

# **APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT AND DECISION**

## **CASTLEREA LOCAL AREA PLAN 2012-2018**



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## PART A: SCREENING

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Roscommon County Council intends to prepare a Local Area Plan for the Castlerea Area in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 - 2006. Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC requires an appropriate assessment of land use plans with respect to ecological implications of any plan or project, whether within or outside a designated site, which does not directly relate to the management of the site but may impact upon its conservation objectives. Therefore, the purpose of this screening report is to consider whether, based on best scientific knowledge, the amendments in respect of the LAP will have potential impacts upon the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 sites, and if so, the development where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects.

NATURA 2000 sites are protected habitats for flora and fauna of European importance. They comprise **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)**, designated under the Habitats Directive and **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)**, designated under the Birds Directive.

Appropriate Assessment is an assessment carried out under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

3. 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) states:

4. 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 social or economic nature, the Member State 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.

(European Commission, 2002)

### 2. NATURA 2000 SITES

NATURA 2000 sites are designed to form an ecologically coherent network of designated sites (protected habitats for flora and fauna of European importance) across the whole of Europe. They comprise **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)**, designated under the Habitats Directive and **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)**, designated under the Birds Directive. Site synopses in respect to SACs, and SPAs, relevant to the Castlerea Local Area Plan are included in this report.

#### Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

These are the prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) lists certain habitats and species that must be protected. Ireland introduced the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 (S.I. No. 94/1997) to give effect to SACs under Irish Law. Any development in, near or adversely affecting an SAC should avoid any significant adverse impact on the features for which the site has been designated or

proposed for designation. There are 27 SACs in Co. Roscommon, indicated on Map 24 and listed in the Table 31 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2008 – 2014.

There are no designations as set out above in the Castlerea Local Area Plan 2012 – 2018 development envelope. The closest such designation is Cloonchambers Bog which is located approximately 3km to the west of the development envelope and upstream on the course of the nearby river suck.

### **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)**

These sites are areas of importance for birds (and often are also important for other types of wildlife). The EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) requires designation of SPAs for listed rare and vulnerable species, regularly occurring migratory species and wetlands, especially those of international importance, which attract large numbers of migratory birds each year. Any development in, near or adversely affecting an SPA should avoid any significant adverse impact on the features for which the site has been designated. SPAs were given effect in Irish Law mainly under the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations 1985 (SI. 291 of 1985). There are 6 SPAs in County Roscommon, indicated on map 24 and listed in Table 32 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2008 – 2014.

There are no designations as set out above in the Castlerea Local Area Plan 2012 – 2018 development envelope. The closest such designation is Bellanagare Bog which is located approximately 6 to 7km to the north of the development envelope and upstream (source) on the course of the Francis river.

### **3. ROSCOMMON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2008 – 2014: POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES CONCERNING DESIGNATED SITES**

There are no Natura 2000 sites within the LAP area though objective 109 of the LAP makes provision for the protection of such should they be designated in the Plan area during the duration of the LAP. The following information contained within the Roscommon County Development Plan 2008 – 2014 provides the strategic direction for RCC concerning Designated Sites within its functional area.

It should be noted that there are currently no published plans by the Competent Authority for the management of the sites, nor are there any published conservation objectives. In the absence of such official plans or objectives, the information contained within the RCDP 2008 – 2014 contains a number of relevant generalized aims, policies and objectives for these Natura 2000 sites.

#### **Strategic Aim for Designated Sites**

The Strategic aim of Roscommon County Council concerning Natura 2000 Sites is to:

- Protect, conserve and enhance the biodiversity and natural heritage of County Roscommon.
- Identify, protect and conserve sites of natural heritage importance, in co-operation with the relevant statutory authorities

#### **Development in or near Heritage Areas**

Planning authorities must ensure that any development proposal which is likely to have a significant effect on a Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area is authorised only to the extent that the planning authority is satisfied it will not adversely affect the integrity of the area. Such development proposals must be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the area, if it is clear, on the basis of a preliminary examination, that the project may have a significant effect on the area. All aspects of the proposal, which may, by itself or in combination with other proposals, affect the area's conservation objectives, should be identified.

The following are the policies and objectives for Designated Sites which are contained within the Roscommon County Development Plan 2008 – 2014:

#### **Policy for Designated sites:**

- Policy 260** Protect proposed and designated Special Protection Areas
- Policy 261** Protect proposed and designated Special Areas of Conservation
- Policy 263** Protect any additional areas that may be designated during the lifetime of the plan by resisting development which would detrimentally impact on the conservation status of those sites.

### **Objectives for Designated Sites**

**Objective 246** Ensure that development in or near or likely to affect a designated site should avoid any significant adverse impact on the features for which the site has been designated.

**Objective 247** Require an appropriate assessment of any development as described in Objective 246 above.

## **4. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA/SCREENING MATRIX**

### **4.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN**

#### **4.1.1. Brief Description of the project or plan**

The purpose of the Castlerea Local Area Plan 2012-2018 is to provide a framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town through the provision of policies and objectives to ensure this. The plan will be in operation for a six year period from 2012 to 2018, unless amended. It aims to co-ordinate the reasonable needs and aspirations of the people of Castlerea, maximise the best-use of its resources, promote its economic and social development, while preserving the best of its natural and built environment and unique character. The plan consists of a written statement and maps which give a graphic representation of the proposals of the plan, and includes land use zoning. In addition, the plan consists of a set of broad aims and provides guidance in the form of policies and objectives for the development of social, physical and environmental infrastructure in a sustainable manner.

The Castlerea Local Area Plan will replace the Castlerea Area Plan which forms part of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2008 – 2014. Large scale additional zoning is not proposed for the lifetime of the 2012-2018 Plan.

In recent years increased development pressure has led to much new development occurring within and around the town, therefore the development boundary proposed as part of the 2008 – 2014 land use plan will be reconsidered as part of this revision process. The process for establishing a new plan boundary will consider the following:

- Aims of the LAP
- Existing development in the town
- National and Regional level policy
- Predicted future population target
- Likely future development needs
- Proper planning and sustainable development

The Housing Strategy for County Roscommon 2008-2014 provides an indicative distribution for the provision of new household formations for the plan period. The figure for Castlerea is 110 new households. This indicative distribution requires flexibility though to address changes in current, emerging and future local circumstances. Sufficient residentially zoned land will be provided to accommodate the population growth over the plan period. As outlined, flexibility is required to address changes in current, emerging and future local circumstance and to allow enough residentially zoned land to cater for demand, taking into consideration that portions may not be released for development.<sup>1</sup> The plan will also seek to zone sufficient

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<sup>1</sup> Housing Strategy for County Roscommon, 2008, p.29

land for community facilities and services to sustain the community during the lifetime of the plan. In addition to considering and meeting the needs of the community, the plan will aim to enhance and protect the built and natural environment taking into consideration the principles of sustainable development.

The existing wastewater treatment plant has a design treatment capacity of 4,590 P.E. and is located approximately 1km southwest of Castlerea town. The existing population of the town is approximately 2000.

Castlerea town is primarily served by the Castlerea Urban Supply scheme which is sourced at Silver Island Spring (estimated discharge value; 2450-4400m<sup>3</sup>/d) which is located c. 1km outside the LAP area, to the north east of the town. The rural hinterlands of the town are serviced by Castlerea Regional Water Supply Scheme which is sourced at Longford spring (estimated discharge value; 5200-5700m<sup>3</sup>/d) which is located at the south easternmost tip of the 2008-2014 Plan area. Both of these sources were at maximum capacity and both schemes were being periodically turned off at night. Water Conservation measures have improved the situation for both of these. The water supply is adequate at present however water quality is problematic.

#### 4.1.2 Brief description of the Natura 2000 sites

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) are collectively known as Natura 2000 sites. Full Site synopses in respect to SACs, and SPAs may be accessed on the National Parks and Wildlife Service's website at; <http://www.npws.ie/ConservationSites/>.

There are no SACs or SPAs within the Castlerea LAP envelope. The closest Natura 2000 sites, in relation to the Castlerea LAP area, Cloonchambers Bog (c SAC) and Drumalough Bog (c SAC) are upstream of the Castlerea LAP envelope. Those within a 15km radius of the LAP boundary are plotted on the attached map and listed below:

#### Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

Of the 29 candidate Special areas of conservation (cSACs) in County Roscommon, those adjacent to the Castlerea development plan area are indicated on the Map above and listed in the table below:

**Table 1: Candidate Special Areas of Conservation adjacent to Castlerea Development Plan area**

SITE	SITE CODE	COUNTY	PRINCIPLE HABITAT
Bellanagare Bog	000592	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog
Carrowbehy/Cahir Bog	000597	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog
Cloonchambers Bog	000600	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog and Alkaline Fen
Corliskea/Trien/Cloonfella Bog	002110	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog and Bog Woodland
Drumalough Bog	002338	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog
Mullygallon Turlough	000612	Co. Roscommon	Turlough
Cloonshanville bog	000614	Co. Roscommon	Raised Bog
Lough Gara	004048	Co. Sligo/Roscommon	Shallow lake
Callow Bog	000595	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog
Coolcam Turlough	000218	Co. Roscommon	Turlough
Derrinea Bog	000604	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog
Lisnageeragh Bog & Ballinastack Turlough	000296	Co. Galway	Active Raised Bog, Turlough
Kilsallagh Bog	000285	Co. Galway	Active Raised Bog
Tullaghanrock Bog	002354	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog

#### ➤ *Bellanagare Bog*

Bellanagare Bog is a large bog situated 6 km north-north-east of Castlerea in Co. Roscommon. It is classified as a western, or intermediate, raised bog, showing as it does features of both raised bog and blanket bog. The bog is underlain by muddy Carboniferous limestone with a low permeability. The sub-soil is predominantly of clayey limestone till. The site lies in an upland area at the top of a surface catchment divide. The surface of the bog is undulating and the peat is concentrated on ridges, with flushes occurring in between. A number of streams, including the Frances River, rise on the site. The bog is traversed by several tracks. A large section of the site is in state ownership.

In the past, the bog was used by wintering Greenland White-fronted Geese from the population that is centred on Lough Gara. However, the geese now feed mainly on intensively managed grassland and seldom use the bogs in the area. The bog may have been used by nesting Golden Plover in the past and is occasionally used by small numbers of wintering birds. There is a good population of Red Grouse at the site. Other typical bog fauna present includes the Common Frog and the Irish Hare – both of these species are listed in the Irish Red Data Book.

While Bellanagare Bog SPA appears to have been abandoned by wintering Greenland White-fronted Geese, it is still of some ornithological importance as it supports a population of Red Grouse, a scarce and declining species in Ireland that is Red listed.

➤ ***Carrowbehy/Caher Bog***

Carrowbehy/Caher Bog is a large floodplain bog developed between low drumlin hills in the headwaters of the River Suck, close to Lough O'Flynn and 8 km north-east of Ballyhaunis, Co. Roscommon.

The bog is the most species-rich of the region with a long list of Bog Mosses (*Sphagnum*) species occurring in a variety of situations. The bog is wet, even as one approaches its margins. Unusually, the bog has partly enveloped a drumlin to the north. To the west of the main section, and separated by a small stream a smaller circular dome exists. The bog appears to have been little burned and a well-developed lichen flora has developed.

Carrowbehy/Caher Bog is a large and little-damaged, species-rich bog featuring extensive, well-developed hummock/pool systems, small in-filling lakes, scarce species and, in places, semi-natural margins undisturbed by recent peat cutting. Actively growing raised bogs are a rare habitat in Europe and are listed by the EU as being of special importance.

➤ ***Cloonchambers bog***

Cloonchambers Bog is a large, relatively intact, undulating bog which lies north of the Ballinlough - Castlerea Road and about 6 km west of Castlerea town. It consists of two elongated peat-filled basins, separated by a strip of grassy, fen vegetation, found where thinner peat merges with mineral soil.

The bog varies in terms of the depth and quality of peat and the wetness of its surface; for this reason, peat-cutting has been largely discontinued. The bog appears not to have been burnt for some years. Cloonchambers Bog is regarded as a good example of a western raised bog and one whose importance is greatly elevated by the presence of a large alkaline fen running through its centre.

➤ ***Corliskea/Trien/Cloonfella Bog***

This site, located approximately 5km south of Castlerea and straddling the Roscommon/Galway county border, comprises a complex of three raised bogs. The site contains large, wet raised bog with well-developed pool systems, large diverse flush systems, subterranean streams with swallowholes and a lake. A remarkable feature of these bogs is the presence of well-developed, wooded flushes.

A major threat to raised bogs is drainage, associated with turf-cutting or afforestation, which upsets the delicate hydrology of these ecosystems. Fires cause damage due to removal of the vegetation and desiccation of the bog surface. Parts of this site have been burned in the past, and although regeneration of the vegetation is occurring, recovery is a slow process.

This site is of international ecological significance as a largely intact complex of raised bogs. Intact raised bogs are a rare habitat, now much restricted in their European and Irish distribution due mainly to commercial peat extraction. Corliskea, Trien and Cloonfelloe Bogs are excellent examples of this habitat, and show a good diversity of microhabitats which are typical of raised bogs. The wooded flushes are of special significance, as bog woodland is extremely rare and the examples here are of high quality and support a number of scarce and rare species. Both raised bog and bog woodland receive priority status on Annex I of the European Habitats Directive.

➤ ***Drumalough Bog***

Drumalough Bog is located 5 km north-west of Castlerea in Co. Roscommon, mainly in the townlands of Drumalough, Breanabeg and Cloonfower. The site comprises three separate sub-sites which were once part of an extensive bog complex, but which are now separated by cutover bog. Two of these sub-sites are high bog, with associated cutover bog, and the third area is open water (Drumalough) surrounded by wet grassland and freshwater marsh.

The site is a candidate Special Area of Conservation selected for active raised bog, degraded raised bog and Rhynchosporion, habitats that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

The eastern sub-site of high bog is distinctly domed and supports typical raised bog vegetation and microtopographical features such as hummocks, pools and flats. The bog surface is very wet and, in places, quaking, and an extensive pool system occurs. An area of flushed vegetation exists at the north-western side, separating the wetter bog from a drier area. The western sub-site of high bog is drier, but also includes typical raised bog vegetation as well as a pool system in its eastern lobe, and there is a large pond in the southern end. Commercial forestry occurs quite near the pool systems on both raised bog sites.

Red Grouse, a Red listed species that is becoming increasingly rare in Ireland, has been recorded at the site. The lake, Drumalough, is used by a variety of other bird species, including Mallard, Heron and Little Grebe.

Current land use on the site consists of localised peat-cutting on the thin central area of the western sub-site. Peat-cutting appears to have ceased in the eastern sub-site. There are areas of commercial forestry on both areas of high bog. Areas of cutover have been reclaimed for agricultural purposes and an area to the north-west of the eastern sub-site is grazed by cattle. Damaging activities occurring on this site include dumping, burning, peat-cutting, afforestation and associated drainage. These are all activities that have resulted in loss of habitat and damage to the hydrological status of the site.

Drumalough Bog is a site of considerable conservation significance comprising as it does raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. This site supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats, including hummock/hollow complexes, pools, flushes and regenerating cutover. The lake adds further to the diversity of the site. Active raised bog is listed as a priority habitat on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Priority status is given to habitats and species that are threatened throughout the E.U. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of this habitat type (over 60%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

➤ ***Mullygallon Turlough***

Mullygallon Turlough is located beside the road, about halfway between Castleplunket and Tulsk. It is in a noticeable basin, bordered by a rock outcrop to the north and sloping, drift-covered fields to the south. A semi-permanent stream enters from the west and flows towards ponds and a swallow hole in rock. The floor of the turlough retains a high watertable, with ditches in summer and there is significant peat accumulation. Fen vegetation covers this peat: there is little formation of marl at present.

The contrast of wet and dry areas in this turlough gives good diversity in the vegetation, which consists of peaty communities in the centre with more typical turlough vegetation around the edges.

Three bird species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive winter at the site: Bewick's Swan, Whooper Swan and Golden Plover. The wetness of the ground vegetation favours breeding of waders: Redshank,

Curlew, Lapwing and Snipe all nest. The site also appears to be ideal for Duck, particularly Wigeon. The Swans and Dabbling Duck can feed on the fen vegetation from shallow water and relatively large numbers occur for such a small site.

Cattle are widespread and there is evidence of some damage to the drier vegetation, leading to the invasion of Dock (*Rumex* spp.); there is also heavy fertilizer use in adjacent fields to the north-east. Mullygollan is an important turlough because of its semi-natural condition, and its high degree of physical and vegetational diversity.

#### ➤ **Lough Gara**

Lough Gara is a shallow (maximum depth 16 m), medium-sized lake which overlies Carboniferous limestones and shales, and Devonian sandstone. The main inflowing river is the River Lung while the main outflow is the Boyle River. There are two main sections to the lake, a larger northern basin and a smaller southern basin, joined by a narrow channel. The lake is classified as a mesotrophic system, with reduced planktonic algal growth noted in a recent sampling period (1998-2000). The shoreline is convoluted and has receded substantially from its original level due to various drainage schemes since the mid-19th century. The site includes several low-lying islands.

There are currently no activities taking place within the site which significantly affect the birds. Part of the site is a Wildfowl Sanctuary. Lough Gara SPA is of high ornithological importance principally on account of the internationally important Greenland White-fronted Goose population that is associated with the lake and also the high numbers of Whooper Swan. The occurrence of these species, along with Golden Plover, is of particular note as they are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

#### ➤ **Callow Bog**

Callow Bog is located approximately 7 km north-west of Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon in the townlands of Callow or Runnawillin, Cloonmagunnaun, Keelbanada, Creggan and Ratra. It is situated on the south-western shore of Lough Gara and is underlain by Carboniferous limestone. The site is a candidate Special Area of Conservation selected for active raised bog, degraded raised bog and Rhynchosporion, habitats that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

Current landuse on the site consists of peat-cutting along much of the bog margins, apart from the north-east where the presence of Lough Gara has curtailed access and the bog margins are relatively intact. Afforestation has occurred on the high bog to the north of the site. Damaging activities associated with this landuse include drainage and burning. Fire damage was recorded in the 1980s when most of the bog was badly damaged. More recently, the large central flush area has been burnt and there is evidence of regular burning throughout the area. Apart from a few small areas of high bog to the north-west and south, most of the high bog has suffered burning in the recent past. These are all activities that have resulted in loss of habitat and damage to the hydrological status of the site, and that pose a continuing threat to its viability.

Callow Bog is of considerable conservation significance comprising as it does a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. Its semi-natural lake margins and its northerly location add to its overall conservation value. Active raised bog is listed as a priority habitat on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Priority status is given to habitats and species that are threatened throughout the E.U. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of this habitat type (over 60%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

#### ➤ **Derrinea Bog**

Derrinea Bog is a small raised bog site situated on the northern margin of Cloonagh Lough, just east of the Mayo/Roscommon border and approximately 10 km north-west of Ballyhaunis. A river emanating from Cloonagh Lough forms the eastern and northern boundary of the site, which features an extensive area of pools, quaking flats and well-developed hummocks.

Despite drainage and turf cutting in the western part of the site, the more easterly areas are remarkably wet and display an extensive mosaic of bog habitats which contribute to the value of the site.

### ➤ Cloonshanville Bog

Cloonshanville Bog is located approximately 2 km east of Frenchpark. The eastern boundary of the site is the Breedoge River, the southern the Frenchpark/Elphin road. It is underlain by low-permeability, clayey limestones. The bog developed in a shallow basin in a groundwater discharge zone. The regional watertable has been lowered, but evidence of groundwater inputs are seen on and around the high bog. Cloonshanville Bog is a large raised bog, a priority habitat listed on Annex I of the EU Habitat Directive.

A large flush area occurs in the centre of the bog dome. The main body of the flush supports an extensive area of bog woodland. This habitat is also listed as a priority Annex I habitat under the EU Habitats Directive and is an extremely rare Irish woodland type. The woodland is well-developed structurally and contains a diverse range of plant species. It is dominated by Birch (*Betula* sp.) with some Willow (*Salix* sp.) occurring, and with an understorey of tussocky Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*). Bog Myrtle (*Myrica gale*) occurs in places. Three areas of coniferous plantation have been included within the site for hydrological reasons. The Breedoge River, which marks the eastern boundary of the site, adds habitat diversity and is important for wildfowl, including Mallard and Snipe.

### ➤ Tullaghanrock Bog

Tullaghanrock Bog is situated approximately 5 km east of Ballaghaderreen and is located in the townlands of Tullaghan Rock and Creggan, Co. Roscommon. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover. The southern and eastern margins are bounded by the River Lung and the old Ballaghaderreen railway line adjoins the north-west margin.

The site is a candidate Special Area of Conservation selected for active raised bog, degraded raised bog and Rhynchosporion, habitats that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Active raised bog comprises areas of high bog that are wet and actively peat-forming, where the percentage cover of bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) is high, and where some or all of the following features occur: hummocks, pools, wet flats, *Sphagnum* lawns, flushes and soaks. Degraded raised bog corresponds to those areas of high bog whose hydrology has been adversely affected by peat cutting, drainage and other land use activities, but which are capable of regeneration.

Current landuse on the site consists of a small forestry plantation on the south-eastern high bog and another on the western margin. Areas of cutover have been reclaimed for agricultural grassland on the west and north-west margins and agricultural grazing occurs on the southern boundary. Peat-cutting no longer occurs on this site. While most of the drains are old and infilling, there are new deep drains around the forestry. Tullaghanrock Bog is a site of considerable conservation significance comprising as it does a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. This site supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats, including hummock/hollow complexes, pools, flushes and regenerating cutover. Active raised bog is listed as a priority habitat on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Priority status is given to habitats and species that are threatened throughout the E.U. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of this habitat type (over 60%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

### ➤ Coolcam Turlough

Coolcam Turlough lies in a complex area of eskers on the borders of Galway and Roscommon, south of Ballinlough. It is a typical, wet, western turlough, with a semipermanent lake with marl deposits, as well as several separate, more muddy basins which dry out in summer. The nearby eskers are sinuous, with a general north-south orientation - the turlough basin has this orientation also. The turlough has no permanent inflow but the main basin takes water from a boggy area to the north, and a smaller quantity from the south-west corner.

Bird counts carried out in summer, 1990, indicate that Mallard, Lapwing, Whimbrel and Dunlin possibly breed at the site. Heron and Curlew have also been recorded. Gravel pits exist on all sides of the turlough but they have not yet affected any of the eskers in the immediate vicinity. There is a large quarry to the south-east: activities here would influence the hydrology of the site should they extend below the watertable. The turlough is grazed by cattle and sheep. There is little intensive farming in the region.

Coolcam is an exceptional site in a fine landscape setting which involves two of the most distinctive habitats in Ireland - turlough and esker. It is one of the very few sites where these two features are juxtaposed. The site is little-damaged: the margins are fully intact, and the vegetation is diverse and natural in appearance. The close approach of other habitats to the turlough, especially bogland and partly wooded eskers adds to the value of the site, as it produces interesting transitional zones in the vegetation. Because of its wetness, Coolcam is an important site for birdlife. A survey of turloughs in Ireland rated Coolcam as the most valuable in the north Midlands, and rated it as being of international importance.

➤ **Kilsallagh Bog**

Kilsallagh Bog is a large raised bog with a largely intact dome set in a peat basin almost completely surrounded by mineral soil. It is situated about 7 km north of Glenamaddy. Most of the boundary, except in the far north, is on, or close to, the mineral soil, and so the site encloses most of the peat basin of Kilsallagh Bog. Damage has occurred in the form of a 12 ha conifer plantation on the dome, and more recently by 20 ha of regular drains which encroach onto the good quality central parts. Burning threatens the bog, causing drying of the surface. Red Grouse, a scarce and declining species in Ireland, breeds on the bog. Raised Bogs are an extremely threatened type in Ireland and Europe, due to peat extraction. Kilsallagh Bog is a good quality raised bog and therefore is of considerable conservation value.

➤ **Lisnageeragh Bog & Ballinastack Turlough**

This site comprises a large raised bog and a small turlough, situated about 3 km northeast of Glenamaddy in County Galway. The bog has a largely intact dome, approximately 50% of which is high quality raised bog habitat. This includes a small but active hummock/pool system in an isolated portion of the bog, in the south-west. Although fire has damaged this area a little, some large hummocks which occur as islands in the bogpools have escaped any damage. Three separate areas of long, winding pools occur, the best being in the centre of the bog.

The turlough attracts wintering waterfowl, which move between this site and other turloughs in the Glenamaddy area according to water levels and disturbance. Three species which are listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive occur – Greenland White-fronted Goose (60-80 average), Whooper Swan (up to 70 in recent winters) and Golden Plover (500-1000+). Wigeon is also regular in winter (up to 500), along with smaller numbers of other waterfowl species (above figures are based on counts carried out in the mid-1990s). Lisnageeragh Bog provides habitat for Red Grouse.

Raised Bogs are a rare habitat in Europe, and in Ireland they continue to be threatened by peat harvesting, drainage, afforestation and burning. The occurrence of a high proportion of good quality raised bog, a habitat listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive, with actively-growing Bog Moss communities makes this site of considerable ecological interest. The close association of a turlough, also listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive, which is in itself a valuable natural habitat and is important for waterfowl, enhances the diversity of the site.

### **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)**

The SPAs closest to Castlerea are indicated on Map 1 above and listed in the table below.

**Table 2: Special Protection Areas adjacent to Castlerea Development Plan area**

SITE	SITE CODE	COUNTY	PRINCIPLE SPECIES
Bellanagare Bog	004105	Co. Roscommon	Wintering ground; Greenland White Fronted Goose, Golden Plover and Red Grouse
Lough Gara	004048	Co. Roscommon/Sligo	Greenland White fronted Goose, Whooper Swan, Golden Plover

➤ **Bellanagare Bog**

Bellanagare Bog is a large bog situated 6 km north-north-east of Castlerea in Co. Roscommon. It is classified as a western, or intermediate, raised bog, showing as it does features of both raised bog and blanket bog. The bog is underlain by muddy Carboniferous limestone with a low permeability. The sub-soil is predominantly of clayey limestone till. The site lies in an upland area at the top of a surface catchment divide. The surface of the bog is undulating and the peat is concentrated on ridges, with flushes occurring in between. A number of streams, including the Frances River, rise on the site. The bog is traversed by several tracks. A large section of the site is in state ownership.

In the past, the bog was used by wintering Greenland White-fronted Geese from the population that is centred on Lough Gara. However, the geese now feed mainly on intensively managed grassland and seldom use the bogs in the area. The bog may have been used by nesting Golden Plover in the past and is occasionally used by small numbers of wintering birds. There is a good population of Red Grouse at the site. Other typical bog fauna present includes the Common Frog and the Irish Hare – both of these species are listed in the Irish Red Data Book.

While Bellanagare Bog SPA appears to have been abandoned by wintering Greenland White-fronted Geese, it is still of some ornithological importance as it supports a population of Red Grouse, a scarce and declining species in Ireland that is Red listed.

### ➤ *Lough Gara*

Lough Gara is a shallow (maximum depth 16 m), medium-sized lake which overlies Carboniferous limestones and shales, and Devonian sandstone. The main inflowing river is the River Lung while the main outflow is the Boyle River. There are two main sections to the lake, a larger northern basin and a smaller southern basin, joined by a narrow channel. The lake is classified as a mesotrophic system, with reduced planktonic algal growth noted in a recent sampling period (1998-2000). The shoreline is convoluted and has receded substantially from its original level due to various drainage schemes since the mid-19th century. The site includes several low-lying islands.

There are currently no activities taking place within the site which significantly affect the birds. Part of the site is a Wildfowl Sanctuary. Lough Gara SPA is of high ornithological importance principally on account of the internationally important Greenland White-fronted Goose population that is associated with the lake and also the high numbers of Whooper Swan. The occurrence of these species, along with Golden Plover, is of particular note as they are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

## 4.2 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

### 4.2.1 Describe the individual elements of the project be (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) that have the potential for having significant effects on the Natura 2000 site.

Notwithstanding the absence of official or published management plans or conservation objectives for specific sites, the Plan has been devised to ensure that uses, developments and effects arising from permissions based on the Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) will not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites<sup>2</sup> in so far as the objectives and criteria for determining the needs of such sites can be inferred from the relevant Site Synopses. There are no Natura 2000 sites within or in the immediate vicinity of the Plan area (within 3 km), no extension of the lands zoned under the previous 2008 land use plan is being considered.

This Local Area Plan aims to identify and analyse the key strategic planning issues concerning the area on the basis of in depth assessments of the Plan area, and sets out policies and objectives for the future development of the area. The Local Area Plan sets out a framework for the sustainable development of the lands within the plan boundaries, taking into consideration the requirements for social and community infrastructure, physical infrastructure, and economic and social development.

<sup>2</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. there must be:

- (a) no alternative solution available;
- (b) imperative reasons for overriding public interest, including those of a social and economic nature; and,
- (c) adequate compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected

The Development strategy is based on the main aims for Castlerea in terms of its growth as an important principle settlement accommodating residential, employment and services for a growing local community, while protecting and enhancing the unique built and natural heritage of the area. Each aim is linked to a set of policies that set out the long-term development framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of Castlerea. A detailed land use-zoning map is depicted in the Plan, which illustrates the Planning Authority's proposals for land-use zonings within the town. These land-use zonings have been designed to facilitate the proper planning and sustainable development of Castlerea and will be considered when assessing planning applications within the development envelope.

The Local Area Plan have been devised to facilitate and promote the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Its uses, developments and effects arising from permissions based on the Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans and projects) shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites.<sup>2</sup>

#### **4.2.2 Describe any likely direct/indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of:**

##### **1. Size and scale, area and land-take, etc**

No projects are approved which will give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts upon the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites arising from their size, scale, area and land take shall be permitted on the basis of this plan (either individually or in combination with other plans and projects).<sup>3</sup>

Residentially land zoned will be subject to a phasing programme for release which is based on the sequential approach. It is envisaged that those areas closest to the established residential areas and which have ready access to public services and facilities and would consolidate development in the area, should be developed first. No lands which cannot be serviced by public sewerage are being considered for development as part of the land use zoning process in this LAP.

##### **2. Distance from the Natura 2000 site or key feature of the site**

There are no Natura 2000 sites located within the Castlerea Local Plan area.

The closest Natura 2000 Site is situated circa. 4km to the west of the westernmost boundary of the Castlerea Local Area Plan. (See map for details of nearest Natura 2000 Sites). The Plan area is sufficiently distant from the closest Natura 2000 sites to ensure that impacts will not occur.

##### **3. Resource Requirements (Water abstraction etc.)**

- Water Supply

The implementation of the policies and objectives in this LAP will not impact on the drinking water sources in the Plan area. Groundwater provides the source of drinking water for this area. The Castlerea Urban Supply scheme is supplied by the Silver Island Spring groundwater source which lies to the north east of the plan area, approximately 1km outside the plan boundary. Given the limited population growth expected during the duration of the LAP and limited amount of lands zoned for new residential development during this period, it is unlikely that there will be significant additional burden on existing water supply during this time. The Closest Natura 2000 site to the Silver Island source is Corliskea/Trien/Cloonfeliv bog cSAC which is a raised bog closed environment, is located approximately 10km to the south west of this source. The Plan area is sufficiently distant from the closest Natura 2000 sites to ensure that impacts will not occur.

##### **4. Emissions and Waste (disposal to land, water or air)**

<sup>3</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. there must be:

- (a) no alternative solution available;
- (b) imperative reasons for overriding public interest, including those of a social and economic nature; and,
- (c) adequate compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected

- **Waste Water Collection and Disposal**

Disposal of wastewater will be via existing infrastructure and given the limited scale of new development planned for within this LAP and the existing available capacity to accommodate any planned growth during this period this will have negligible (if any) impacts on the Natura 2000 network. Waste-water collection and pumping station facilities are in place to service development within Castlerea Local Plan area.

- **Surface Water Disposal**

Disposal/ runoff of surface water will be via existing infrastructure and given the limited scale of new development planned for within this LAP disposal/runoff of surface water will have negligible (if any) impacts on the Natura 2000 network. The Flood Review Study of Roscommon has provided the council with measures for controlling inappropriate development especially within flood plains. The Council has a policy in the RCDP 2008 - 2014 to implement the objectives of this study. If the guidelines given in the flood review study are strictly adhered to then flooding in this area should not occur.

As indicated in the RCDP 2008 – 2014, it is an aim to have water quality within all the County's schemes defined as 'good status' by 2015. An integrated approach to management and monitoring of lake and river catchments areas is underway with the support of the DoEHLG. The GSI is also working with the Council in the preparation of Groundwater Protection schemes. The measures recommended in these plans will aid the protection of sources for both public and private water scheme supplies. The RCDP and LAP has also provided guidance concerning the control of development and associated septic tanks, identification of areas suitable for the spreading of slurry; and the framing and adoption of bye-laws by the Local Authority with regard to water quality.

It is considered that the policies and objectives set out in Chapter 3 of the Castlerea LAP and the amendments within this chapter will address environmental concerns in relation to water provision within the Castlerea LAP area.

- **Excavation requirements**

There are no excavation requirements as part of this LAP which would have an effect on the Natura 2000 network. The Council has placed certain restrictions on quarrying close to Eskers and geological features of regional importance. This may be applied if deemed necessary to the LAP.

## **5. Transportation requirements**

Given that there are no Natura 2000 site within or adjacent to the LAP area the LAP will not involve the construction or alteration of roads within or adjacent to the Natura 2000 network. The amendments will not have a significant impact upon transportation requirements. Any increase in population and visitors to the town as a result of the development within the plan area may create an impact upon the infrastructure and necessity of service provision. It is noted that the infrastructure in place in the Plan area is capable of facilitating development and the National Secondary (N60) road network serving the town is satisfactory. Large scale additional zoning is not proposed for the lifetime of the 2012-2018 Plan.

## **6. Plan implementation period**

The Castlerea Local Area Plan will be in effect from 2012 – 2018.

## **7. Physical changes that will flow from the project or plan (from excavation, piling, dredging, etc.)**

No specific projects are detailed within the LAP. No land is zoned and / or no projects, giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites arising

from their size, scale, area and land take, shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans and projects).<sup>6</sup>

## **8. Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc**

No specific projects are detailed within the LAP. No land is zoned and / or no projects, giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites arising from their size, scale, area and land take, shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans and projects).<sup>5</sup>

### **4.2.3 Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of:**

#### **1. Loss or Reduction of habitat area**

Roscommon County Council has not zoned land for development in these areas. The protection of these areas is clearly indicated within the RCDP 2008-2014 and this Plan. There are no Natura 2000 sites within or immediately adjacent the LAP boundary. It is considered that the closest Natura 2000 sites are sufficiently distant from the LAP area to ensure no loss or reduction of habitat area as a result of the policies and objectives of this LAP.

#### **2. Habitat or Species Fragmentation**

There are no SPAs or SACs in the Castlerea Local Area Plan area. The closest SPA, Bellanagare Bog has been identified in Chapter 6 of the Castlerea LAP. SPAs, NHAs and SACs have all been highlighted in Chapter 6 of the Castlerea LAP. Developments with potential to affect Natura 2000 sites will be required to conform to the Habitats Directive especially in respect to the need for an appropriate assessment. No development will be permitted that could give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites. The Local Area Plan will not have a significant impact upon habitat or species fragmentation. The protection of these areas is clearly indicated within the RCDP 2008 – 2014. No projects which will give rise to reduction of habitat areas or species fragmentation for the Natura 2000 sites shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).<sup>7</sup>

#### **3. Disturbance to key species**

There are no SPAs or SACs in the Castlerea Local Area Plan area. The closest SPA, Bellanagare Bog has been identified in Chapter 6 of the Castlerea LAP. SPAs, NHAs and SACs have all been highlighted in Chapter 6 of the Castlerea LAP. Developments with potential to affect Natura 2000 sites will be required to conform to the Habitats Directive especially in respect to the need for an appropriate assessment. No development will be permitted that could give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites. The Local Area Plan will not have a significant impact upon disturbance to key species. The protection of these areas is clearly indicated within the RCDP 2008 – 2014. No projects which will give rise to disturbance to key species for the Natura 2000 sites shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).<sup>7</sup>

#### **4. Reduction in species density**

There are no SPAs or SACs in the Castlerea Local Area Plan area. The closest SPA, Bellanagare Bog has been identified in Chapter 6 of the Castlerea LAP. SPAs, NHAs and SACs have all been highlighted in Chapter 6 of the Castlerea LAP. Developments with potential to affect Natura 2000 sites will be required to conform to the Habitats Directive especially in respect to the need for an appropriate assessment. No development will be permitted that could give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites. The Local Area Plan will not have a significant impact a reduction in species density. The protection of these areas is clearly indicated within the RCDP 2008 – 2014. No projects which will give rise to reduction in species density for the Natura 2000 sites shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. there must be:  
(a) no alternative solution available;

## **5. Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water analysis, etc.)**

There are no SPAs or SACs in the Castlerea Local Area Plan area. The closest SPA, Bellanagare Bog has been identified in Chapter 6 of the Castlerea LAP. SPAs, NHAs and SACs have all been highlighted in Chapter 6 of the Castlerea LAP.

The protection of these areas is clearly indicated within the RCDP 2008 – 2014. No projects which will give rise to changes in key indicators of conservation value for the Natura 2000 sites shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).<sup>7</sup>

## **6. Climate change**

A number of policies and objectives have been included in this Plan which will ensure that the production of greenhouse gases will be significantly reduced by either the construction of energy efficient homes and policies relating to the use of renewable energy. It is considered that the Castlerea Local Area Plan will not have a significant impact upon climate change.

### **4.2.4 Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of:**

#### **1. Interference with the key relationship that define the structure of the site**

There are no Natura 2000 sites within or immediately adjacent the LAP boundary. It is considered that the closest Natura 2000 sites are sufficiently distant from the LAP area to ensure no impact on the relationships that define the structure of the Natura 2000 sites will arise from the LAP.

#### **2. Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site**

There are no Natura 2000 sites within or immediately adjacent the LAP boundary. It is considered that the closest Natura 2000 sites are sufficiently distant from the LAP area to ensure that there will be no interference with the key relationships that define the function of the Natura 2000 sites which are in the proximity of the Castlerea LAP area.

### **4.2.5 Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:**

1. Loss - Not applicable
2. Fragmentation - Not applicable
3. Disruption - Not applicable
4. Disturbance - Not applicable
5. Change to key elements of the site (water quality etc.) - Not applicable
5. **Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.**

Not Applicable

## **6. Conclusion**

Therefore, the Castlerea Local Area Plan is not considered to have a significant impact upon any Natura 2000 sites. As already outlined there are no Natura 2000 sites within the Castlerea LAP area and the closest

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(b) imperative reasons for overriding public interest, including those of a social and economic nature; and,  
 (c) adequate compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected

is Cloonchambers bog, approximately 3km to the west of the westernmost periphery of the LAP development envelope. As set out above; Roscommon County Council have put in place policies and objectives to protect the Natura 2000 sites. Developments in close proximity to these areas will be subject to environmental impact assessment and these assessments will assess the impacts of the development on the Natura 2000 sites, and list any mitigation measures to be employed by a developer to eliminate/mitigate against any impacts.



## PART B: SCREENING DECISION

### 5. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS REPORT

#### 5.1 NAME OF PLAN

##### 5.1.1 Name of project or plan

Castlerea Local Area Plan 2012 – 2018

##### 5.1.2 Name and location of Natura 2000 sites (See Map 1; Section 4)

There are no SACs or SPAs within the Castlerea LAP envelope. The closest Natura 2000 sites, in relation to the Castlerea LAP area, Cloonchambers Bog (c SAC) and Drumalough Bog (c SAC) are upstream of the Castlerea LAP envelope.

Of the 29 candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) in County Roscommon, those adjacent to the Castlerea development plan area are indicated on the Map above and listed in the table below.

**Table 1: Candidate Special Areas of Conservation adjacent to Castlerea Development Plan area**

SITE	SITE CODE	COUNTY	PRINCIPLE HABITAT
Bellanagare Bog	000592	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog
Carrowbehy/Cahir Bog	000597	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog
Cloonchambers Bog	000600	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog and Alkaline Fen
Corliskea/Trien/Cloonfella Bog	002110	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog and Bog Woodland
Drumalough Bog	002338	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog
Mullygallon Turlough	000612	Co. Roscommon	Turlough
Cloonshanville bog	000614	Co. Roscommon	Raised Bog
Lough Gara	004048	Co. Sligo/Roscommon	Shallow lake
Callow Bog	000595	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog
Coolcam Turlough	000218	Co. Roscommon	Turlough
Derrinea Bog	000604	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog
Lisnageeragh Bog & Ballinastack Turlough	000296	Co. Galway	Active Raised Bog, Turlough
Kilsallagh Bog	000285	Co. Galway	Active Raised Bog
Tullaghanrock Bog	002354	Co. Roscommon	Active Raised Bog

The SPAs closest to Castlerea are indicated on Map 1 above and listed in the table below.

**Table 2: Special Protection Areas adjacent to Castlerea Development Plan area**

SITE	SITE CODE	COUNTY	PRINCIPLE SPECIES
Bellanagare Bog	004105	Co. Roscommon	Wintering ground; Greenland White Fronted Goose, Golden Plover and Red Grouse
Lough Gara	004048	Co. Roscommon/Sligo	Greenland White fronted Goose, Whooper Swan, Golden Plover

### 5.1.3 Description of the plan or project

The purpose of the Castlerea Local Area Plan 2012-2018 is to provide a framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town through the provision of policies and objectives to ensure this. The plan will be in operation for a six year period from 2012 to 2018, unless amended. It aims to co-ordinate the reasonable needs and aspirations of the people of Castlerea, maximise the best-use of its resources, promote its economic and social development, while preserving the best of its natural and built environment and unique character. The plan consists of a written statement and maps which give a graphic representation of the proposals of the plan, and includes land use zoning. In addition, the plan consists of a set of broad aims and provides guidance in the form of policies and objectives for the development of social, physical and environmental infrastructure in a sustainable manner.

The Castlerea Local Area Plan will replace the Castlerea Area Plan which forms part of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2008 – 2014. Large scale additional zoning is not proposed for the lifetime of the 2012-2018 Plan.

In recent years increased development pressure has led to much new development occurring within and around the town, therefore the development boundary proposed as part of the 2008 – 2014 land use plan will be reconsidered as part of this revision process. The process for establishing a new plan boundary will consider the following:

- Aims of the LAP
- Existing development in the town
- National and Regional level policy
- Predicted future population target
- Likely future development needs
- Proper planning and sustainable development

The Housing Strategy for County Roscommon 2008-2014 provides an indicative distribution for the provision of new household formations for the plan period. The figure for Castlerea is 110 new households. This indicative distribution requires flexibility though to address changes in current, emerging and future local circumstances. Sufficient residentially zoned land will be provided to accommodate the population growth over the plan period. As outlined, flexibility is required to address changes in current, emerging and future local circumstance,<sup>5</sup> and to allow enough residentially zoned land to cater for demand, taking into consideration that portions may not be released for development. The plan will also seek to zone sufficient land for community facilities and services to sustain the community during the lifetime of the plan. In addition to considering and meeting the needs of the community, the plan will aim to enhance and protect the built and natural environment taking into consideration the principles of sustainable development.

### 5.1.4 Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (provide details)?

The Plan is not directly connected with or necessary for the management of designated sites. The LAP analyses the Castlerea LAP envelope and sets out principles for the future development of this area. The primary function of this Local Area Plan is to establish policies and objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The Local Area Plan provides a framework for the sustainable development of the land within the envelope taking into consideration the requirements for physical and social development. The Plan will include measures to protect, conserve and manage in a prudent and sustainable manner, Castlerea's outstanding natural heritage including adjacent Natura 2000 sites and to seek the enhancement of these resources where appropriate and feasible.

### 5.1.5 Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)?

This development plan forms part of a hierarchy of National, regional and county level planning framework and policy documents, specifically the Roscommon CDP, National Spatial Strategy and the Regional

<sup>5</sup> Housing Strategy for County Roscommon, 2008, p.29

Planning Guidelines. The main environmental objectives of these policies and strategies are to protect the environment and to maintain a sustainable environment.

The preparation of the LAP allows for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Its uses, developments and effects arising from permissions based on the Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans and projects) shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites.<sup>6</sup>

## 5.2 THE ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

### 5.2.1 Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site.

The preparation of the LAP facilitates and promotes the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Its uses, developments and effects arising from permissions based on the Plan centre individually or in combination with other plans and projects and shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites.<sup>6</sup>

### 5.2.2 Explain why these affects are not considered significant

The purpose of the Castlerea Local Area Plan is to set out policies and objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. It sets a framework for the sustainable development of the land within the envelope taking into consideration the requirements for residential development, social and community infrastructure, physical infrastructure, economic and industrial development and the need for greenbelt / environmental corridors to link various uses. Policies and objectives have been formulated to anticipate and avoid the need for development that would be likely to significantly and adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites. A number of environmental policies and objectives have been included within the plan to ensure that they are adequately protected and developments permitted within the Plan area shall be required to conform to the relevant regulatory provisions for the prevention of pollution, nuisance or other environmental effects likely to significantly adversely affect the integrity of any of the Natura 2000 sites.

The Screening process considered the potential significant affects of the LAP on 14 cSAC's and 2 SPA's within a 15km radius of the LAP boundary, the closest of which was a cSAC approximately 4 Km to the west of the LAP boundary. The process considered the LAP in terms of size and scale, area and land take, distance, resource requirements, emissions and waste, transportation requirements, plan implementation period and physical changes flowing from the plan. The process also considered the LAP in the context of the above Natura 2000 sites in terms of loss or reduction of habitat area, habitat or species fragmentation, disturbance to key species, reduction in species density, changes in key indicators of conservation value and climate change.

The process concluded that the Castlerea Local Area Plan is not considered to have a significant impact upon any Natura 2000 sites. As already outlined there are no Natura 2000 sites within the Castlerea LAP area and the closest is Cloonchambers bog, approximately 3km to the west of the westernmost periphery of the LAP development envelope. As set out above; Roscommon County Council have put in place policies and objectives to protect the Natura 2000 sites. Developments in close proximity to these areas will be subject to environmental impact assessment and these assessments will assess the impacts of the development on the Natura 2000 sites, and list any mitigation measures to be employed by a developer to eliminate/mitigate against any impacts.

Note: There are no official management plans for these sites. Accordingly conservation objectives had to be inferred for use in the evaluation of likely effects.

<sup>6</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. there must be:

- (a) no alternative solution available;
- (b) imperative reasons for overriding public interest, including those of a social and economic nature; and,
- (c) adequate compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected

### 5.2.3 List of Agencies consulted: Provide contact names and telephone numbers or e-mail addresses

**1. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

----- Environmental Protection Agency, Regional Inspectorate, Inniscarra, County Cork. Tel. 021 487 5540

**2. Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG)**

----- Development Applications Unit, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dún Scéine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin 2. Tel. 01 888 3105

**3. Dept. of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (MCMNR)**

----- Co-ordination Unit, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCMNR), 29-31 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2

### 5.2.3 Response to Consultations

The **Environmental Protection Agency** only commented on the SEA screening.

Both the **Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government** and the **Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources** have no comment at this time.

## 5.3 DATA COLLECTED TO CARRY OUT THE ASSESSMENT

### 5.3.1 Who carried out the Assessment?

CAAS Ltd, The Courtyard, 25 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1

Forward Planning Unit, Planning Section, Roscommon County Council, Golf Links Road, Roscommon

### 5.3.2 Sources of Data

Existing records

Screening Report for the SEA for Roscommon County Development Plan 2008-2014.

Castlerea LAP 2012 - 2018

Roscommon County Development Plan 2008 – 2014

### 5.3.3 Level of assessment completed

Desktop study.

### 5.3.4 Where can the full results of the assessment be assessed and viewed?

This screening report and decision with the Castlerea Local Area Plan 2012-2018 is available for inspection at the following locations;

The Planning Office, Roscommon County Council, Golf Links Road, Roscommon, during the hours 9.30 a.m.–1.00 p.m. and 2.00 p.m.–4.30p.m., Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays.

Other locations where the Plan may be viewed: -

- The Customer Services Desk, Roscommon County Council, The Courthouse, Roscommon
- The Boyle Area Office, Bridge Street, Boyle, Co. Roscommon
- The Castlerea Area Office, County Council Offices, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon
- Boyle Branch Library, King House, Boyle, Co. Roscommon
- Castlerea Branch Library, Main Street, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon  
(Please contact your local Branch Library for opening hours)
- On Roscommon County Council's website at: [www.roscommoncoco.ie](http://www.roscommoncoco.ie)

## 5.4 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Having reviewed the Castlerea LAP in accordance with the Methodological guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, a “Screening Matrix” and a “Finding of no significant effects matrix” have been completed. These matrices are included in the sections of this report.

The primary need for an appropriate assessment would be if the Plan were likely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. The Local Area Plan has been formulated to ensure that uses, development and effects arising from permissions based upon this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites.<sup>7</sup>

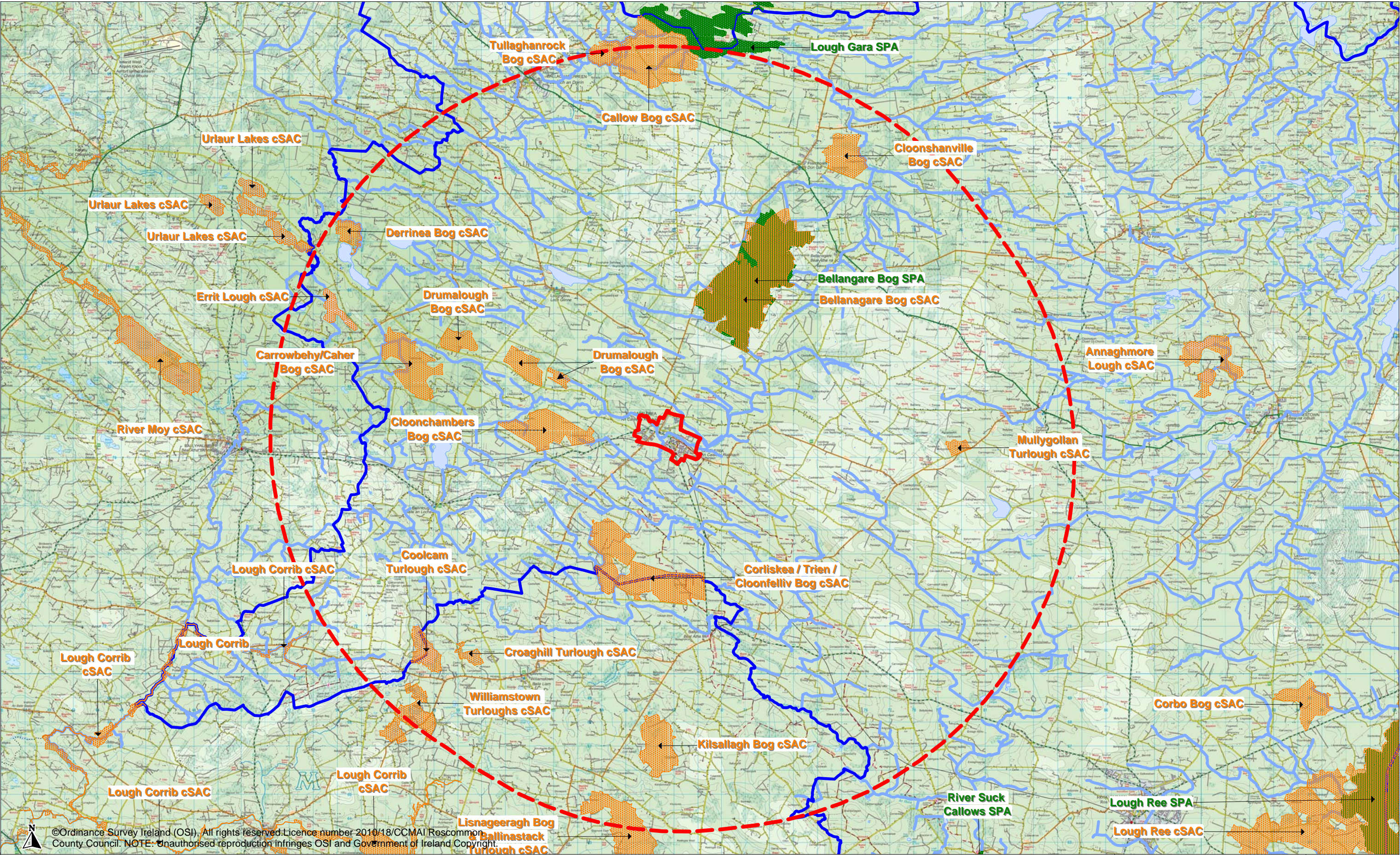
This screening report concludes that the Castlerea Local Area Plan does not require further appropriate assessment.

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<sup>7</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. there must be:

- (a) no alternative solution available;
- (b) imperative reasons for overriding public interest, including those of a social and economic nature; and,
- (c) adequate compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected





**Legend**

- Roscommon County Boundary
- Castlereah LAP Boundary 2012-2018
- 15km buffer around Castlereah

- candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC)
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes

**Castlereah  
Local Area Plan 2012-2018**

**Map 1  
Location of Natura 2000  
Sites adjacent to Castlereah**

**Scale:** N.t.s. **Drawn by:** JC **Date:** April 2012



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