposed site is located. The bat suitability index of the area is considered Low to Moderate (27 on a scale that ranges from 0 to 100 with 0 being least favourable and 100 most favourable for bats). Species-specific scores are provided in Table 5.4 and specific bat species with a moderate score on Figures 5.9 to 5.13. All bat species in Ireland are protected under national legislation (Wildlife Act, 1976, as amended in 2000) and European legislation (Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC).

Table 5.4: Suitability Index for all bat species

Species		Suitability Index
All Bats		27
Soprano Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	41
Brown Long-eared Bat	*Plecotus auritus*	35
Common Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	39
Lesser Horseshoe Bat	*Rhinolophus hipposideros*	5
Leisler's Bat	*Nyctalus leisleri*	39
Whiskered Bat	*Myotis mystacinus*	14
Daubenton's Bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	31
Nathusius' Bat	*Pipistrellus nathusii*	3
Natterer' Bat	*Myotis nattereri*	36

All of the recorded species have an IUCN conservation status of 'least concern.' The site offers low potential for roosting bats and a low potential for use by foraging and/or commuting bats as it is set in an urban environment along a busy road with streetlights along its length, the majority of the site is not connected through treelines and hedgerows. All three structures within the site which were graded as 'Low' (Table 5.2). Therefore, there is the potential that the area could be used by bats.

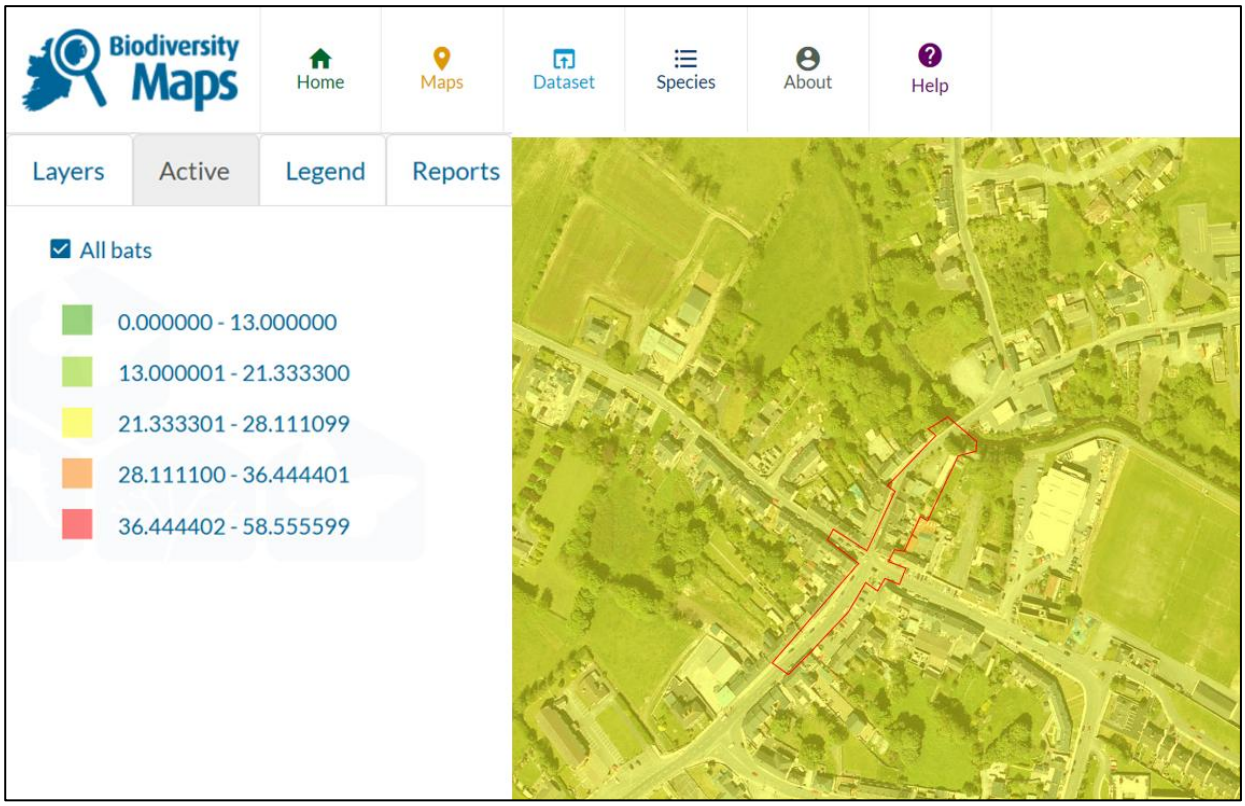

Figure 5.9: Suitability index for all bats in the site and surrounding areas; site location is shown by the red line boundary (Source: NBDC, 2025).

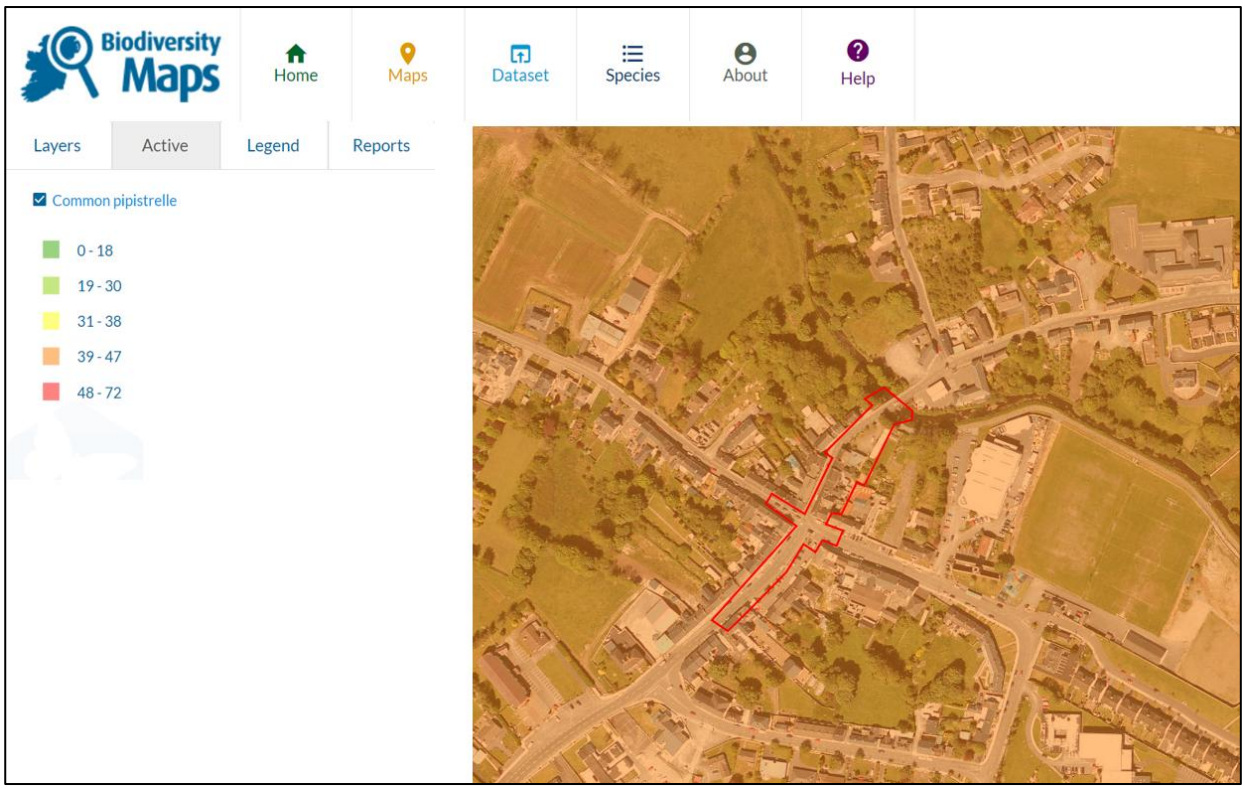

Figure 5.10: Suitability index for Common pipistrelle in the site and surrounding areas; site location is shown by the red line boundary (Source: NBDC, 2025)

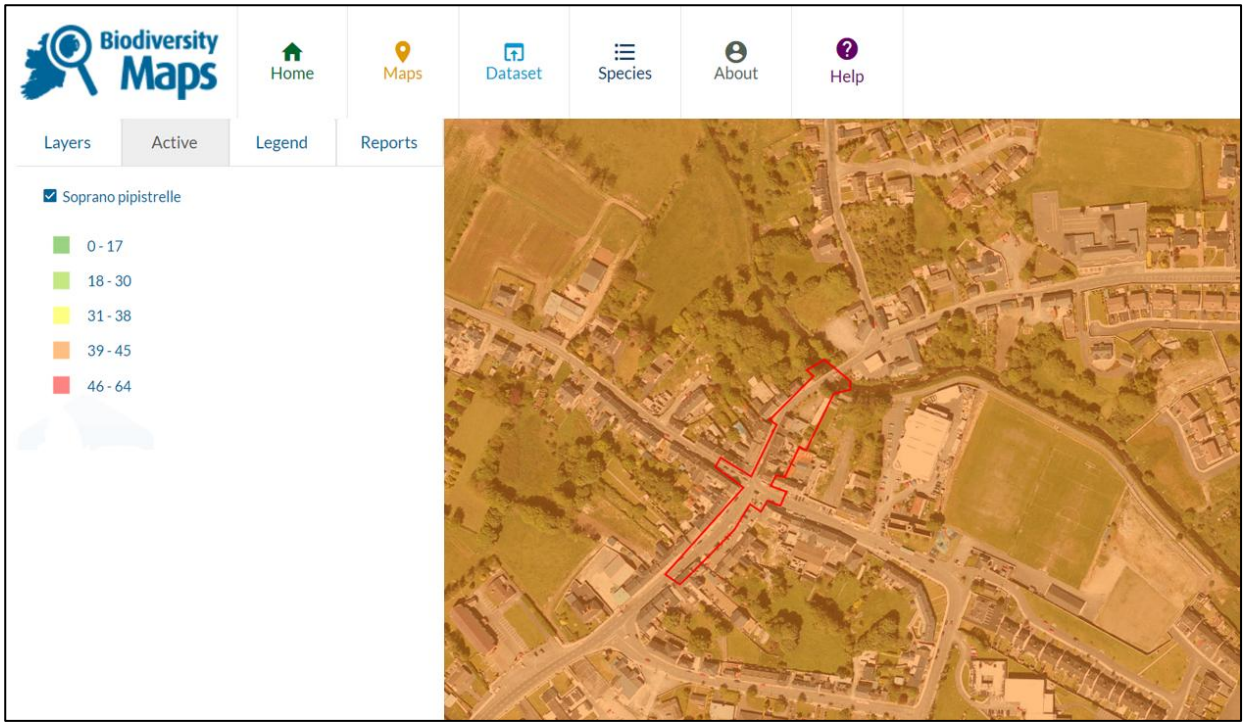

Figure 5.11: Suitability index for Soprano pipistrelle in the site and surrounding areas; site location is shown by the red line boundary (Source: NBDC, 2025)

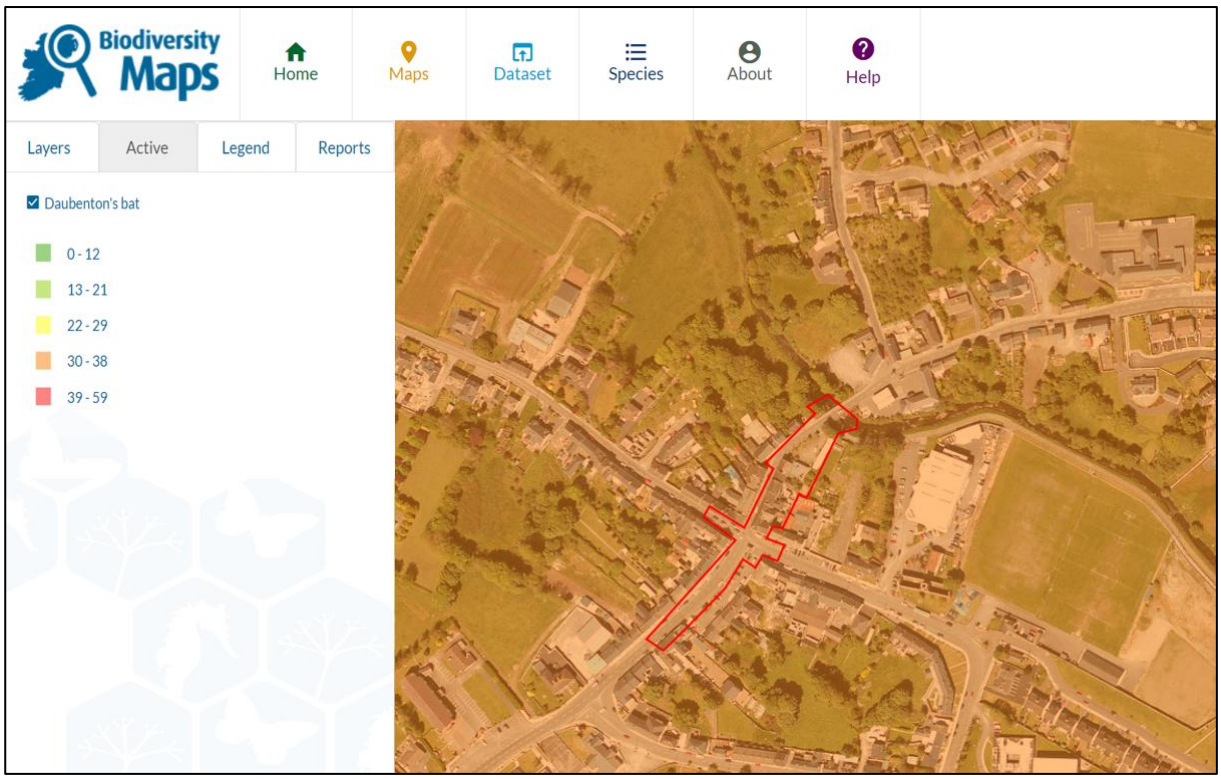

Figure 5.12: Suitability index for Daubenton's bat in the site and surrounding areas; site location is shown by the red line boundary (Source: NBDC, 2025)

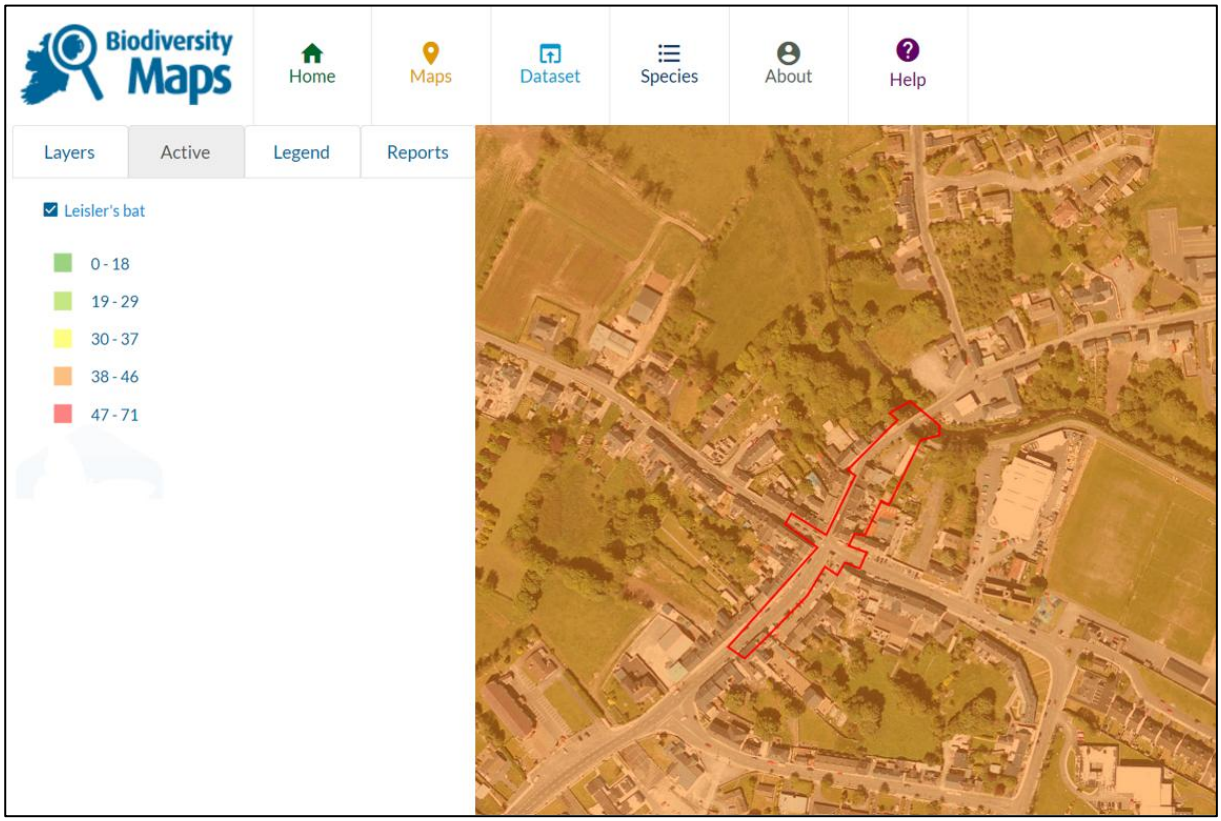

Figure 5.13: Suitability index for Leisler's bat in the site and surrounding areas; site location is shown by the red line boundary (Source: NBDC, 2025)

5.2.2 OTTERS

The Otter (*Lutra lutra*) are protected under the Wildlife Act of 1976 (as amended) and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act of 2000 in Ireland and under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) in the European Union. These acts grant legal protection to otters and their habitats to ensure their conservation and well-being. Under the Wildlife Act, it is illegal to intentionally disturb, harm, or kill otters, possess or sell otters or their parts, or damage or destroy their breeding or resting places (holts). Otters are also protected from habitat destruction or degradation that may directly or indirectly harm their populations. Under the Habitats Directive, otters are listed as a protected species, specifically under Annex II and Annex IV. This listing means that member states of the EU are obligated to take necessary measures to ensure the conservation of otters and their habitats.

According to the NBDC, there are two records of the European Otter from 2015 from the 2km grid square (M65B) in which the site is located. The footprint of the proposed works and an area extending 150m to each side of the N83 along the Sinking River was surveyed for any signs or evidence of otters including spraints, foraging evidence, and remains such as fish bones, access runs, tracks, prints and holts. During the walkover survey of the site, the footprint of the proposed works was searched for evidence of otters including spraints, tracks, slides and chutes, holts and dens, and foraging evidence such as remains of fish bones and scales. None of the above was found on site during the surveying period. There was no evidence observed to suggest that otters are using the developable area of the site. The site is set in an urban environment and there is an intact fence along the River Sinking which would be a barrier for otters. However, based on the close location of the SAC to the site, as well as Otter being a qualifying interest of the SAC, in an abundance of caution, otter will be given further consideration within this report.

5.2.3 BIRDS

The NBDC holds records of nineteen protected bird species present within the 2km square (M65B) in which the proposed site is located. These are listed on Table 5.3.

Table 5.5: Protected bird species within the 2km Grid Square and their protection status (NBDC, 2025)

Bird Species	Protection Status
Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)	Protected Species: Wildlife, Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species || Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Pheasant (Phasianus colchicus)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Annex III, Section I
Common Snipe (Gallinago gallinago)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, EU Birds Directive >> Annex, Annex III, Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Swift (*Apus apus*)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Wood Pigeon (Columba palumbus)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Annex III
Eurasian Curlew (Numenius arquata)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Eurasian Teal (Anas crecca)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Annex III, Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
House Martin (Delichon urbicum)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
House Sparrow (Passer domesticus)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)	Protected Species: Wildlife, EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Annex III
Northern Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II, Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Sky Lark (*Alauda arvensis*)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts, EU Birds Directive >> Annex II

During the site survey on the 23rd of April 2025, the following birds have been either observed or heard by the surveyors: Wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*), Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*), Rook (Corvus frugilegus), and Hooded crow (*Corvus cornix).* During the site visit no birds were seen to be nesting in the derelict houses, instead near sunset they flew to their nesting site which were large deciduous trees along the Sinking River.

Given that the works include the demolition of buildings, it will likely cause a temporary noise disturbance to the local bird population; this will only occur during the construction phase. Therefore, birds will be considered further within this report.

5.2.4 AMPHIBIANS

According to the NBDC, there was one Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*), recorded within the 2km grid square (M65B) in which the site is located. The Common Frog is the most widespread of Ireland's native amphibians and is protected under the EU Habitats Directive [92/43/EEC] Annex V, the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) Appendix III, and the Wildlife Acts (1976 2000).

The Sinking River was observed, and surrounding areas were surveyed, and no amphibians were recorded during the site visit. The River is very deep and fast flowing and therefore, unlikely to support the Common Frog or other amphibians. Therefore, they can be scoped out of this assessment and from further consideration within this report.

5.2.5 INVERTEBRATES

According to the NBDC, there are no records of protected invertebrates from the 2km grid square (M65B) in which the site is located. Surveys were conducted during the window of butterfly flight in spring/summer. A number of common butterflies, moths, and insects are likely to occur, but no species of conservation concern on the Irish Red List of butterflies (Regan et al., 2010) are predicted to occur as no specialised butterfly habitats such as oak woods or Kidney Vetch were identified on the site.

There was no potential habitat for the European protected butterfly species, the Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) due to the lack of Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), the larval food plant, found within the footprint of the proposed development site. There was also no habitat for Ireland's only nationally protected butterfly, the Small Blue (*Cupido minimus*), since no Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*) was present.

5.3 NATURA 2000 (EUROPEAN SITES)

There is one Natura 2000 site within the 2km potential ZoI of the proposed development, Lough Corrib SAC (00297) which is located directly adjacent to the site boundary. The next closest Natura 2000 site is the Williamstown Turloughs SAC located 6.23km of the site. There was no SPA located within the 15km Zone of Influence.

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report has been produced separately from this EcIA to assess the potential for effects on European sites. The AA Screening Report concluded there were unlikely to be any negligible effects on nearby European sites arising from the proposed development, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. Therefore, European sites can be scoped out of this assessment and excluded from further consideration in this report.

5.4 INVASIVE SPECIES

According to the NBDC, there was 2 records of fauna invasive species and none for invasive flora from the 2km grid square (M65B) in which the site is located. These include:

- Jenkins' Spire Snail *(Potamopyrgus antipodarum)*
- New Zealand flatworm *(Arthurdendyus triangulates)*

During the site walkover on the 23rd of April 2025, two invasive species has been identified on site, Sycamore. (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Wall Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*). These plants were found in several locations within the site boundary a map of the locations can be seen on Figure 5.14. No other invasive flora

or fauna were identified. Neither species are listed in the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011), and therefore, no legal restrictions are put in place, and no further action is required. Therefore, invasive species can be excluded from this assessment and no further consideration is needed.

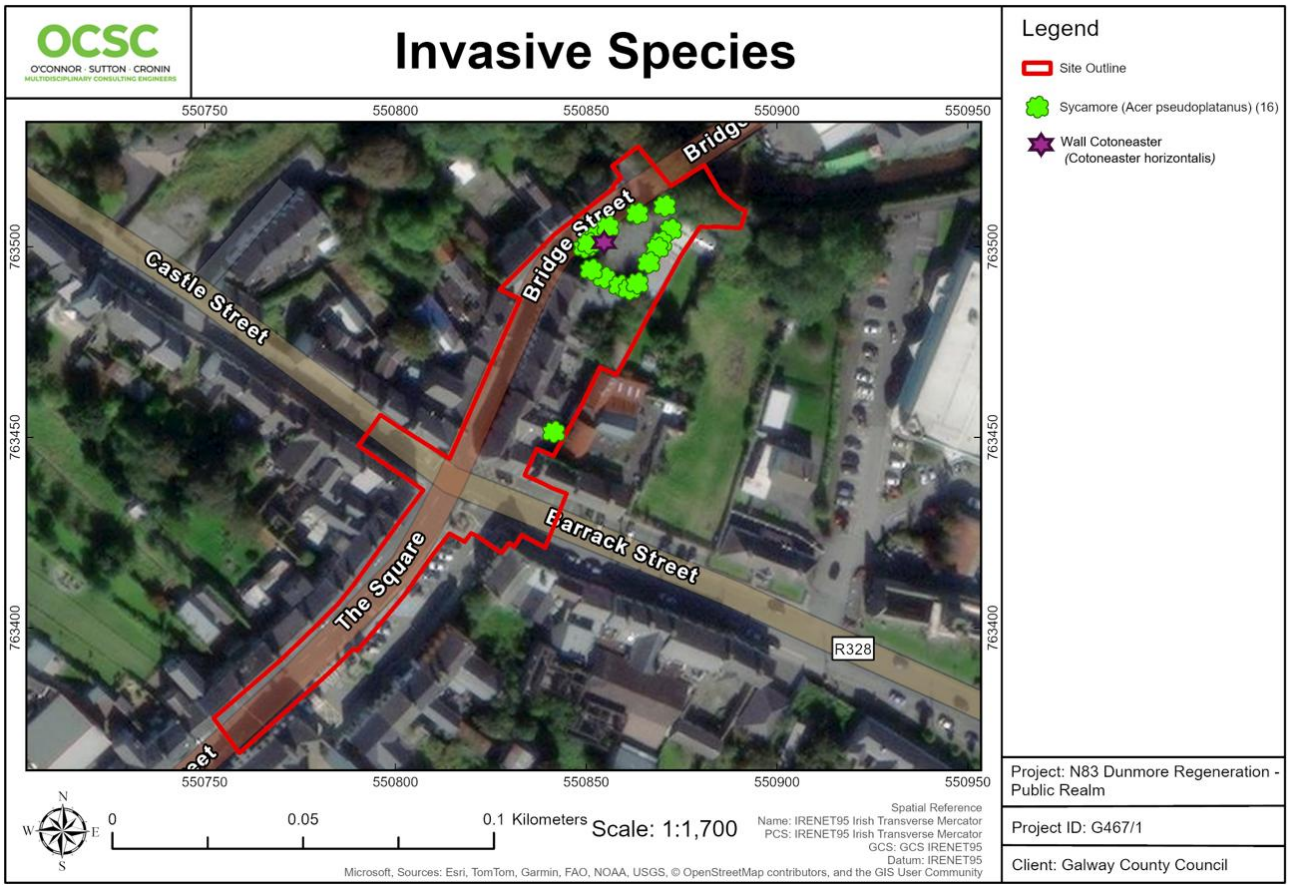

Figure 5.14: Invasive species found on site location (Source : OCSC, 2025)

5.5 SUMMARY OF EVALUATION OF ECOLOGICAL FEATURES

Table 5.3 summarises the ecological features described and evaluated in the preceding sections of this chapter. The importance of these features is summarised along with their legal status and rationale for not carrying forward any features for detailed assessment.

Table 5.6: Summary of evaluation of ecological features

Ecological Feature	Scale at which Feature is important	Comments on legal status and/or importance
Natura 2000 sites	International	Natura 2000 sites have been screened out in the Appropriate Assessment Screening report prepared as part of this application.
pNHA/NHA	National	pNHA/NHA sites have been scoped out due to the lack of ecological connectivity to the site via the landscape or surface water features.

Ecological Feature	Scale at which Feature is important	Comments on legal status and/or importance
Habitats	Local (Higher)	The habitats present evaluated as important at the site level are sufficiently widespread and commonly occurring within the landscape. The habitats are resilient, so they do not require detailed assessment.
Mammals	Local (Higher)	Mammals (otters), are scoped out of further consideration within this report as either not likely to be present at all or are not likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.
Bats	County	Two buildings and one tree were determined to have low roosting potential. Therefore, a single survey each is needed. Further detailed assessment of bats is required, and a standalone Bat Survey Report has been produced by OCSC).
Birds	Local (Higher)	There is potential for impact on birds due to the presence of protected birds on site. Further detailed assessment of birds is required.
Amphibians	Local (Higher)	The Sinking River is adjacent to the site is deep and presents no suitable areas for spawning frogs or for the Smooth Newt; therefore, amphibians can be scoped out.
Invertebrates	Local-County (Higher)	No protected species of invertebrates or suitable habitats for those were found on site, so the invertebrates were scoped out.
Invasive species	County	Two invasive species were found on site, Sycamore (*A. pseudoplatanus*) and Wall Cotoneaster (*C. horizontalis*). Neither species are listed on the Third Schedule. Therefore, no action is required, and no further consideration is required in this report.

6 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

This section sets out the potential impacts and their effects on important ecological features. The information available from the desk study and fieldwork has been used to identify impacts and the significant effects including positive, negative, direct, indirect, and cumulative effects.

6.1 DO NOTHING IMPACT

In the absence of development, it is assumed that the site would remain as a road and Kent Station compound within an urban setting. The habitats would remain unchanged. The Do-Nothing Impact would result in no change in the ecological interest of the site over time.

6.2 POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Construction impacts

The proposed development creates the potential for impact from the use of plant and machinery, from materials used in and during the development such as cementitious products, paints, and petroleum hydrocarbons, and from debris and dust generated during the development.

Operational impacts

No significant impacts to designated sites are predicted during the operational phase of the project.

The potential impacts of developing the site are limited to habitat loss, temporary disturbance, and displacement of species.

Bats

Given the treelines along the river walk and the necessity for removal/felling, along with the demolition of derelict houses, there is a potential for impact on bats. Any mitigation measures identified as required will be included in the Standalone Bat Survey Report produced by OCSC (2025). Therefore, only standard construction best practice methods for bats will be considered in this report. These methods are for the purpose of general protection to bat populations in the area and are not specific to or related to Lough Corrib SAC or its qualifying interests.

Birds

Given the treelines along the river walk and the necessity for removal/felling, along with the demolition of derelict houses, there is a potential for impact on nesting birds. Therefore, only standard construction best practice methods for birds will be considered in this report. These methods are for the purpose of general protection to bird populations in the area and are not specific to or related to Lough Corrib SAC or its qualifying interests.

6.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative effects can result from individually insignificant but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time or concentrated in a location. Cumulative effects can occur where a proposed development results in individually insignificant impacts that, when considered in-combination with impacts of other proposed or permitted plans and projects, can result in significant effects.

The effects of the proposed construction are likely to be confined to the immediate area of the site and will be limited to habitat loss and habitat degradation of commonly occurring and widespread habitats as well as temporary disturbance and displacement of species within the immediate surroundings of the site. These effects are not thought to be significant subject to the implementation of standard construction best practice methods and design.

Proposed and granted planning applications within the area dating back to 2019 were reviewed to identify works of a significant scale which may produce in-combination effects with the proposed works. Grants of planning in the vicinity of the site were reviewed to identify works of a significant scale which may produce in-combination effects with the proposed works. The following planning grants of larger than single domestic scale were identified:

- **Planning Application Reference 22908:** Permission for partial demolition of storage sheds to the rear yard, construction of 1 x two storey dwelling in the rear yard area, first and second floor rear extension to the existing dwelling over the shop, first floor deck area to the rear of the shop. conversion of existing first floor storage shed to studio, misc. alterations to all elevations of the existing dwelling, associated siteworks, hard and soft landscaping. The application is subject to AA Screening and Flood Risk Assessment. Gross floor space of proposed works: 167.24 sqm
- **Planning Application Reference 2461697:** Permission for partial demolition of boundary wall to the north, replacement and repair of existing roof finishes, car parking, misc. alterations to west elevation of the existing building, associated site works, hard and soft landscaping. Gross floor space of work to be retained: 426 sqm

Other granted planning permissions in the vicinity of the site pertain primarily to small-scale constructions, change of use, or retention of works. However, these larger grants and the smaller scale grants of planning, and existing businesses and amenities in the vicinity of the site are unlikely to produce significant in-combination effects with the proposed development.

The Galway County Council County Development Plan 2022-2028 was consulted to assess any impacts of the proposed works along with future development projects planned within the surrounding area. The Development Plan identifies areas within the county outlined for development. Upgrades to the Water Treatment Plant for Dunmore/Glenamaddy have been identified within the plan. Currently the wastewater capacity and water capacity for the area is adequate. No other development within Dunmore has been identified within the County Development Plan.

7 OPERATING PROCEDURES

In this section, the standard operating procedures and best practice methods will be outlined. This will be employed by the appointed Contractor(s) during construction and operation are presented below. These methods are standard best practice methods for construction works, ensuring protection on to the receiving environment. In this case, meaning that they are not specific to, or related to Lough Corrib SAC or its qualifying interests, unless stated below.

7.1 PRE-CONSTRUCTION SURVEYS

At least one month in advance of construction, and within the appropriate season, the following surveys must be carried out:

- Pre-commencement survey for invasive species, if more than 12 months have elapsed since the survey undertaken for this report.
- Dusk surveys to be carried out in accordance with the PRA assessment in Section 5.2.1.
- Nesting bird survey 24 hours prior if demolition is carried out during nesting bird season.

7.2 PRE-COMMENCEMENT PHASE

The following best practice methods will be implemented prior to commencement of site works:

- Construction compounds are to be located at a minimum distance of 20m from a waterbody. Where this cannot be facilitated, and a compound is located within this distance, the implementation of silt curtains or sediment traps should be installed to prevent sediment runoff into adjacent waterbodies.
- All materials and equipment necessary to carry out best practice methods while working near waterbodies should be brought on-site in advance of any works commencing. An adequate amount of silt fencing, clean stone, stakes, etc. will be kept on site at all times.
- Construction should be carried out during periods least likely to disturb sensitive wildlife, such as outside breeding seasons, especially for birds.
- No presence of otter was recorded on site, however if during the course of works evidence of otter presence is identified, works must cease to that area and a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted. No works should be undertaken within 150m of any holts at which breeding females or cubs are present (NRA 2008).
- All site staff will be advised of best practice methods to be utilised on site through a toolbox talk.
- No equipment should be washed out or cleaned within the work area or near a watercourse.
- Existing trees should be retained where possible. Treelines are of far greater benefit to bats than single, free-standing trees or shrubs as they provide corridors for movement, avoidance of light and predators, a better shelter belt for the clustering of insects, and greater substrate for insect breeding and feeding (bats' food source).

- In general, artificial light creates a barrier for commuting bats, so lighting should be avoided where possible. If any external lighting is required, it must be sensitive to the presence of bats commuting in the area. Directional lighting (i.e., lighting which is focused on work areas and not nearby countryside) shall be used.
- When working near the watercourse, refer to Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) (2016) Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries During Construction in and Adjacent to Waters. Inland Fisheries Ireland, taking standard measures to protect and preserve existing vegetation and habitats.

7.3 APPROACH TO POLLUTION

The construction phase of the proposed works has the potential to introduce effects such as disturbance due to noise and vibrations, surface water run-off, sedimentation, and potential spread of invasive species. However, the drainage system to be constructed on site will be designed in accordance with the SuDS Manual, and surface water design will be carried out so that the changes to the road will result in runoff that is restricted to a maximum equal to, or less than, the current runoff equivalent.

Further standard construction best practice methods to be employed to reduce the risk of pollution during site works are outlined in Section 7.4.

7.4 CONSTRUCTION PHASE

Construction Site Best Practices:

- Minimise construction activities near waterbodies during sensitive periods like heavy rainfall.
- Schedule construction activities to avoid wet or rainy conditions when runoff is more likely.
- Avoid the bird breeding season (typically April to September inclusive) for vegetation clearance, tree felling, or demolition of buildings/structures.

Vehicle and Equipment Management:

- Regularly inspect and maintain construction vehicles and equipment to prevent oil or fuel leaks.
- Use drip pans and absorbent materials under equipment to catch and contain leaks
- Refuelling of vehicles and machinery shall be done off-site where practicable, or in the absence of this, on an impermeable surface in a specified location away from any watercourse (at least 20m).

Proper Chemical Handling and Waste Disposal:

- Use environmentally friendly and non-toxic materials whenever possible.
- Store and dispose of construction materials, chemicals, and waste in a manner that prevents leakage into the waterbodies.
- Properly manage construction waste and debris by sorting and recycling materials where possible. Dispose of hazardous materials in accordance with environmental regulations.

Monitoring and Inspections:

- Conduct regular inspections of the construction site to identify and address potential pollution sources.

Regulatory Compliance:

- Ensure compliance with local, regional, and national regulations related to water quality and environmental protection.

Spill Response Plan:

- Develop a detailed spill response plan that outlines procedures for containment and cleanup of chemical spills and other emergencies.
- Ensure that spill containment measures are in place, including spill kits and absorbent materials, to respond quickly to any accidental release of pollutants, fuels, or chemicals.

The following additional standard construction best practice methods should be implemented on the site:

- Construction activities should be limited to daytime hours to minimise disruption to nocturnal animals.
- Train construction personnel on environmental and safety protocols to ensure that they are aware of and adhere to mitigation measures.
- Avoid demolition during the bird nesting season (typically March to August).
- In the event of hedgehogs being found in the work area, relocate them to nearby safe habitats.
- Use permeable fencing that allow hedgehogs to move freely.
- In the event that bats are found on the proposed development site during construction, demolition, or tree felling, works will immediately cease in that area, and the local NPWS conservation ranger will be contacted. The bats should be removed by hand by a suitably qualified bat surveyor.
- An experienced Ecologist should be on site when required during construction works and site clearance to provide ecological advice to avoid and/or minimise ecological impacts.

7.5 OPERATION PHASE

No mitigation will be necessary during the operational phase.

8 CONCLUSION

The overall purpose of this report was to assess the ecological standing of the site in its current condition in advance of the works beginning on Dunmore, County Galway. The proposed works at the N83 Dunmore regeneration project will not result in negative effects on the ecology of the area or on sites designated for nature once standard construction best practice methods are implemented. Overall, the residual effects are anticipated to be slight.
The report has identified the baseline ecological status of the site along with ensuring compliance with relevant national and European statutory requirements to guarantee that works completed by Galway County Council will not negatively impact environmental receptors.

It is anticipated that the proposed road works have the potential to negatively impact on the immediate surrounding environment. Potential concerns arising from the works include:

- Temporary disturbance of species for the duration of the works
- Displacement of species

Although some negative impacts have been outlined above for the works in terms of siltation, species disturbance, etc., the implementation of standard operating procedures and best practice methods reduce the risk of impact on the ecology of the site with no long-term impact on the ecology of the site and protected areas within the ZoI. It is recommended that a pre-construction dusk bat surveys and invasive species survey be carried out if more than 12 months has passed since previous surveys. In addition to this, nesting bird surveys should be carried out 24 hours prior to demolition commencing if the works are to be carried out during nesting bird season (March 1st to August 31st).

It is concluded that, subject to implementation of best practice methods and standard operating procedures along with mitigation measures (which are not linked to the SAC or its qualifying interests), the proposed project is not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects on the ecological integrity of the site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

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10 VERIFICATION

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