Pier extension – Droim, Leitir Mor, Co. Galway

AA Screening

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Contract

This report describes work commissioned by Rhiannon Simpson, on behalf of MKO, by an instruction dated 20/01/2026. The Client's representative for the contract was Rhiannon Simpson. Jai Dolan, Johanna Healy and Dominic Tilley of JBA Consulting carried out this work.

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Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
DEHLG	Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
DHPLG	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
EC	European Communities
ECJ	European Court Judgement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
GCC	Galway Count Council
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GSI	Geological Survey Ireland
IAQM	Institute of Air Quality Management
INNS	Invasive Non-Native Species
IROPI	Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest
LSE	Likely Significant Effect
NBDC	National Biodiversity Data Centre
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Services
QI	Qualifying Interest
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
WFD	Water Framework Directive
ZoI	Zone of Influence

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

JBA Consulting Engineers and Scientists Ltd. (hereafter JBA) has been commissioned by Rhiannon Simpson of MKO on behalf of Galway County Council to prepare an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for the proposed development at Droim Pier, Leitir Mor, Co. Galway.

Galway County Council is required to prepare or commission an Appropriate Assessment screening, and if necessary, a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) to inform an Appropriate Assessment, to determine whether proposed development is likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site, in light of its conservation objectives and best scientific knowledge, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

This Appropriate Assessment screening report provides the results of the screening appraisal conducted for the proposed development in order to complete the first stage of the appropriate assessment process in accordance with Article 42 of the 2011 Bird and Habitats Regulations, which implements the Habitats Directive (European Commission, 1992) into Irish Law.

1.2 Legislative Context

Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora, known as the 'Habitats Directive' - provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of habitats and species of European Community interest, at a favourable conservation status. Articles 3 - 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000 sites are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79 / 409 / EEC).

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans or projects affecting Natura 2000 sites.

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

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

Article 6(4) deals with the steps that should be taken when it is determined, as a result of Appropriate Assessment, that a plan/project will adversely affect a European site. Issues dealing with alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest and compensatory measures need to be addressed in such a case.

Article 6(4) states:

"If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and / or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest."

The requirements of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive have been transposed into Irish legislation by means of inter alia the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015 (S.I. No. 477 / 2011) as amended.

1.3 Appropriate Assessment Process

Guidance on the AA process was initially produced by the European Commission in 2002, which was subsequently developed into guidance specifically for Ireland by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) (2009, rev 2010). Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) produced a Practice Note in 2021, PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (OPR, 2021). These guidance documents identify a staged approach to conducting an AA. More recent guidance is contained in EC (2021) Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

1.3.1 Stage 1 – Screening for AA

The initial, screening stage of the Appropriate Assessment is to determine:

- whether the proposed plan or project is directly connected with or necessary for the management of the European designated site for nature conservation (Natura 2000 site)
- if it is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the European designated site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

For those sites where, potential adverse impacts are identified, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, further assessment is necessary to determine if the proposals will have an adverse impact on the integrity of a European designated site, in view of the site's conservation objectives (i.e., the process proceeds to Stage 2).

1.3.2 Stage 2 – AA

This stage requires a more in-depth evaluation of the plan or project, and the potential direct and indirect impacts of them on the integrity and interest features of the European designated site(s), alone and in-combination with other plans and projects, taking into account the site's conservation objectives. Where required, mitigation or avoidance measures will be suggested.

The competent authority can only agree to the plan or project after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site(s) concerned. If this cannot be determined, and where

mitigation cannot be achieved, then a derogation from Article 6(3) may be sought in Stage 3, in accordance with the provisions of Article 6(4).

1.3.3 Stage 3 - Procedure under Article 6(4)

Article 6(4) allows for exceptions to the general rule of 6(3). It is up to the authority to decide whether a derogation from Article 6(3) can be applied.

The provisions of Article 6(4) entail three key requirements that must be met and documented;

Step 1- Identification of alternative solutions

Step 2- Comparative assessment of the alternatives considered

Step 3- Examining imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI)

This report is in support of a Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

1.3.4 Recent judgements of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and how they are used in this assessment

The CJEU has been asked to issue rulings on development plans, which are used to inform this assessment.

The CJEU issued a ruling on the consideration of avoidance and reduction measures as a result of People over Wind, Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-323/17) [2018]. This judgement stated that measures intended to reduce or avoid effects on a Natura 2000 site should only be considered within the framework of an Appropriate Assessment, and it is not permissible to take into account such measures at the screening stage.

The decision of the CJEU in case C-721/21 (Eco Advocacy CLG v An Bord Pleanála), delivered in June 2023, found that Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive must be interpreted as meaning that: “in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out an appropriate assessment of the implications of a plan or project for a site, account may be taken of the features of that plan or project which involve the removal of contaminants and which therefore may have the effect of reducing the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site, where those features have been incorporated into that plan or project as standard features, inherent in such a plan or project, irrespective of any effect on the site.” (Para. 53(3) of the Judgement). This indicates that an AA screening can take into account “standard features”, i.e. all the constituent elements of that project inherent in it/elements that are incorporated into a projects design, not with the aim of reducing its negative effects (even where these have the effect of reducing harmful effects on a European site).

The CJEU ruling in Grace & Sweetman (C-164/17) [2018] clarified the difference between avoidance and reduction (mitigation) measures and compensation. Measures intended to compensate for the negative effects of a project cannot be taken into account in the assessment of the implications of a project and instead are considered under Article 6(4). This means that any project where an effect on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site remains and can only be offset by compensation, would need to proceed under Article 6(4), demonstrating “imperative reasons of overriding public interest”.

The CJEU ruling in the case of Holohan v An Bord Pleanála (C-461/17) [2018] also clarified the importance in Appropriate Assessment of taking into account habitat types and species outside the boundary of the Natura 2000 site where implications of the impacts on those habitat and species may impact the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site. In this assessment

functionally linked and supporting habitat for species outside of Natura 2000 sites are assessed where they could potentially impact the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 sites within the zone of Influence (ZoI).

1.4 Methodology

The Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been prepared having regard to the Birds and Habitats Directives, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-15 as amended and relevant jurisprudence of the EU and Irish courts. The following documents have also been used to provide guidance for the assessment:

- DEHLG (2009 rev 2010) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG, 2009);
- Office of the Planning Regulator (2021) OPR Practice Note PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (OPR, 2021);
- European Communities (EC) (2019) Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, 2019);
- EC (2021/ C 437/01) Commission notice Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC ;
- EC (2022) Guidance document on assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - A summary (European Commission, 2022);
- EC (2021) Guidance document on the strict protection of species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC; and
- (CIEEM, 2024). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland - Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal, Second Ed.
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) (2025). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 1: Summary Overview. Unpublished NPWS report (NPWS, 2025a).
- NPWS (2025). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 2: Habitat Assessments. Unpublished NPWS report (NPWS, 2025b).
- NPWS (2025). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 3: Species Assessments. Unpublished NPWS report (NPWS, 2025c).

1.4.1 Screening Methods

This screening assessment uses the source-pathway-receptor (S-P-R) model as outlined in guidance (OPR, 2021). The source-pathway-receptor model allows for potential significant effects to be eliminated if no viable source, pathway, or receptor is present.

The S-P-R method uses an examination of the construction methods or project description and allows sources of impact to be determined. This also allows a zone of influence (ZoI) for the project to be generated based on the size, scale and nature of the works involved. The pathways for impact are also analysed to see if a functional pathway for impact is present. This report analyses three pathways: surface water, groundwater and land. Using information gathered from desk sources (e.g. mapped qualifying interests from the Conservation Objectives for the site) and from field surveys, receptors within the zone of influence are identified. In some cases, sensitive receptors may also play a role in determining the zone of influence. If any of the three parts to

the model are not present (source-pathway-receptor) the potential for a likely significant effect from the project on the Natura 2000 network can be discounted.

Surface water pathways can result in impacts where material entering the surface water drainage are carried in this water to sites that are connected downstream and can therefore impact surface water bodies themselves, and surface water dependent species and habitats that rely on them.

Groundwater pathways can transmit impacts where there is contamination of water entering the groundwater body which is then discharged (sometimes over periods of several decades) and impacts groundwater dependent habitats and species that rely on them.

Land pathways are related to physical disturbance of habitats or species and generally only occur over short physical distances (this can also include habitats for aquatic species). Air pathways relate to the transport of material, generally dust and atmospheric pollution, via air movements that are subsequently deposited on habitats and species in or connected to the Natura 2000 Sites. Impacts on the presence of populations of species of conservation interest outside of the protected site are also considered here.

1.4.2 Likely Significant Effect Test

The test for AA screening is whether the project could have a 'Likely Significant Effect' on any Natura 2000 site. A likely significant effect is defined as any effect that could undermine the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. There must be a causal connection between the project and the qualifying interest of the site which could result in possible significant effects on the site. The likely significant effect test is a lower threshold for the screening assessment than 'adverse effect on site integrity' considered at Appropriate Assessment stage (Stage 2) as screening is intended to be a preliminary examination for potential effects.

The Zone of Influence was used to identify Natura 2000 sites that could be impacted by the project. For each of these sites, the Qualifying Interest features and their associated conservation objectives were identified, and the possibility of likely significant effect was determined by a combination of location, ecological and hydrological connectivity, sensitivity of receptor and magnitude of the source of impact.

1.4.3 Desktop Study

A desktop study was conducted of available published and unpublished information, along with a review of data available on the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) web-based databases, to identify key habitats and species, including legally protected and species of conservation concern, that may be present within ecologically relevant distances from the project as explained below.. The data sources below were consulted for the desktop study:

Aerial photography available from www.osi.ie and ESRI World Imagery.
NPWS website (www.npws.ie) where Natura 2000 site synopses, data forms and conservation objectives were obtained along with Annex 1 habitat distribution data and status reports.
River Basin Management Plans
NBDC Biodiversity Maps (maps.biodiversityireland.ie)
Catchments (www.catchments.ie)
Environmental Protection Agency Maps (https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps)

Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) (www.gsi.ie)
GSI - Groundwater data viewer (https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com)
Planning Applications (myplan.ie)

1.4.4 Ecological Site Survey

To inform the ecological baseline of this AA Screening report an ecological walkover survey was conducted on 03/05/2024 by JBA Ecologist Matthew Hosking, and updated surveys on 18/03/2026 by JBA Ecologist Dominic Tilley. The results of these surveys can be found in Section 3.

The ecological walkover survey recorded habitats and protected species, following the methods outlined in the documents below:

Heritage Council (2011). Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping (Smith et al., 2011).
Ecological Surveying Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna during the Planning of National Road Schemes (NRA, 2009).

Aerial photographs and site maps assisted the surveys. Habitats have been named and described following Fossitt (2000). Nomenclature for higher plants follows that given in The New Flora of the British Isles 4th Edition (Stace, 2019). Identification of Irish plants generally follows Webb's An Irish Flora (Parnell and Curtis, 2012).

1.4.5 In-Combination Screening

The possibility of in-combination effects are considered only at a high level. Where there is no effect at all via a pathway, there is no possibility of in-combination effects. Where a likely significant effect is identified, the in-combination assessment is carried forwards to a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

1.5 Limitations and Constraints

This AA Screening is based on an ecological site survey and existing data from the above-mentioned sources. The screening assessment necessarily relies on some assumptions and is inevitably subject to some limitations as detailed below. These do not affect the conclusion, but the following points are recorded in order to ensure the basis of the assessment is clear:

Information on the works and conditions on site are based on current knowledge at the time of writing. Changes to the site since surveys were undertaken cannot be accounted for. However, the site survey was carried out in 2026, and the report will have followed CIEEM (2019) Advice note on the lifespan of ecological reports and surveys.
Where field data and desktop data are limited, the precautionary principle is utilised when determining potential ecological sensitivities within the proposed developments ZoI.

Data from biological record centres or online databases is historical information, and datasets may be incomplete, inaccurate, or missing. The absence of records for an area may be due to the under recording in the area and not necessarily imply the absence of species. These records are therefore to be treated as minimum information available for the area.

2 Project Description

2.1 The 'Project'

The proposed project (hereafter referred to as 'the proposed development') is directly connected with Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC and may have potential Likely Significant Effects upon the Natura 2000 sites identified in Section 4. Therefore, the proposed project is subject to the requirements of the AA process. The proposed works relates to the upgrade of the existing pier located at Droim, Leitir Moir, Co. Galway.

2.2 Site Location

The location for the proposed development (Figure 2-1) is Droim Pier, Maumeen, Shanacavas, Co. Galway, located to the south of Leitir Moir, and south-east of Ballynakill Lough. The site is within a sheltered inlet, with the isle of Illaunnanownim and Loughcarrick Island several hundred meters offshore to the south-west. The site is connected by unnamed local road to the R374, which is situated 2km north of the site.



Figure 2-1: Site location with site boundary (©OSM, 2026)

2.3 Proposed Project

The proposed works will involve:

- Construction of 1 no. extension to the existing pier (202.5 sq. m) including pier steps and a vertical ladder providing access to the water;
- Construction of 1 no. new slipway (c 29.33m in length and c 5m wide) for launching and landing of small vessels;
- Construction of a vehicle and trailer parking hardstand area (providing 3 no. car parking spaces and 2 no. trailer parking spaces);
- Widening of existing the roadway and bridge from c 4.2m to c 8.2m to provide vehicular access to the proposed vehicle and trailer parking area;
- Provision of 6 no. solar powered street lights (6m height);
- Construction 1 no. 1.2m high roadside parapet boundary wall;
- Provision of new stormwater road gullies and extension of the existing culvert to drain the pier face;
- All ancillary site enabling and development works.
- Site compound to be located on the existing pier. No land outside the works boundary will be provided to the contractor for the provision of the site compound.

Site layout is seen in Appendix A and cross section of slipway and pier extension is seen in Appendix B.

The following points outline the construction methodology for the construction of the pier extension and slipway as proposed by the client:

Stage 1 – Site mobilisation:

- The appointed contractor will typically decide the location of the site compound that facilitates their requirements in terms of construction equipment and material storage;
- No land outside the works boundary will be provided to the contractor for the provision of a site compound;
- The contractors work proposal should include provisions for locating a site compound. The site compound will be located on the existing concrete deck/hardstand area;
- It is not envisioned that the site compound will require a road surface;
- For the extent of the works to be carried out, a site compound will typically consist of a 2Nr shipping containers and a storage area for equipment contained within a heras fenced area;
- Blackwater will typically be contained onsite in portable toilets which are typically serviced on a weekly basis;
- Greywater arising from site activities such as cleaning will be collected and stored prior to transport to a suitable facility offsite for recovery/disposal. Run-off containing pollutants into surrounding soils, watercourses and open excavations will not be permitted;
- All fuel must be stored more than 50m from a watercourse and should be bunded to 110% capacity;
- A daily record of machinery inspections should take place to check for leaks and spills and a record kept for inspection;
- A spill kit and drip tray should be onsite at all times and available for refuelling operations;
- The plant refuelling procedures should be detailed in the contractors' methods statements.

Stage 2 – Rock Breaking and Excavation:

- Prior to commencement of construction works, a detailed method statement will be required from the contractor that details that they adhere to safe methods of best practice in terms of both environmental safety and construction works safety;
- Typically localised excavation of sediment/cobbles/stones to bedrock in some areas below the footprint of the slipway and pier development will be required (area/volume to be confirmed at construction stage);
- It is envisioned that the material will typically be reused to create the hardstanding area onsite. If, at the time of construction, the material is unable to be used, the material will be removed from site typically in 8-wheel tipper trucks to a waste disposal facility by a licensed contractor.

Stage 3 – Shuttering and Formwork

- Shuttering pans to be fixed to bedrock and tied at corners using diawag bars which have been chemical anchored into existing bedrock;
- Shuttering pans supported using steel Acrow props fixed to Lego blocks and by double bagged tonne bags of sand (which should be retrieved on completion of the pour).

Stage 4 – Concrete Works

- Precast concrete elements will be used, whenever possible, to negate the requirement for in-situ concrete;
- All in situ concrete works must be done during dry weather conditions and isolated from any water that may enter the drainage network/sea until the concrete has cured;
- Concrete delivery vehicles will be precluded from washing out at locations which would result in discharge to surface waters and will be required to wash into a concrete absorption sack or similar;
- No concrete should enter the sea. This is typically achieved by diverting the water away from the working area through the use of double bagged bags of sand;
- Shutters will typically be made watertight through a combination of Hessian and sandbags to retain the concrete during the pour and pours are typically timed to begin on the going/falling tide to allow for sufficient time for the concrete to set prior to the rising tide;
- An underwater concrete mix will be specified at detailed design stage for all in-situ works that will be intertidal;
- Removal of shutters will take place typically 24-48 hours upon completion of the pour and process repeated to completion of slipway/pier extension.

Stage 5 – Hardstand/Parking Area

- Area to be surveyed by contractor;
- Area to be levelled using excavator and surfaced with dredged material and locally sourced hardcore infill stone;
- Foundations for boundary wall to be excavated and poured using in-situ concrete;

- Boundary wall to be shuttered and poured in a similar manner to pier and slipway construction;
- Installation of stormwater gullies to drain to the pier face;
- Completion of pavement construction (material to be defined at detailed design stage).

Stage 6 – Widening of Bridge

- Excavate and construct foundations at bedrock;
- Extend bridge approx. 3m to the Northeastern side;
- Bridge construction is anticipated to be undertaken using a precast culvert.

Stage 7 – Demobilisation and Handover

- Removal of site compound;
- Inspection of works and handover.

Duration of the construction works will be 12 months.

2.4 Zone of Influence

The Zone of Influence (ZoI) is considered using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model, therefore only designated sites that are connected to the project site are recorded and assessed. This ZoI uses the precautionary principle.

Natura 2000 sites within a 5km range of the proposed scheme were examined in relation to surface water and groundwater / ground-to-surface water pathways (i.e., local surface water sub-catchments and groundwater bodies / aquifers), with an extended range for those with a downstream hydrological connection.

Connections are assessed for impacts relating to noise disturbance (400m), air pollution (emissions and dust) (250m), and any supporting habitat for SAC/SPA species beyond this distance that may have QI species that utilise the site. The ZoI for air pollution was considered as per the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (IAQM, 2024), including ex-situ habitats used by QI species associated with local Natura 2000 sites.

This means the final ZoI can be a complex shape not easily defined by a simple distance figure, but in this way the assessment includes all relevant sites whilst avoiding unnecessary inclusion of other sites.

3 Existing Environment

3.1 Baseline Conditions

The proposed development at Droim Pier is adjacent to the pre-existing piers and connecting roadways. The site exists within the intertidal zone, shown at low tide in Figure 3-1. This intertidal habitat has been previously mapped by the NPWS as an intertidal reef community complex and part of Annex I habitats Reefs [1170] and Large Shallow inlets and bays [1160]. The habitat above the tidal range surrounding the site is dominated by a mosaic of exposed bedrock and grassland.



Figure 3-1: Proposed site at low tide May 2024

3.2 Habitats

The Fossitt classified habitats and associated Annex I habitats recorded during the site survey are listed below in Table 3-1. These are further described in the sections below and mapped in Figure 3-2 and Appendix C.

Table 3-1: Habitats recorded on site classified by Fossitt (2000)

Fossit Name	Fossit Code	Annex I habitat
Stone walls and other stonework	BL1	
Buildings and artificial surfaces	BL3	
Sea walls, piers and jetties	CC1	
Upper salt marsh	CM2	
Tidal rivers	CW2	
Spoil and bare ground	ED2	
Recolonising bare ground	ED3	
Exposed siliceous rock	ER1	
Reed and large sedge swamps	FS1	
Eroding/upland rivers	FW1	
Drainage ditches	FW4	
Wet grassland	GS4	
Montane Heath	HH4	
Sheltered rocky shores	LR3	Reefs [1170]
Mixed substrata shores	LR4	
Scrub	WS1	
Sea inlets and bays	MW2	/Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]

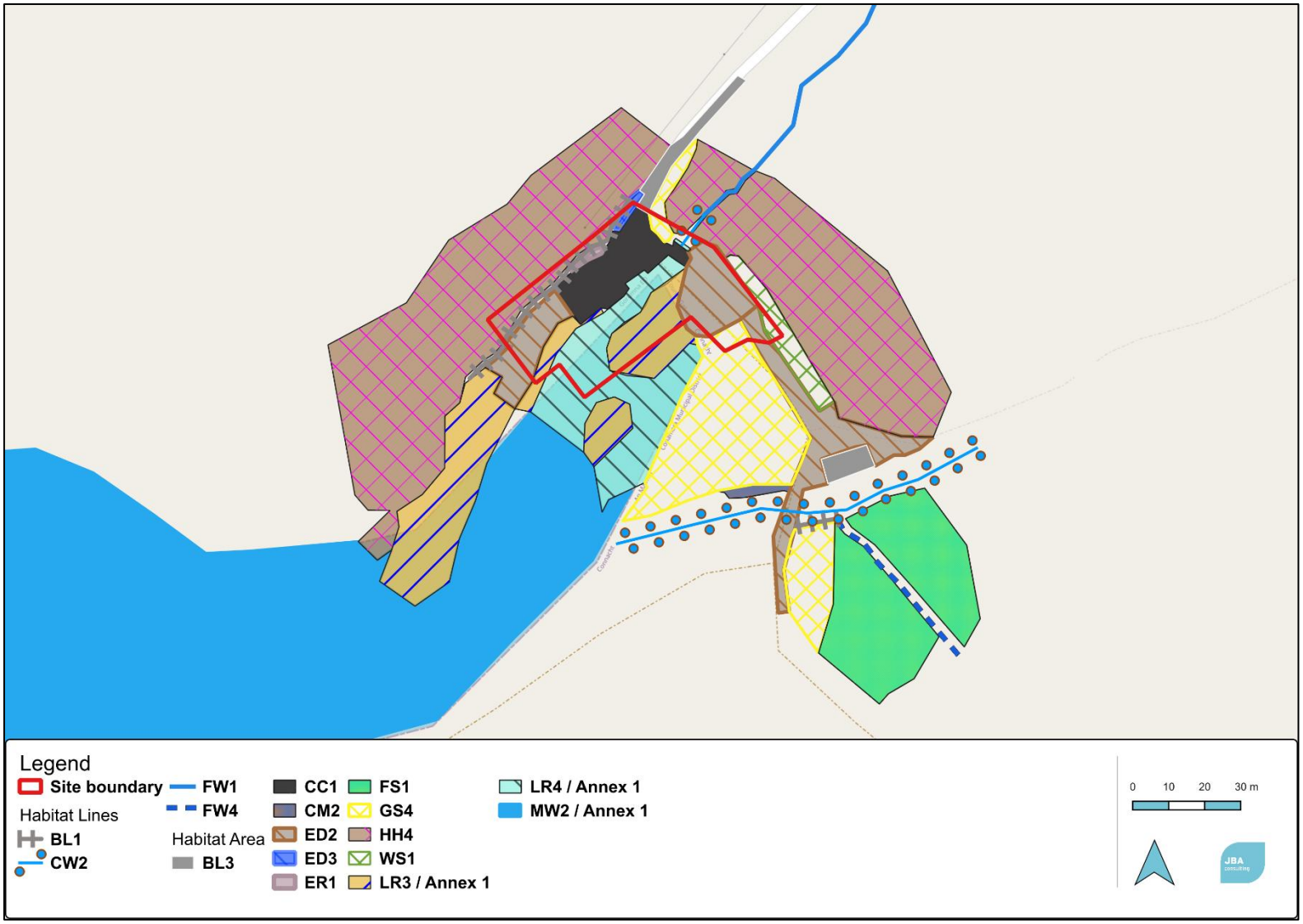


Figure 3-2: Habitat map at low tide (©OSM, 2026)

3.2.1 Stone walls and other stonework (BL1)

Stone walls with no mortar occur on the site in various locations (Figure 3-3). Species colonising the gaps and base of the wall include Bitter Cress *Cardamine hirsuta*, Bird's Foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and Bramble *Rubus fructicosus*.



Figure 3-3: Stone wall

3.2.2 Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)

A hard surface road enters the site from the north, connecting to the pier and a bridge over a stream to the north west of the site (Figure 3-4). No vegetation is growing on these surfaces.

To the south of the site, a small cow shed has been erected.



Figure 3-4: Existing bridge with tidal inlet below



Figure 3-5: Cow shed to the south of the site

3.2.3 Sea walls, jetties and piers (CC1)

A small pier is located to the north west of the sea inlet, comprised of a concrete surface area with steps down to the water (Figure 3-6). Some ropes and other fishing equipment are stored on the pier. This pier comprises part of the proposed works. There is little to no vegetation growing on the pier, although some algal growth is present in the tidal areas.



Figure 3-6: Existing pier 2026with Sheltered rocky shore in the foreground

3.2.4 Upper salt marsh (CM2)

A small section of salt marsh occurs to the southeast of the site, adjacent to the southern most stream which flows in from the east (Figure 3-7). This habitat is dominated by Red Fescue *Festuca rubra* and Sea Thrift *Armeria maritima*.



Figure 3-7: Area of salt marsh

3.2.5 Tidal rivers (CW2)

A stream to the west of the proposed site is influenced by the tides with loose, washed up remnants of dead red and brown seaweed lining the bed and banks of the stream (Figure 3-8). *Ulva* spp. was recorded throughout the stream due to the freshwater influence. A stream to the east of the site is also tidally influenced, with similar species occurring.



Figure 3-8: Tidal river to the west which flows under the bridge to a small barrier of boulders

3.2.6 Spoil and bare ground (ED2)

Areas of loose cobble laid out for vehicular access extends beyond the existing jetty and into the water before an area of sheltered rocky shore. Sections of bare ground are found to the east of the site, extending past the southerly located stream (Figure 3-9).



Figure 3-9: Bare ground with cobbles beyond the existing pier.

3.2.7 Recolonising bare ground (ED3)

A small section of bare ground occurs in the north of the site, which is being colonised by bryophytes and small tufts of Red Fescue, as well as Bramble spreading into the habitat.

3.2.8 Exposed siliceous rock (ER1)

Rock outcrop is present on the right side of the entrance to the car park on the pier. There is little to no vegetation growing on this section other than a few tufts of Red Fescue and minimal Lichen cover.

3.2.9 Reed and large sedge swamps (FS1)

To the south-east of the site an area of field that is largely waterlogged. This area is dominated by Common Reed *Phragmites australis* with Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera* underneath (Figure 3-10).



Figure 3-10: Patch of Common Reed found in a field adjacent to the south-east of the site.

3.2.10 Eroding/upland rivers (FW1)

To the north of the site is a small stream which feeds directly into the tidal river / marine inlet beneath the existing bridge (Figure 3-11). The stream is culverted at the road level and presents little opportunity for fish; there is also little suitable Otter habitat available. There is minimal instream vegetation present, with recorded bank vegetation including Common Dog-violet *Viola reichenbachiana*, Primrose *Primula vulgaris* and Bog Myrtle *Myrica gale*.



Figure 3-11: Small stream entering the site from the North.

3.2.11 Drainage ditches (FW4)

There is a small drainage ditch in the waterlogged field to south-east of the site.

3.2.12 Wet grassland (GS4)

There is an elevated section of ground that is not impacted by saline conditions and has allowed more terrestrial grasslands to grow. A drained field to south-east of the site also fits this habitat description. Species include Cock's Foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna*, Sweet Vernal Grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Pignut *Conopodium majus*, Bramble, Western Gorse *Ulex gallii*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Common Sedge *Carex nigra*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Yellow Iris *Iris pseudacorus* and Bird's Foot Trefoil. A small number of Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*, a number of stunted Willow *Salix* spp. and Heath Milkwort *Polygala serpyllifolia* were also recorded.

3.2.13 Montane heath (HH4)

Montane heath habitat (Figure 3-12) was recorded flanking the site's northwestern boundary, extending past the end of the pier to the coastline. The area to the north-east of the bridge is also classified as montane heath, with this area extending down beyond the site's eastern boundary. This habitat is dominated by Western Gorse, with Ling *Calluna vulgaris* and Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix* occurring throughout. Common peatland indicators such as Lousewort and Milkwort were frequently recorded within this habitat. Other species recorded include Deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum*, Tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, Common Sedge and Creeping Buttercup.



Figure 3-12: Montane heath found on site.

3.2.14 Sheltered rocky shores (LR3)

Most of the shoreline within the area of the site is classified as sheltered rocky shores (Figure 3-13). The saline influenced vegetation does not stretch far beyond the high tide line due to the sheltered nature of the area. Species in this habitat include Sea Lettuce *Ulva lactuca*, Bladder Wrack *Fucus vesiculosus* and Spiral Wrack *Fucus spiralis.* Species above the tideline include Sea Thrift, Sea Plantain *Plantago maritima*, Common Scurvygrass *Cochlearia officinalis*, Sea Beet *Beta vulgaris* ssp. *Maritima*. Lichen are abundant on the exposed rock including but not limited to, *Ramalina cuspidata, Ramalina siliquosa, Xanthoria parietina, Ochrolechia parella*. Large rocks within the bay support species such as Common periwinkle *Littorina littorea*, Flat Periwinkle *Littorina littoralis*, Rough Periwinkle *Littorina saxatilis*, and Thick topshell *Phorcus lineatus.*. This rocky shore habitat has been mapped by NPWS as the Annex I habitat Reefs and is equivalent to the reef community type- Intertidal reef community complex (NPWS, 2014).

An area of approximately 70m^2 will need to be removed to allow for the slipway to be constructed.



Figure 3-13: Example of sheltered rocky shore showing zonation of lichen and seaweed



Figure 3-14: Rocky outcrop (centre) that will be removed.

3.2.15 Mixed substrata shores (LR4)

Between the large boulders in the sheltered areas, areas of mixed substrate are prevalent. Patches of soft mud lie between areas of cobble stones and gravel. Vegetation recorded in this habitat during the low tide survey included Channel Wrack *Pelvetia canaliculata*, Knotted Wrack *Ascophyllum nodosum*, Bladderwrack, *Cladophora* spp. and *Ulva* spp. (Figure 3-15).



Figure 3-15: Mixed substrata shore on site

3.2.16 Sea inlets and bays (MW2)

The proposed site is located at the inward point of a small, relatively narrow sea inlet. This habitat has been mapped by NPWS as the Annex I habitat - Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]. At low tide the majority of this inlet completely drains exposing the associated sheltered rocky shore / Reefs [1170] and mixed substrata shores habitats.

3.2.17 Scrub (WS1)

Running along the site's north-eastern most extent of the site is a thick band of Bramble with some Western Gorse growing through, which is encroaching over a stone wall (Figure 3-16).



Figure 3-16: Scrub lining the path to the east of the site.

3.3 Rare & Protected Flora

There were no floral species listed under the Flora (Protection) Order 2022 recorded by the JBA Ecologists during the ecological walkover surveys. The site survey in 2026 was carried out outside of the main flowering season but this is unlikely to be a limitation.

3.4 Protected Fauna

There was no evidence of QI species recorded by the JBA Ecologists during the ecological walkover surveys.

3.4.1 Otter

No field signs of Eurasian Otter *Lutra lutra* such as feeding remains, scat, or evidence of resting places were recorded by the JBA Ecologists during the ecological walkover surveys in 2024 and 2026. However, given Otter, a QI of the SAC, is known to use both freshwater and marine environments within Kilkieran Bay, it is likely that they will be present near the vicinity of the pier for commuting and foraging activities. Furthermore, the local stream flowing into the inlet provides Otter with a freshwater source to groom and maintain their fur coats.

3.4.2 Harbour Seal

No signs of Harbour Seal *Phoca vitulina* were recorded by the JBA Ecologists during the ecological walkover surveys of the pier area, though the inlet area does provide suitable haul out sites. Furthermore, there was no sign of Harbour Seal activity at the breeding site located 500m south-west of the site, at the mouth of the inlet. Neither survey was carried out during the optimal breeding season.

Aerial surveys carried out in 2017 recorded seals in Kiggaul Bay, approximately 3km from the proposed work site.



Figure 3-17: Potential haul out site approximately 330m west of the site.

3.4.3 Other species

Twenty two bird species were recorded across the two survey periods, these include marine and terrestrial species. Of these, two are Annex 1 species, Little Egret and Sandwich Tern. The site does not support suitable breeding habitat for these species. Four species are Red listed, seven species are Amber listed and 10 Green listed. All recorded species are expected in this type of coastal location. Note that Pheasant are not assessed. The wider surrounding area presents opportunities for terrestrial birds to roost, forage and breed; the shingle/sandy beach approximately 500m from the site may provide suitable habitat for marine birds to nest.

Evidence of Lesser spotted catshark *Scyliorhinus canicular* breeding in the area was also recorded.

No sign of marine mammals were recorded during 30 minute observation of the inlet from the north and south of the pier inlet in March 2026.

These species will not be considered further within the assessment.

Table 3-2: Bird species recorded in the vicinity of the site, with reference to Bird of Conservation Concern (BoCCI). IUCN listing (LC: Least Concern, NT: Near Threatened), Annex status, and during which survey they were recorded.

Species	Scientific name	BoCCi4 (Season)	IUCN Red List (2023)	Annex Listing	survey
Wigeon	*Mareca penelope*	Amber (B/W)	LC		2026
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	Amber (B/W)	LC		2026
Pheasant	*Phasianus colchicus*	NA	LC		2026
Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	Green (B)	LC		2024
Curlew	*Numenius arquata*	Red (B/W)	NT		2026
Snipe	*Gallinago gallinago*	Red (B/W)	LC		2026
Redshank	*Tringa totanus*	Red (B/W)	LC		2026
Greenshank	*Tringa nebularia*	Green (W)	LC		2026
Great Black-backed Gull	*Larus marinus*	Green (B/W)	LC		2026
Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus*	Amber (B/W)	LC		2024, 2026
Lesser Black-backed Gull	*Larus fuscus*	Amber (B/W)	LC		2026
Sandwich Tern	*Thalasseus sandvicensis*	Amber (B)	LC	1	2024
Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	Amber (B/W)	LC		2026
Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*	Green (B/W)	LC		2024, 2026
Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	Green	LC	1	2026

Species	Scientific name	BoCCi4 (Season)	IUCN Red List (2023)	Annex Listing	survey
		(B/W)			
Hooded Crow	*Corvus cornix*	Green (B)	LC		2026
Raven	*Corvus corax*	Green (B)	LC		2026
Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	Amber (B)	LC		2024
Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*	Green (B)	LC		2026
Robin	*Erithacus rubecula*	Green (B)	LC		2026
Stonechat	*Saxicola rubicola*	Green (B)	LC		2024, 2026
Meadow Pipit	*Anthus pratensis*	Red (B)	LC		2024, 2026

3.5 Protected Species from NBDC database

A 2km radius custom polygon was created through NBDC Biodiversity Maps (NBDC, 2026) in order to assess if any of the Natura 2000 QI species were recorded in close proximity of the site within the last ten years. No QI species were recorded within the custom polygon.

For a full record list of protected flora and fauna collated from the NBDC database, see Appendix D.

3.6 Invasive Non-Native Species

There was no evidence of invasive floral or fauna species listed under the Third Schedule of the EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 S.I. No. 477/2011 recorded by the JBA Ecologists during the ecological walkover surveys.

NBDC records for invasive species within 5km of the site are presented in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3: Proximity of high impact invasive non-native species to the site

Invasive Non-native Species	Proximity to Site
Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica*	1.9km (east) [2019]
Wire Weed *Sargassum muticum*	3.8km (north-east) [2017]

3.7 Surface Water Catchments

The proposed site is located within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Galway Bay North Catchment, within the Furnace_SC_010 (EPA, 2026). Table 3-3 and Figure 3-18 outline the freshwater streams and coastal waterbodies within the vicinity of the site.

Table 3-4: The WFD waterbodies within the ZoI of the proposed works

WFD Waterbody	WFD Status (2019-2024)	Risk Status
IE_WE_010_0000	High	Review
IE_WE_200_0000	High	Not at risk
Furnace_SC_010	Good	Not at risk

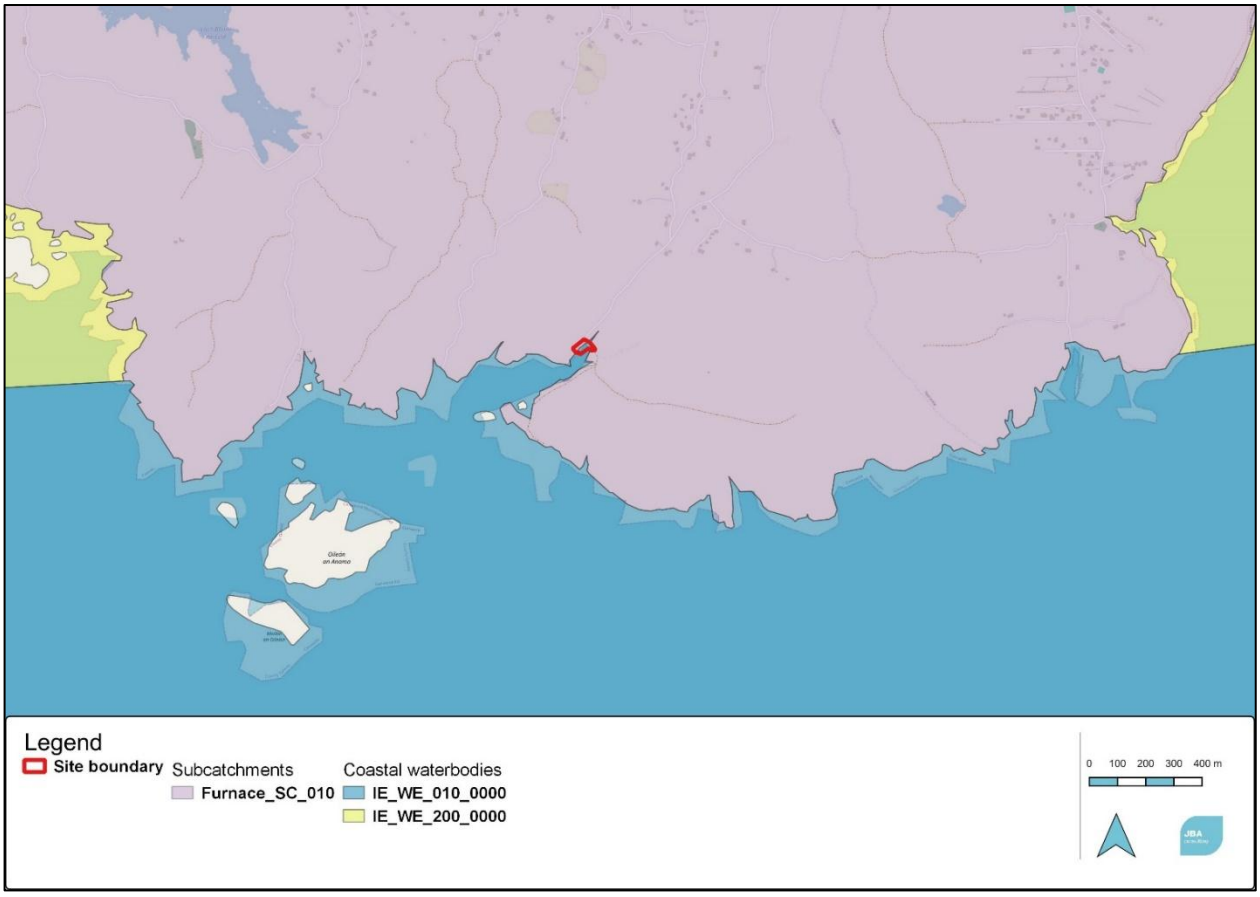


Figure 3-18: Sub Catchments and Coastal waterbodies (©OSM, 2026)

3.8 Groundwater Bodies

The proposed development is located within the Spiddal (IE_WE_G_0004) groundwater body (Figure 3-19). The Spiddal groundwater body currently has a “Good” WFD status (2019-2024), while its risk status is currently not at risk.

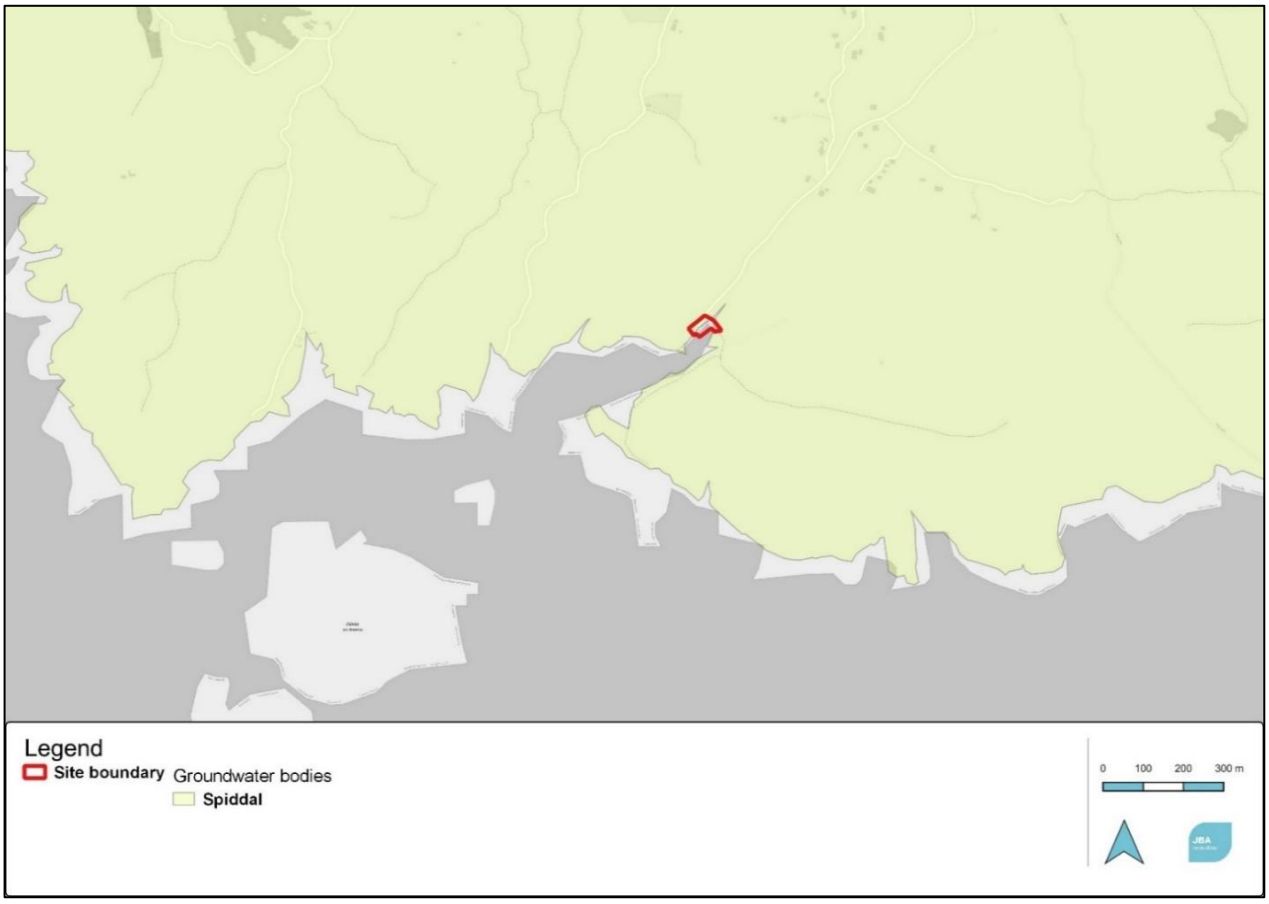


Figure 3-19: Groundwater bodies on site and in the area (©OSM, 2026)

3.8.1 Underlying Geology & Aquifer Vulnerability

The underlying geology is predominately made up of massive amphibolites and basic pillow lavas. Within these are subordinate lensoid bodies containing any or all of the following: cherts, intraformational pebbly mudstones, tuffs, agglomerates, and minor sandstones. Much of this site has exposed bedrock, and as a result this site displays 'X – Rock at or near surface' aquifer vulnerability (Figure 3-20) within its boundaries .

The aquifer within the underlying bedrock is considered to be generally unproductive, except for local zones. It has a limited and relatively poor connected network of fractures, fissures, and joints, with less permeable and/or more limited zones of higher permeability. Overall permeability, storage capacity, recharge acceptance, length of flow path and baseflow are likely to be less than in locally important bedrock aquifers .



Figure 3-20: Groundwater vulnerability on site and in the local area (©OSM, 2026)

4 Natura 2000 Sites

The DEHLG (2009) guidance identifies that Screening for Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project should consider the following Natura 2000 sites:

- Any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the plan or project area.
- Any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the plan or project. This is dependent on the nature and scale of the plan, with 15km generally recommended for plans, but potentially much less for projects.
- Any Natura 2000 sites that are more than 15km from the plan or project area, but may potentially be impacted upon, for example, through a hydrological connection.

Furthermore, the OPR guidance is to use a Source-Pathway-Receptors model, therefore only directly connected sites will be retained (OPR, 2021).

Within the ZoI, only one Natura 2000 site was recorded (Table 4-1), and mapped in relation to the proposed site (Figure 4-1) with potential pathways from site indicated.

Table 4-1 Natura 2000 sites within ZoI of the proposed site

Site Name	Code	Direct Distance from Site	Indirect Hydrological Connection / Distance
Kilkieran Bay And Islands SAC	002111	0m	0m

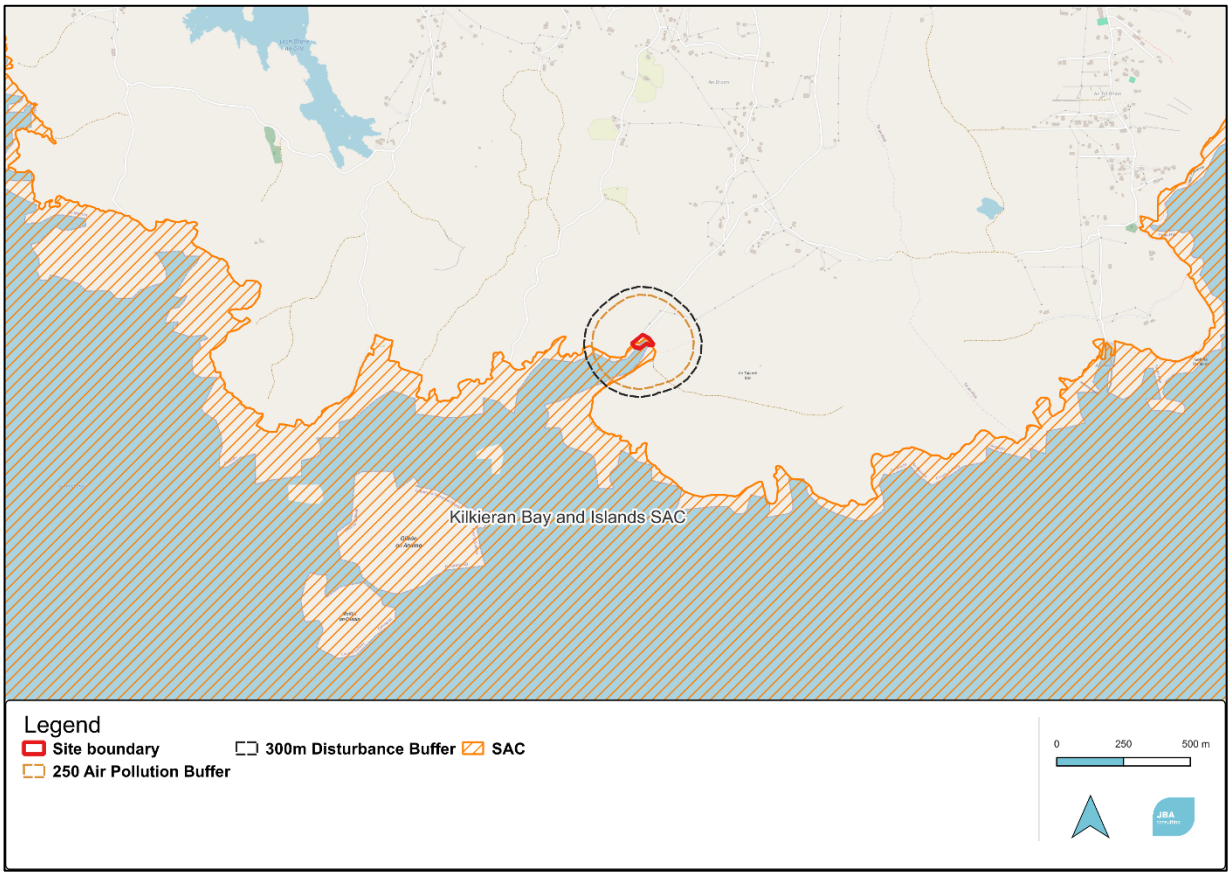


Figure 4-1: Natura 2000 sites within the project ZoI (©OSM, 2026)

Qualifying Interests (QIs), brief site descriptions, and potentially relevant threats/pressures are described below (Table 4-2 and Figure 4-2) for the Kilkieran Bay And Islands SAC Natura 2000 sites with pathways to the development:

Table 4-2: Site briefs; QIs; and project-relevant threats /pressures and their impacts and sources to the Natura 2000 sites within the ZoI

Site Name	Brief	Qualifying Interests / Special Conservation Interests	Project-relevant Threats / Pressures: Impact (Source)
Kilkieran Bay And Islands SAC	Kilkieran Bay is situated on the extreme north-west shore of Galway Bay. It is approximately 13 km in length and 7 km at its widest point. Kilkieran Bay is an indented fjord and much of the complexity is due to numerous rocky outcrops and islands. The bay is subject to strong tidal streams as the sea funnels between islands and through channels. The shoreline is typically rocky, giving way to mud in shallow water. A particular feature of the site is the large numbers of salt marshes on peat and the numerous small beaches of shell sand. The terrestrial areas of the site are mostly covered by shallow peaty soils, with dry heath and blanket bog present. Brackish and small freshwater lakes also occur. The marine habitats found within Kilkieran Bay are of very high conservation value. Kilkieran Bay has a very high diversity of marine species, with a high number of species that are rare or considered to be worthy of conservation in Ireland occurring in the area. Communities of particular importance are the extensive and varied beds of free living red calcareous algae or maerl. Kilkieran Bay is one of three known localities in Ireland where the maerl species Lithothamnion corallioides, Lithophyllum dentatum and Lithothamnion fasciculatum co-occur. This range of maerl deposits in Kilkieran Bay, gives rise to a variety of communities. Within these communities are a number of rare anemones, such as Scolanthus callimorphus and Aureliania heterocera. A population of the large burrowing anemone Pachycerianthus	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) [1410] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea [3130] Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis*) [6510] *Phocoena phocoena* (Harbour Porpoise) [1351] *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355] *Phoca vitulina* (Harbour Seal) [1365] *Najas flexilis* (Slender Naiad) [1833]	Intensive cattle grazing: Moderate impact (inside). Intensive sheep grazing: Moderate impact (inside). Intensive fish farming, intensification: Moderate impact (inside). (EEA, 2018).

Site Name	Brief	Qualifying Interests / Special Conservation Interests	Project-relevant Threats / Pressures: Impact (Source)
	multiplicatus occurs at two muddy sites within Kilkieran Bay and is known from only three other localities in Ireland. The lagoon environments located within the SAC host unique communities of vegetation, unique to south Connemara while being absent from the rest of Ireland. Salt meadows, both Atlantic and Mediterranean, are particularly well represented, the site probably containing the largest area of salt marsh on peat in the country. Lowland hay meadows occur and are typical of the type that was formerly widespread along the western seaboard. The site provides optimum habitat for Eurasian Otter *Lutra lutra*, as well as supporting an important population of Harbour Seal *Phoca vitulina*. Grey seal *Halichoerus grypus* is also a regular visitor and may breed on site. The site also supports a population of Slender Naiad *Najas flexilis*. The island and islets of Kilkieran Bay host a range of important seabird colonies, particularly breeding Arctic, Common, and Little Terns. The site also supports a population of Barnacle Goose in winter alongside a population of Black Guillemot. Herring, Great Black-backed, and Black-headed Gull are also supported within the site (NPWS, 2024).		

4.1.1 Qualifying Interests present within the ZoI

There are four QIs that have been mapped by NPWS as being present within the ZoI, which is comprised of the coastal and terrestrial area of southern Droim, Leitir Móir. They are as follows:

Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]

Reefs [1170]

Eurasian Otter *Lutra lutra* [1355]

Harbour Seal *Phoca vitulina* [1365]

Harbour Seal breeding and moulting sites with reference to proposed site are seen in Figure 4-2.

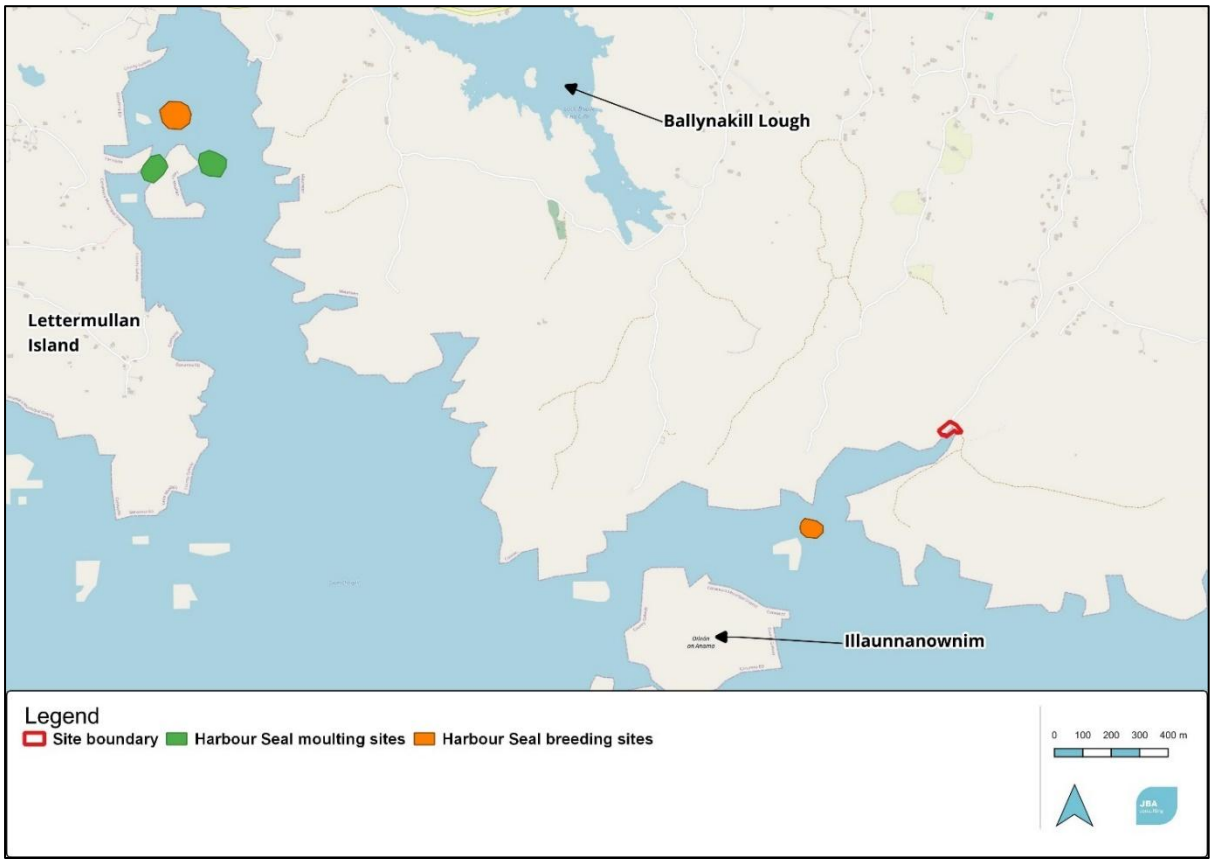


Figure 4-2: Seal breeding and moulting sites (©OSM, 2026, NPWS, 2014)

5 Other Relevant Plans and Projects

5.1 Cumulative Effects

As part of the Screening for an Appropriate Assessment, in addition to the proposed works. Other relevant projects and plans in the region that may induce cumulative impacts must be considered at this stage. The following projects or plans were identified as potential sources of cumulative impacts:

Galway County Council Development Plan 2022
River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 / 2022-2027

5.1.1 Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

The proposed scheme's development is in line with the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. It is an objective of the Plan to ensure that all development within the County conforms to five key design principles which includes the increased awareness, participation, enjoyment, knowledge and understanding of the county's heritage in order to lead to appropriate conservation, management and protection to safeguard it for future generations. This includes:

- Conserve, manage, protect and enhance the character of the County as defined by Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
- To ensure compliance with relevant International, European Directives and National Legislation in relation to Natural Heritage, Biodiversity, Green/Blue Infrastructure and Climate Change
- To ensure climate change considerations are taken into account in the Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green/Blue Infrastructure:
- To continue to implement actions of the National Heritage Plan and the National Biodiversity Plan and the current Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2017-2022 in partnership with all relevant stakeholders and any successor to these documents.
- And to promote the creation of an integrated and coherent green infrastructure network throughout County Galway in order to enhance connectivity, social inclusion, sense of place and the creation of wildlife corridors.

The Plan also aims to protect and enhance surface water quality, to support, improve and protect Natura 2000 sites, and to develop an integrated Green and Blue Infrastructure network to enhance biodiversity, provide accessible parks, open spaces, recreational facilities, to promote investments aiming to support environmental protection and facilitate the sustainable economic growth of the county (GCC, 2022).

An independent Screening for Appropriate Assessment was carried out on the Development plan, which was concluded that an Appropriate Assessment was necessary for this project. The associated Natura Impact Report concluded that there are no likely significant direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project on any Natura 2000 sites (CAAS Ltd, 2026). Overall, the Galway Council Development Plan 2022- 2028 is not

considered to adversely impact any Natura 2000 site, nor is it expected to contribute to any cumulative or in-combination effects.

5.1.2 River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027

Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland - 'Water Action Plan 2024: A River Basin Management Plan' (DHLGH, 2024) sets out the measures that are necessary to protect and restore water quality in Ireland. The overall aim of the plan is to ensure that our natural waters are sustainably managed and that freshwater resources are protected so as to maintain and improve Ireland's water environment. The 3rd cycle Catchment Reports were published in 2024. The Catchment Reports provide a summary of the water quality assessment outcomes for respective catchments, including status and risk categories, significant threats and pressures, details on protected areas and a comparison between cycle 2 and cycle 3.

The Third Cycle River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 is not anticipated to contribute to cumulative or in-combination effects.

5.1.3 Other planning applications

A search of planning applications that have been made in the last three years and within 2km of the proposed project was carried out. These can be found below in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1: Other projects within the locality which may have an accumulative impact on the development of the project

Planning Reference	Address	Application Status	Decision date	Summary of development
22681	An Máimín	Conditional	19/10/2022	chun teach cónaithe agus córas séarachais agus gach obair láithreáin ag teastáil a thógáil.Spás urláir comhlán na n-oibreacha beartaithe: 202sqm. (To build a residential house and a sewage system and all necessary site works. Total floor area of the planned works: 202sqm).
2360503	Glentrasna	Conditional	05/06/2024	For the development consisting of refurbishment and upgrading works [including (where necessary) replacement of existing poles along the existing overhead electricity line, minor ground works e.g. replacement or installation of stays, and maintenance or improvement works]; and all associated ancillary works including the provision of temporary accessways. Replacement poles will be constructed at, or immediately adjacent to, the existing structures that they will replace. Replacement poles will have a maximum height of 12m above ground; and be similar in appearance to existing poles. Planning permission is sought for a 10-year period. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be submitted to the Planning Authority with the application.
2312	Teeranea Lettermore P.O.	Conditional	23/10/2023	chun teach cónaithe, garáiste, córas séarachais agus gach obair láithreáin ag teastáil, a thógáil. Spás urláir comhlán na n-oibreacha beartaithe i: 200sqm (h) & 60sqm (g). (For a dwelling house, garage, septic system, and all required site works, to be built. Total floor area of the proposed works: 200sqm (h) & 60sqm (g)).
21862	Tir an Fhia, Leitir Mor	Conditional	11/10/2021	chun athrú atá deantá ar leagann amach an tí a choinneal a bhi ceadaithe faoi uimhir pleanail 04/1786 chomh maith le cead chun aonad féin fhreastail a thógáil (Granny Flat) ar taobh an teach cónaithe ata ann cheana féin, tá an t-aonad comhdhéanta de sineadh agus seirbhís láithreáin a bhaineann leis. Spás urláir comhlán na n-oibreacha beartaithe: 68.01 sqm. (For a change that has been granted on the house set out to have been allowed under planning number 04/1786 as well as to build a self-contained unit (Granny flat) on the side of the existing dwelling, the unit consists of a footprint and site service associated with it. Total floor area of the proposed works: 68.01sqm).

5.2 Summary

The developments permitted above have the potential to have overlapping construction and short-term residual impact phases with the Proposed Scheme and therefore, in the absence of mitigation measures, these developments may result in potential in-combination or cumulative impacts given their proximity to the local Natura 2000 sites.

The Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028) and River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 and projects within the locality of the proposed project are considered in combination with the currently proposed project in the Screening Assessment section below.

6 Screening Assessment

6.1 Introduction

This screening exercise will focus on assessing the likely significant effects of the project works on the Natura 2000 site identified in Section 4, and listed below:

- Kilkieran Bay And Islands SAC

This section identifies the potential impacts which may arise as result of the proposed works. It then goes on to identify how these impacts could potentially impact on Natura 2000 sites listed in Section 4. The significance of potential impacts is also assessed, with any potential in-combination impacts also identified.

6.2 Assessment Criteria

6.2.1 Description of the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or project) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 sites

Potential adverse impacts that could cause a significant effect on the qualifying interests of the Natura 2000 sites, during the construction and operational phases of the project, will impact on the sites via surface water pathways, groundwater pathways and land and air pathways. Surface water pathways can impact on surface water quality and surface water dependent habitats and species. Groundwater pathways can impact on groundwater quality and quality of groundwater dependent habitats and species. Land and air pathways can impact by direct physical disturbance and dust or other air-based emissions.

The proposed project is anticipated to impact on the QIs of Kilkieran Bay And Islands SAC. The rationale for including and excluding specific impacts via the main pathways is given in more detail in the following sub-sections.

6.2.2 Surface Water Pathways

The proposed site has surface water connectivity to the identified Natura 2000 site as the site is located with the Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC. Potential release of construction pollutants into the water through surface water could affect some of the designated features of Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC.

Several potential pollutants will be utilised at the site, including diesel, engine/hydraulic oils, and washout from mixing of concrete/cement etc. The potential for temporary impacts is through unintentional discharge of these chemicals/particles to surface water from where they could spread up to 2km before being sufficiently diluted to prevent impacts. Within these 2km there is the potential for negative effects on habitats and species. The qualifying interests most susceptible to potential impacts, through surface water pathway include Otter, Harbour Seal, Reefs and Large shallow inlets and bays.

In the absence of mitigation there is the potential for significant impacts on surface water from pollutants during the construction of the slipway.

Therefore, likely significant effects via the surface water pollution pathway during the construction and operational phases are anticipated for the Natura 2000 site within the ZoI.

6.2.3 Groundwater Impact Pathways

Due to the presence of rocks at or near the surface, the area surrounding the site has aquifer vulnerability ranked as 'Rock at or near Surface, or Karst' and groundwater-based impacts would likely occur should any of the Natura 2000 sites reside within the same groundwater body as the proposed site.

Construction Phase

Given the proximity of the local streams and marine waters, it is anticipated that any connection to groundwater or the water table is expected to be connected to these streams or adjacent marine waters, and therefore is a surface water pathway. There are no groundwater-dependent QIs of any Natura 2000 sites present within the project ZoI.

Operational Phase

No potential for significant effects via groundwater pathways has been identified for the operational phase of the proposed project.

Therefore, likely significant effects on designated Natura 2000 sites within the ZOI via the groundwater pathway are not anticipated during the construction and operational phases of the proposed project.

6.2.4 Land Impact Pathways

As the proposed site is located within the Kilkieran Bay And Islands SAC, there will be a direct loss of intertidal reef habitat where the pier and slipway will extend into this habitat. Prior to construction, rock breaking will remove areas of reef habitat.

Presently, the habitats contained within the site are the Annex I designated Reefs [1170] (including an intertidal reef community complex) and Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]. Furthermore, the loss of supporting habitat within the identified Natura 2000 sites via land-based impacts could have potential adverse impacts on a number of the QIs associated with these Natura 2000 sites.

In the absence of any mitigation, impacts are anticipated to key species during construction as the location of the site lies within the commuting, breeding, resting and foraging of QI species. The site is within the Eurasian Otter commuting and foraging zone (NPWS, 2014); and within 500m of Harbour Seal breeding site (NPWS, 2014).

The proposed works and operations associated with the proposed project have the potential to physically disturb, degrade, or remove the QI supporting habitats within the Natura 2000 site as the proposed site is located within the Natura 2000 site within the ZoI.

There may be some disturbance to sediment to the area where the slipway will be constructed. The temporary resuspension of sediment into the water column during a short period of the tidal cycle while the works take place, will not have a significant impact on SAC's QIs within the 5km buffer zone. Marine tidal areas are dynamic environments and the variable movement of large volumes of suspended particles are part of their natural processes.

Therefore, during the construction and operational phases of the proposed project, likely significant effects via the land impact pathway on the Natura 2000 site within the ZoI are anticipated.

6.2.5 Air Impact Pathways

The disturbance or environmental degradation of supporting habitats outside the identified Natura 2000 sites via air pollution impacts could have potential significant effects on a number of the QIs associated with these Natura 2000 sites.

Visual and Audible Disturbance (QI Species)

Though no evidence of the QI species directly associated with the Natura 2000 site was recorded on the site visit, Harbour Seal and Otter are likely to occur within the ZoI of the site. The site lies within the commuting, breeding, resting and foraging area of QI species; i.e. within the Eurasian Otter commuting and foraging zone (NPWS, 2014); and within 500m of Harbour Seal breeding site (NPWS, 2014).

These species may be disturbed through noise and vibration during the construction of the slipway. **Therefore, during the construction phases of the proposed project, likely significant effects via the air (disturbance) impact pathway are anticipated for the QI Harbour Seal and Otter of the Natura 2000 site.**

Given the operational nature of the proposed project, likely significant effects via the air pathway (disturbance) are not anticipated during the operational phase.

Air Pollution (Emissions and Dust)

The ZoI for the air quality impact assessment will include all sensitive ecological receptors (QIs and supporting habitats) within a distance of 250m of the proposed project during the construction phase.

Air (Chemical emissions)

Vehicle emissions can potentially impact the QIs of the Natura 2000 sites within the ZoI. There will be a small increase in local traffic attending the site of the proposed development during construction, resulting in an increase in local NOx emissions, however, vehicular emissions are not anticipated to significantly impact the Natura 2000 sites due to the scale of the project during sites construction and operational phases.

Therefore, likely significant effects from vehicular emissions via the air pathway are not anticipated during the construction and operational phases for the Natura 2000 sites and their respective QIs.

Air (Dust settlement)

Dust particles can be classified into those that are easily deposited and those that remain suspended in the air for extended periods. This division is useful as deposited dust is usually the coarse fraction of particulates that causes dust annoyance, whereas suspended particulate matter is implicated more in exposure impacts. Airborne particles have a broad range of diameters, from nano-particles and ultrafine particles (diameters less than 0.1 microns (µm) to the very large particles with diameters up towards 100µm. There is no clear dividing line between the sizes of suspended particulates and deposited particulates, although particles with diameters >50µm tend to be deposited quickly and particles of diameter <10µm (PM10) have an extremely low deposition rate in comparison. Therefore, the size of suspended and deposited dust particles affects their distribution and as such requires different approaches to sampling these fractions. PM10 is the fraction of airborne (suspended) particulates which contains particles of diameter less than 10µm. PM2.5 is the fraction of airborne (suspended) particulates which contains particles of diameter less than 2.5µm.

PM10 is most commonly associated with road dust and construction activities. Wear and tear of brakes and tyres on vehicles and crushing activities at construction sites can all contribute to a rise in PM10. Larger particles (100µm diameter) are likely to settle within 5-10m of their source under a typical mean wind speed of 4-5 metres per second (m/s), and particles between 30-100 µm diameter are likely to settle within 100m of the source. Smaller particles, particularly those <10 µm in diameter, i.e., PM10, have a greater potential to have their settling rate impeded by atmospheric turbulence and to be transported further from their source.

The construction phase of the project will entail minor excavations of the coastal land and intertidal reef adjacent to the existing pier, as well potential mixing of cement and aggregate. These activities have the potential to generate harmful quantities of dust. Concrete/cement dust is highly alkaline and can impact on aquatic freshwater and marine environments by altering pH levels.

Dust emissions are exacerbated by dry weather and high wind speeds. The impact of dust, therefore, also depends on the wind direction and the relative location of the dust source and receptor. Though the prevailing wind in the development's locality is south-westerly (Windfinder.com, 2024), generally blowing in a landward direction, this cannot be assured for the length of construction phase.

Therefore, due to the project works occurring within the Natura 2000 site, likely significant effects via the air pathway are anticipated during the construction and operational phases for the Natura 2000 sites and their respective QIs.

6.2.6 Cumulative impact

The Galway Council Development Plan 2022- 2028 and the Third Cycle River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027are not considered to adversely impact any Natura 2000 site, nor are they expected to contribute to any cumulative or in-combination effects.

Given the proximity of the other relevant plans and project developments in Section 5.1 to the proposed site, their potential connectivity in terms of groundwater pathways to the Natura 2000 site is likely to be similar to the proposed site. With this in consideration, it can be stated that cumulative impacts are not anticipated.

With this in consideration, it can be stated that cumulative impacts are not anticipated from plans and projects in combination with the proposed project.

6.3 Summary

6.3.1 Description of likely direct, indirect, or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) on the Natura 2000 sites

Project Elements	Comment
Size and scale	The proposed project works will involve: - Construction of a concrete pier extension (13.5m length x 15m width) added to south-west end of the existing pier. - Construction of a new slipway (29m length x 5m width), with a flat deck entry area. To be located immediately east of the small bridge connecting the existing pier to the eastern track. - Construction of new hardstand/parking area to the east of the existing bridge and at the base of the new slipway. - Construction of 1200mm high and 600mm wide boundary wall around the new hardstand/parking area to the east of the bridge, along the edges of the widened bridge, and along the northern section of the widened road to the west of the bridge. - Approximately 3m widening to the northeastern side of the existing bridge.

<table>
<tr><th>Project Elements</th><th>Comment</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Land-take</td><td>There will be direct land take from the Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC. Approximated 196.6m^2 of intertidal reef habitat is expected to be lost as a result of the proposed development. This includes:
1. 27.1m^2 due to the extension of pier on the west side of the bridge
2. 141.5m^2 from the construction of the slipway
3. 14.3m^2 from the proposed hardstand/parking area
4. 13.7m^2 from the widening of the bridge

The habitat to be removed is designated by NPWS as intertidal reef community complex, within the designated Annex I habitats Reefs [1170] (196.6m^2/0.00022%,) and Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] (196.6m^2/0.0001%) (NPWS, 2014).There will be a small scale but nonetheless permanent direct loss of the Annex I habitat Reefs [1170] from the Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC (NPWS, 2014). This is seen as negligible, considering the accuracy of the calculation for the total area of this habitat within the SAC.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Distance from Natura 2000 sites or key features of the site</td><td><table><tr><th>Natura 2000 site</th><th>Approximate direct distance</th><th>Approximate hydrological distance</th></tr><tr><td>Kilkieran Bay And Islands SAC</td><td>0m</td><td>0m</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.)</td><td>There will be no surface water nor groundwater abstraction on-site during operations.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Emissions (disposal to land, water or air)</td><td>Temporary Impacts:
Water:
Several potential pollutants will be utilised at the site, including diesel, engine/hydraulic oils, concrete dust and washings, etc. The potential for temporary impacts is through unintentional discharge of these chemicals/particles to surface water from where they could spread up to 2km before being sufficiently diluted to prevent impacts. Within these 2km there is the potential for negative effects on marine habitats, and QI Otter and Harbour Seal..
In the absence of mitigation there is the potential for significant impacts on surface water from pollutants during the construction of the slipway.

Sediment / Silt:
There may be some disturbance to sediment to the area where the slipway will be constructed. The temporary resuspension of sediment within the water column during a short period of the tidal cycle while the works take place, will not have a significant impact on SAC’s QIs within the 5km buffer zone. Marine tidal areas are dynamic environments and the variable movement of suspended particles are part of their natural processes.

Air:
Non-particulate air pollution will be restricted to emissions from working machinery and will not have a significant impact on habitats or species of qualifying interest. However, particulate dust pollution generated during the in-situ construction of slipway may impact the local qualifying</td></tr>
</table>

Project Elements	Comment
	interests. Concrete/cement dust is highly alkaline and can impact on aquatic freshwater and marine environments by altering pH levels. *Permanent Impacts:* Negligible; the pier extension and slipway will allow for safer access for local fishers. It is not expected to significantly increase the number of fishing boats using the area.
Excavation requirements	Construction phase excavation depths will be limited to the top-most layers of the soil (approximately 0.3m max average). Some rock breaking of intertidal reef habitat is required and disturbance of intertidal marine sediment layers to enable slipway construction. Typically localised excavation of sediment/cobbles/stones to bedrock in some areas below the footprint of the slipway and pier development will be required (area/volume to be confirmed at construction stage).
Transportation requirements	Temporary Impacts: Levels of traffic to the site during the construction phase will result in slight increase in traffic to the R374 and the road which connects the regional road to the site. Given the bordering proximity of the road accessing the site to the Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC, noise and visual disturbance will occur when en route to the site. However, given the small-scale nature of this project, disturbance from mildly increased traffic should be minor, therefore it is not anticipated to affect the SAC within the Zone of Influence or buffer zone. Permanent Impacts: Traffic to and from the site will be on pre-existing roads. Given the project's operational transportation requirements, impacts on the SAC are not anticipated.
Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc.	The construction duration of the proposed construction is 12 months Operation is to be permanent, and no decommissioning is anticipated.

6.3.2 Description of likely changes to the Natura 2000 sites

Potential Impact	Comments
Reduction of habitat area	There will be a reduction in habitat area to the Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC, namely the Reefs [1170] and Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Annex I habitats.

Potential Impact	Comments
Disturbance to key species	Temporary Impacts In the absence of any mitigation, impacts are anticipated to key species during construction as the location of the site lies within the commuting, breeding, resting and foraging of QI species. For example, the site is within the Eurasian Otter commuting and foraging zone (NPWS, 2014); and within 500m of Harbour Seal breeding site (NPWS, 2014). Permanent Impacts No change in disturbance to key species is anticipated during operation of the project.
Habitat or species fragmentation	There will be no temporary or permanent habitat or species fragmentation as the small section of habitat to be taken is at the edge of the habitats potential range.
Reduction in species density	Given the anticipated direct loss of reef community habitat, there will be some reduction in species density. However, this is likely to be minor and only in the immediate surroundings of the site given the size of the project.
Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.)	Temporary Impacts on Water Quality: There is potential for temporary impacts on water quality given the hydrological connection of site to the Natura 2000 sites, particularly Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC. Permanent Impacts on Water Quality: The operational phase of the project will not result in any permanent or continuous impacts on water quality given the nature of the project.
Climate change	N/A

6.3.3 Description of likely impacts to the Natura 2000 sites as a whole

Potential Impact	Comments
Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site	The proposed project could interfere with key relationships that define the ecological structure of the Natura 2000 site that enables the site to sustain habitats, complexity of habitats, and/or levels of populations of species, e.g. Pollution from hydrocarbons and cement, could impact on invertebrates and their predators (Otter and seals) further up the food chain
Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site	The proposed project could interfere with key relationships, between water quality, habitats and supported species, that define the function of the present Natura 2000 site.

Provide indicators of significance as a result of identification of effects set out above in terms of:

Potential Impact	Indicators
Loss (Estimated percentage of lost area of habitat)	There will be a direct small-scale loss of habitat area in Kilkieran Bay and Islands (intertidal reef community complex /Reefs [1170] and Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]). No

Potential Impact	Indicators
	other Natura 2000 sites will experience a direct loss in habitat area.
Fragmentation	Fragmentation of habitat and/or species is not anticipated.
Disruption & disturbance	Disruption and/ or disturbance is anticipated.
Change to key elements of the site (e.g., water quality etc.)	Small-scale temporary changes to key elements (i.e. water quality) of the site are anticipated.

6.3.4 Describe from the above elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is known.

Based upon best scientific judgement, significant impacts are expected from the elements mentioned above; and that no significant gaps in knowledge of the scale or magnitude of potential impacts from the proposed site exist.

6.4 Conclusion

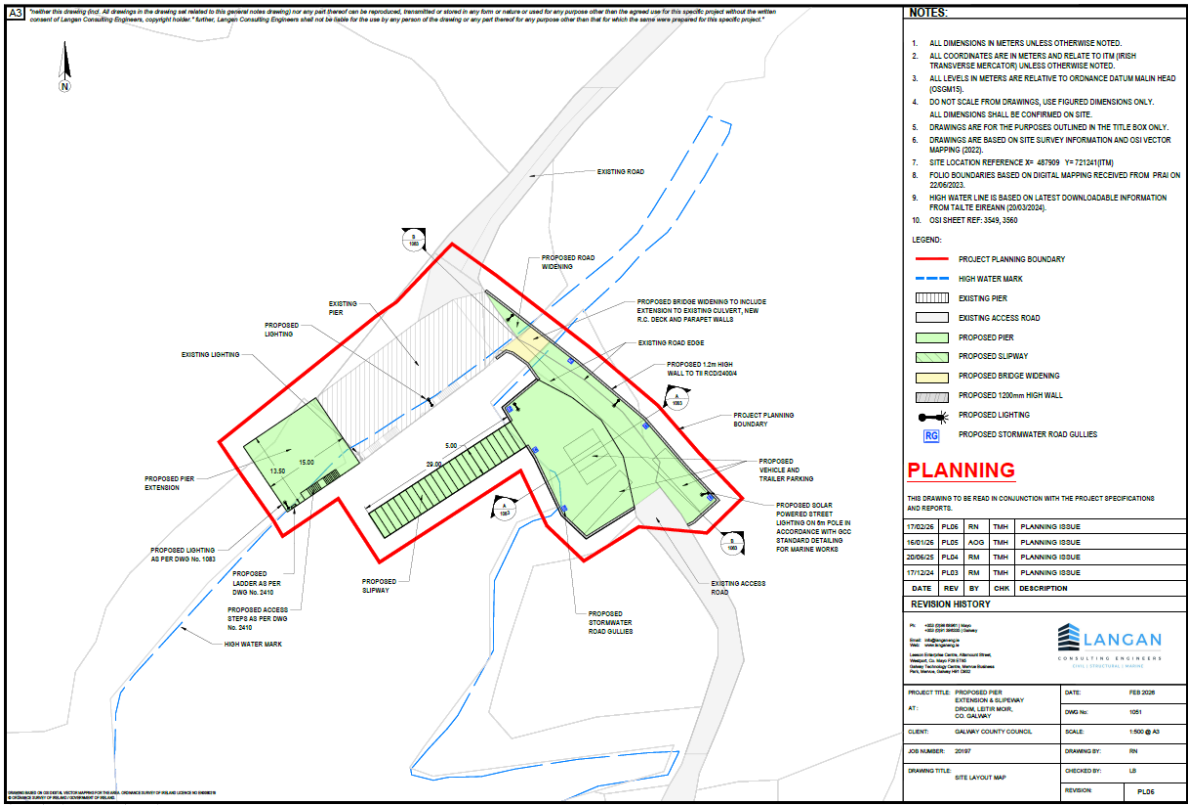
Following this initial screening of the proposed project at Droim, Leitir Móir, Co. Galway, it can be concluded that significant impacts are anticipated via surface water, or land/air pathways on the following Natura 2000 sites:

- Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC

Given the anticipated impacts on the above Natura 2000 site as a result of the proposed development, this report declares that this proposed project must progress to next stage, Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment / Natura Impact Statement (NIS), so that mitigation measures may be outlined and incorporated into the proposed construction works, in order to safeguard the integrity of the Natura 2000 site from any adverse significant effect via the source receptor-pathways highlighted in this report.

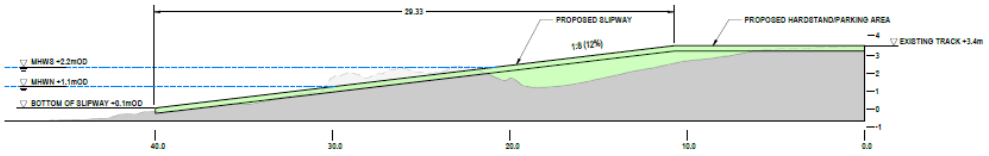
Appendices

A - Site Layout Plan

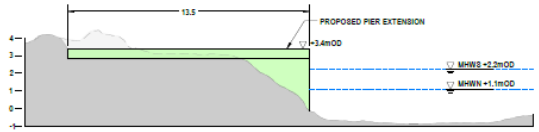


B - Cross Section through Slipway and Pier Extension

A3 "neither this drawing (incl. All drawings in the drawing set related to this general notes drawing) nor any part thereof can be reproduced, transmitted or stored in any form or nature or used for any purpose other than the agreed use for this specific project without the written consent of Langan Consulting Engineers, copyright holder." further, Langan Consulting Engineers shall not be liable for the use by any person of the drawing or any part thereof for any purpose other than that for which the same were prepared for this specific project."



SECTION 1 - THRU PROPOSED SLIPWAY
SCALE 1:200



SECTION 2 - THRU PROPOSED PIER EXTENSION
SCALE 1:200

NOTES:

1. ALL DIMENSIONS IN METERS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
2. ALL COORDINATES ARE IN METERS AND RELATE TO ITM (IRISH TRANSVERSE MERCATOR) UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
3. ALL LEVELS IN METERS ARE RELATIVE TO ORDNANCE DATUM MALIN HEAD (OSGM15).
4. DO NOT SCALE FROM DRAWINGS, USE FIGURED DIMENSIONS ONLY. ALL DIMENSIONS SHALL BE CONFIRMED ON SITE.
5. DRAWINGS ARE FOR THE PURPOSES OUTLINED IN THE TITLE BOX ONLY.
6. DRAWINGS ARE BASED ON SITE SURVEY INFORMATION AND OSI VECTOR MAPPING (2022).
7. SITE LOCATION REFERENCE X= 487909 Y= 721241(ITM)

PLANNING

THIS DRAWING TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS AND REPORTS.

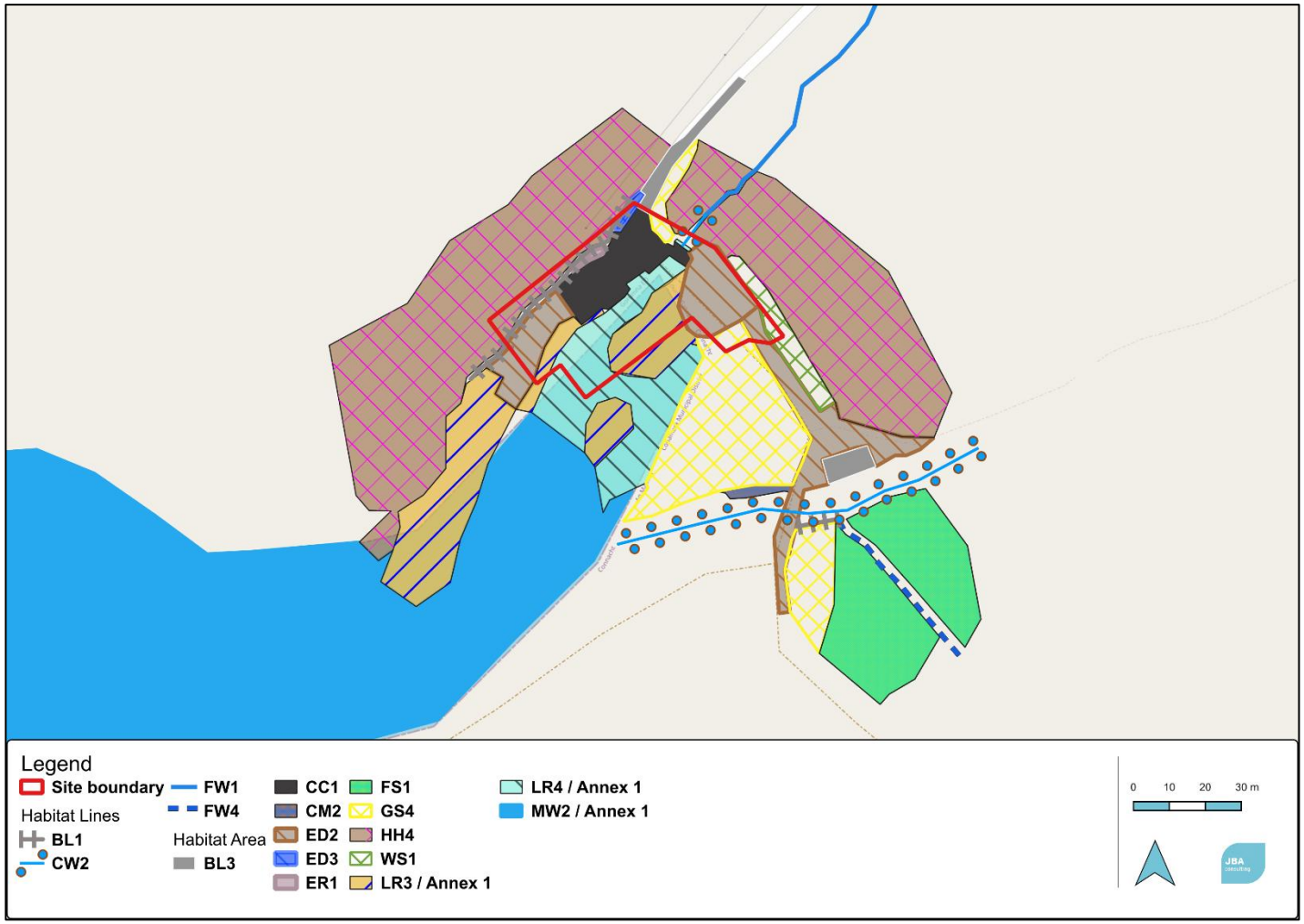
DATE	REV	BY	CHK	DESCRIPTION
20/06/25	PL03	RM	TMH	PLANNING ISSUE
28/03/24	PL02	RM	TMH	PLANNING ISSUE
01/06/22	PL01	GC	JL	PLANNING ISSUE
24/03/21	DR01	GC	JL	DRAFT ISSUE

REVISION HISTORY

LANGAN CONSULTING ENGINEERS CIVIL | STRUCTURAL | MARINE

PROJECT TITLE:	PROPOSED PIER EXTENSION & SLIPWAY	DATE:	FEB 2021
AT:	DROIM, LEITIR MOIR, CO. GALWAY	DWG No:	1081
CLIENT:	GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL	SCALE:	1:200 @ A3
JOB NUMBER:	20197	DRAWING BY:	GC
DRAWING TITLE:	CROSS SECTIONS THROUGH SLIPWAY AND PIER EXTENSION	CHECKED BY:	JL
		REVISION:	PL03

C - Habitat Map



D - Protected species recorded within 2km

These records correspond with the species covered by national legislation that are publicly available on the NBDC database with an online query (NBDC, 2026).

Species Name	Date of last record	Designation
Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*	24/10/2020	EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara*	25/08/2019	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Marsh Fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia*	31/12/2014	EU Habitats Directive >> Annex II Threatened Species: Vulnerable

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