APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING OF PROPOSED BOYLE LIBRARY PROJECT, BOYLE, Co. ROSCOMMON

Appropriate Assessment Screening

In accordance with the requirements of Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC)

PREPARED FOR

Roscommon County Council

By
Caroline Shiel, B.Sc., Ph.D.
Edenville,
Kinlough,
Co. Leitrim
(087) 2851148
carolineshiel@outlook.com

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CONTENTS

Author Details

This Appropriate Assessment screening report was prepared by Dr Caroline Shiel, Consulting Ecologist, Edenville, Kinlough, Co. Leitrim.

Dr Shiel holds a first class honours BSc degree in zoology (1989) from University College Galway (now NUIG). She was awarded a PhD in zoology in 1998, also from University College Galway.

Dr Shiel has worked as a consulting ecologist since 1990 and has over 30 years' experience in conducting field surveys specialising in mammal ecology.

1. INTRODUCTION

This Appropriate Assessment Screening report has been prepared in compliance with Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2009, February 2010) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (DoEHLG) to assess the potential impact of the proposed Boyle Library Project, Boyle, Co. Roscommon on the Natura 2000 network in view of the sites' conservation objectives.

The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the "favourable conservation status" of habitats and species of European Community interest. Special areas of conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) have been designated and are collectively known as European sites.

The proposed site is located in the centre of Boyle town, adjacent to the River Boyle. The River Boyle flows in a north-easterly direction through Boyle town and is a tributary of the River Shannon, which it joins c. 57km downstream. At the confluence of the River Boyle with the River Shannon the River Shannon is a SAC (Lower River Shannon SAC 002165)
The closest protected Natura 2000 sites to the site are Lough Gara SPA (6.2km), Lough Arrow SPA (6.9 km), Lough Arrow SAC (6.5 km) and Bricklieve Mountains / Keshcorran SAC (7.1km).

This screening report provides the information required to establish if the project likely to have a significant effect, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on European site(s) in view of the site's conservation objectives.

2. PROTECTED SITES

International Conservation Designations

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora) forms the basis for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). It lists certain habitats (Annex I) and species (Annex II) for special protection. Similarly, Special Protection Areas (SPA) are classified under the Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds). Collectively, SACs and SPAs are referred to as the Natura 2000 network.

In general terms, they are considered to be of exceptional importance for rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats and species within the European Community. The Screening Assessment is carried out in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), which attempts to ensure the conservation of a wide range of rare, threatened or endemic animal and plant species through the assessment of the potential adverse effects of a plan or project on SACs and SPAs.
An Appropriate Assessment is an evaluation of the potential impacts of a plan or project on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site, and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects.

Appropriate Assessment Screening

Appropriate Assessment screening takes into consideration the likely effects on any protected site (SAC or SPA) within 15km of the proposed works site in terms of the conservation objectives for the sites. These sites provide for the protection and long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. Appropriate Assessment screening also takes into consideration the effects of in-combination/cumulative effects of any other plans/projects in the area.

The DoEHLG (2009) Guidance on AA recommends a 15km buffer zone be used. A review of all sites within the 15km Zone of Influence has allowed a determination to be made that in the absence of significant hydrological links the project will not impose effects beyond this 15km buffer.

Natura 2000 sites beyond 15km from the proposed work site are considered to be outside the Zone of Influence.

European sites that occur within 15km of the project site are listed in Table 1. Table 1 also includes details on specific Qualifying Interests and SCIs for each European site.

There are seven protected sites in the European NATURA network within 15 km of the proposed site.

These sites are illustrated in Figure 1 and listed in Table 1 below.

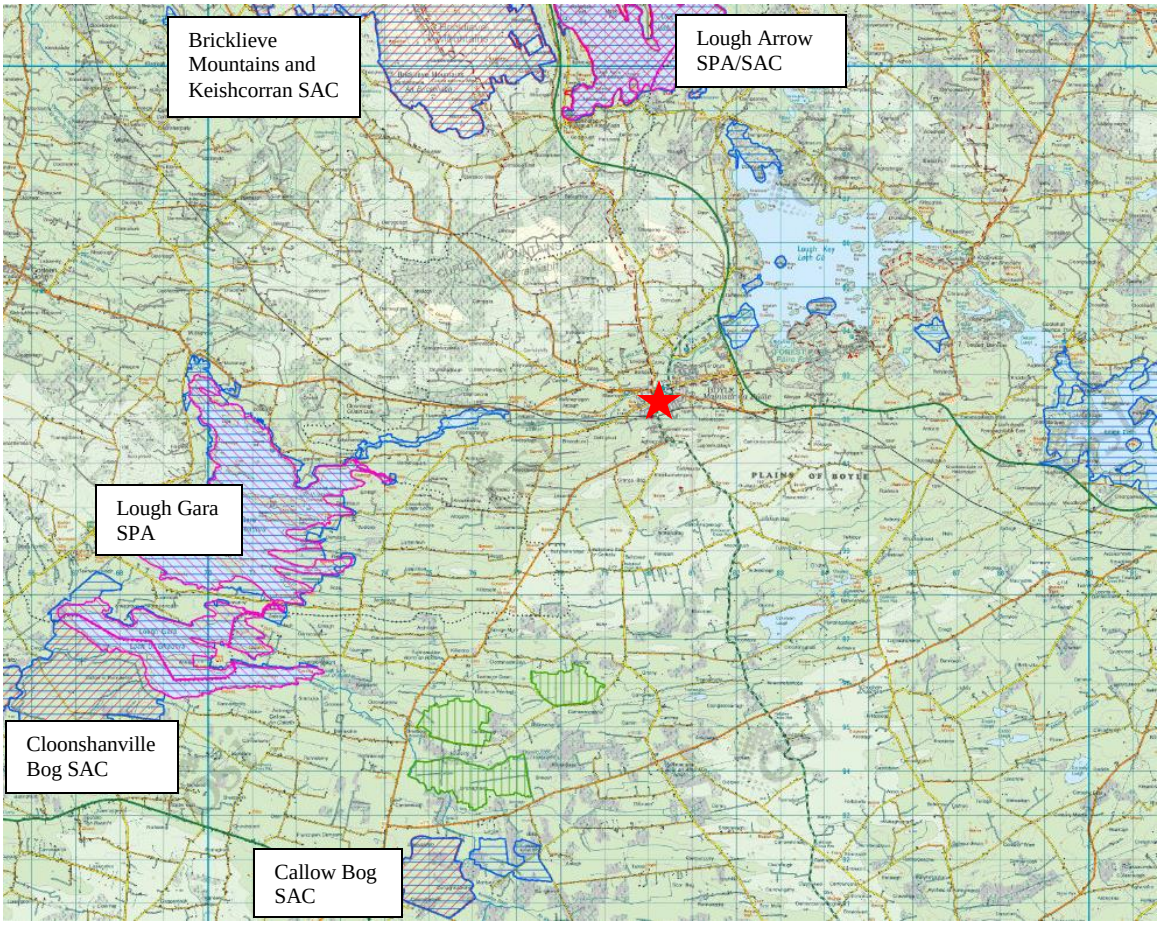

Figure 1 – Natura Sites within 15km of Boyle Library project

SITE	SITE CODE	DISTANCE FROM SITE	QUALIFYING FEATURES (Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests)	SITE DESCRIPTION AND VULNERABILITY/THREATS
Lough Gara SPA	004048	c.6.2 km to south west	Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038] Greenland White-fronted Goose (Answer albifrons flavirostris) [A395]	Lough Gara is located on the Co.Sligo/Roscommon border south-west of the Curlew Mountains and between the towns of Boyle and Ballaghaderreen.It is a shallow (maximum depth 16m), 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 River Boyle. The lake 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. **No site specific threats were identified by NPWS**.
Lough Arrow SPA	004050	c. 6.9 km to north	Little Grebe (Tachybaptus ruficollis) [A004] Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula) [A061] Wetlands and Waterbirds [A999]	Lough Arrow is a large limestone lake situated almost entirely within Co. Sligo with a small section extending into Co. Roscommon. It is sheltered on three sides by hills and is the source of the Unshin River which flows north-westwards from its northern end. The average depth of the water is 9m (max 33m). The lake is classified as a mesotrophic system. There is a well-developed submerged aquatic flora with a notable charophyte community. The shores of the lake are mostly stony, though several bays occur in which Common Club-rush (Scirpus lacustris) and Common reed (Phragmites australis) and found in abundance. **No site specific threats were identified by NPWS**
Lough Arrow SAC	001673	c. 6.5km to north	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140	Lough Arrow, located in Counties Sligo and Roscommon, is a large limestone lake that conforms to a type listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Lough Arrow is unusual in being a mesotrophic natural lake which has changed little in the past 40 years. It is largely spring-fed and very sheltered for its size, and, as such, is hydrologically different from most other lakes. **No site specific threats were identified by NPWS**
Bricklieve Mountains & Keishcorran SAC	001656	c. 7.1km km to north west	Turloughs [3180] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates	The Bricklieve Mountains and Keishcorran are located west of Lough Arrow and approximately 6km north-west of Boyle town. The site is located in Co. Sligo. The site is a large

			(Festuco-Brometalia) (*important orchid sites) [6210] Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis) [6510] Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (Thlaspietea rotundifolii) [8120] Euphydryas aurinia (Marsh fritillary) [1065] Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]	isolated block of carboniferous limestone that reaches a height of approximately 300m. Typical landscape features associated with karst topography are present, including caves, dry valleys and limestone pavement. **The main treats to the diverse flora of this site are the application of artificial fertilisers, overgrazing by domestic stock, burning, quarrying, turf-cutting and afforestation. The area has probably been grazing since prehistoric times and is in equilibrium with the present prevailing land use. This equilibrium needs to be maintained as a reduction in grazing pressure would result in the spread of scrub vegetation and over-grazing would lead to poaching and loss in vegetation cover and diversity**.
Cloonshanville Bog SAC	000614	c. 11km to south west	Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] Bog woodland [91D0]	Cloonshanville Bog is located approximately 2km east of Frenchpark in Co. Roscommon. The eastern boundary of the site is the Breedoge River, while the southern is the Frenchpark/Elphin Road. The bog developed in a shallow basin in a groundwater discharge zone and is underlain by low-permeability, clayey limestones. **Much of the uncut high bog is in a degraded state as a result of drainage associated with peat cutting. Afforestation has also affected the integrity of the bog. Additionally, it is possible that dredging of the adjacent river may, indirectly, have a deleterious effect on the hydrology of the habitat. Further dying out of the surface of the bog remains a threat.**
Callow Bog SAC	000595	c. 13 km to south west	Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]	Callow Bog is located approximately 7km north-west of Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon. It is situated on the south-western shore of Lough Gara and is underlain by carboniferous limestone. The site includes both areas of high bog and cut over. He high bog consists of five lobes dissected by roads and a stream. Overall the high bog is relatively flat with slight slopes north to Lough Gara. Two wet areas with pools occur. The high bog also supports a very large central flush. The River Lung flows near the north-western boundary of the site and there is a low-relief drumlin to the northwest of the bog. To the south, the raised bog is surrounded by

				agricultural land. Current land use 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 land use 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**.**
Unshin River SAC	001898	c. 14.2 km to north	Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (*important orchid sites) [6210] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]	The River Unshin runs from Lough Arrow north to Ballysadare Bay, Co. Sligo. The river is largely undrained and unaltered along much of its course. The marginal vegetation associated with the river is also included in the site, along with other semi-natural habitats adjacent to the river (included in order to enhance its protection). Many of these habitat types are interesting and of conservation value in their own right. Other watercourses included within the site are the Owenboy/ Owenbeg and a number of smaller tributaries. The Unshin River flows across a number of geological boundaries between sandstone, shales and limestone. This results in unusual physico-chemical qualities which in turn are reflected in the rich and varied plant and animal populations. **No site-specific threats were identified by NPWS**

Table 1 – Protected Sites with 15km of works site

Only one of the seven sites listed in Table 1 is hydrologically linked to the proposed work site. The River Boyle which flows past the site flows out of Lough Gara (SAC 004048) c. 6km upstream of site. The River Boyle flows through Boyle town and enters Lough Key c. 2 km north east of the site. Lough Key is not designated as a Natura 2000 site. The River Boyle does not enter a SAC until c.57km downstream where it enters the River Shannon (Lower River Shannon SAC 002165).

3. METHODOLOGY OF SCREENING

This screening report examines whether the effects of the proposed construction of Boyle Library is likely to have a significant effect on any of the seven SACs within 15km of the site.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision- making tests for plans and projects likely to affect European sites. Article 6 (3) establishes the requirement for AA –

"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In 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.

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the [Natura 2000] 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, Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission pf the compensatory measures adopted.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or 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"

Appropriate Assessment

The assessment of a proposed project likely to affect a Natura 2000 site is a 4-stage process

The relevant guidance documents for Appropriate Assessment set out a staged process for carrying out Appropriate Assessment, the first of which is referred to as screening.

Stage 1 – Screening The screening stage identifies the likely impacts on Natura 2000 sites, if any, which would arise from a proposed plan or project, either alone, or in

combination with other plans and projects, and further considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.
If it can be concluded during the screening exercise that there is no likelihood of significant impacts occurring on any Natura 2000 sites, as a result of the proposed development either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, then there is no requirement to proceed to subsequent stages of Appropriate Assessment.

If it is not possible to conclusively rule out significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites , the assessment should proceed to **Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment** for which a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) must be prepared.

Stage 3 of the process is **Assessment of Alternative Solutions** which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the plan or project that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

Stage 4 Assessment where Adverse Impacts Remain is an assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. Ecological impact assessment of potential effects on European sites is conducted following a standard source-pathway-receptor model.
In relation to this site the Source would be pollutant run-off, Pathways are groundwater/River Boyle connecting to nearby qualifying habitats, Receptors are the qualifying aquatic habitats and species of the connected European site.
The AA needs to be fully integrated with the various stages of the development plan process in order to ensure that the ecological implications of the project do not affect any areas designated as European sites.
The proposed construction of Boyle Library does not comply with the first screening test as the proposed development is not directly connected to, or necessary for the management of any Natura 2000 site. This screening exercise will therefore inform the Appropriate Assessment process in determining whether the proposed development, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites within the study area.
If effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overtly complicated, then the Appropriate Assessment process must proceed to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

3.1 Guidance and Data Sources

The following documents have been used to complete this Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities. (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010).
- Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites (2001) and Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provision of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive (2018)
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities (Reference: NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10).
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites - The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.
- Appropriate Assessment Mapping Tool at www.gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/AAGeoTool

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

This screening report examines whether the proposed construction of Boyle Library and associated works will have any significant impacts on the seven Natura 2000 sites that are situated within 15km of the site.

The site of the proposed library is in the centre of Boyle town adjacent to the southern bank of the River Boyle. It lies to the rear of The Royal Hotel which is currently undergoing extensive redevelopment. The proposed library building is two-storey in height with a civic space to the east of the building.

At this location, the banks of the river have been altered and are comprised of manmade built banks. There is very little bank vegetation, apart from a stand of willow on the river bank. Within the site boundary, there are no natural habitats present. The site is classified as Buildings and Built Surfaces (BL3) - Fossitt, 2000.

Figure 2 is an aerial photo of the proposed site with an outline of the site superimposed on the photo. Figure 3 is a design plan prepared for the project.

Figure 2 – aerial photo of site with outline of proposed development indicated in red

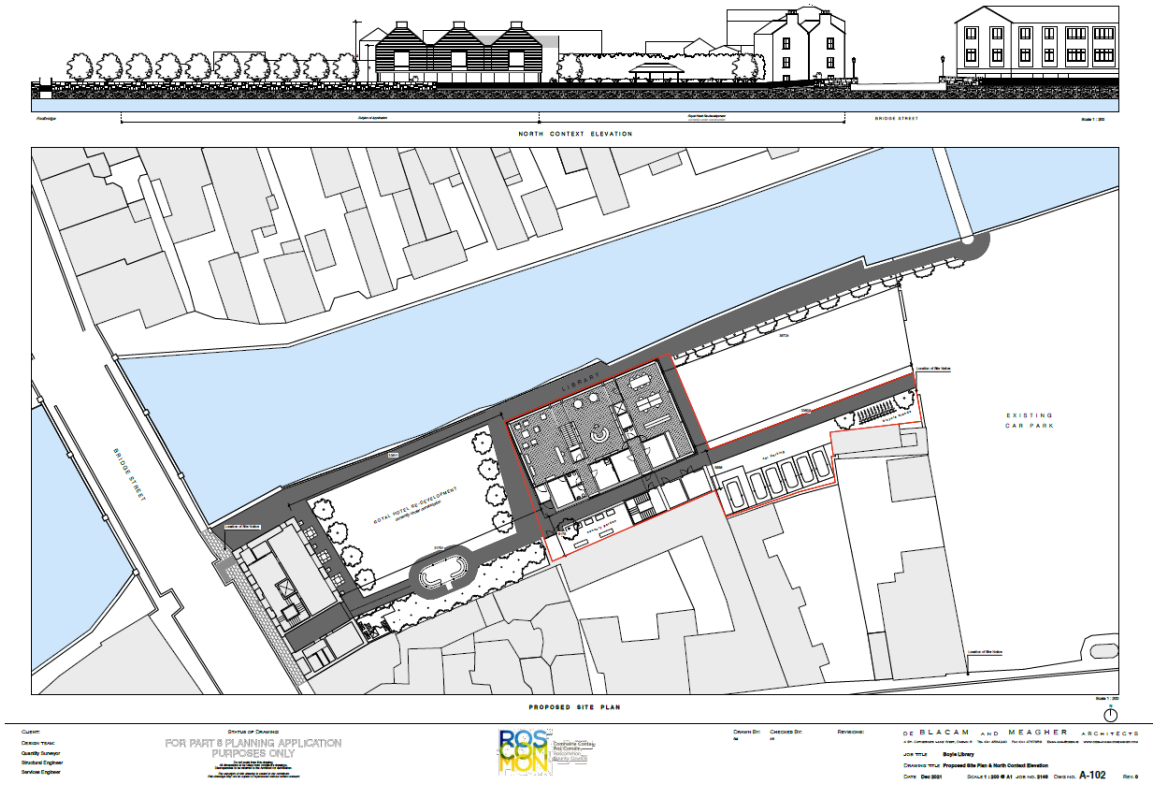

Figure 3 – plan of site and profile of building

5. SCOPE OF THE WORKS

Proposed Works

- Construction of a new two-storey library building on site
- Construction of a new civic space to the east of the new building
- All associated site and ancillary works

A site visit was conducted on 14th January 2022. A range of photos were taken on site and from the opposite site of the River Boyle looking across the river towards the proposed site.

Photo 1 – site of proposed library building to rear of Royal Hotel (currently undergoing extensive renovation)

Photo 2 – showing proximity of site to River Boyle

Photo 3 – proposed library building will be constructed to the rear of this large stone warehouse building

Photo 4 – An open civic space will be constructed to the west of the library building

Photo 5 – close up of stonework in rear wall of warehouse. This building has high potential as a bat roost. It will not be affected by the proposed development

Photo 6 – close up of stonework in rear wall of warehouse. This building has high potential as a bat roost. It will not be affected by the proposed development

Photo 7 – looking west along site from area of proposed amenity area

Photo 8 – looking west along site from area of proposed amenity area

Photo 9 – south west corner of proposed amenity area adjacent to stone warehouse

Photo 10 – looking across River Boyle towards proposed site

Photo 11 – looking across River Boyle towards proposed site

6. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

This stage of the process identifies any likely significant effects to European sites from a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. The screening phase was progressed in the following stages. A series of questions are asked during the screening stage of the AA process in order to determine

- Whether a plan or project can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site; and
- Whether the project will have a potentially significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, in view of the site's conservation objectives or if residual uncertainty exists regarding potential impacts.

The proposed construction of Boyle Library does not comply with the first screening test as the proposed development is not directly connected to, or necessary for the management of any Natura 2000 site. This screening exercise will therefore inform the Appropriate Assessment process in determining whether the proposed development, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites within the study area.

If effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overtly complicated, then the Appropriate Assessment process must proceed to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

An important element of the AA process is the identification of the "conservation objectives", "Qualifying interests (QIs) and/or Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of European sites requiring assessment. Qualifying Interests are the habitat features and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive for which each European site has been designated and afforded protection. SCIs are wetland habitats and bird species listed within Annex I and II of the Birds Directive. Threats to the ecological/environmental conditions that are required to support Qis and SCIs are considered as vital part of the assessment.

Site-Specific Conservation Objectives SSCOs have been designed to define favourable conservation status for a particular habitat or species at that site. According to the European Commission interpretation document "Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC paragraph 4.6 (3) states "The integrity of a site involves its ecological functions. The decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on and be limited to the sites conservation objectives."

Favourable Conservation status of a habitat is achieved when

- Its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing;
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future; and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when

- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future; and

- There is, and will probably continue to be , a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Desktop Study
The ecological desktop study completed for this AA of the project comprised the following elements:

- Identification of European sites within 15km with identification of potential pathways links for specific sites greater than 15km from the proposed development site
- Review of the NPWS site synopsis and conservation objectives for European sites with identification of potential pathways from the proposed development, and
- A series of ecological desktop studies were undertaken to collate information on protected species including bats, otters, birds, Annex II habitat types, protected flora, invertebrates and amphibians

National Biodiversity Data Centre Records
Consultation with NBDC maps revealed that there are records of Freshwater Crayfish *Austropotomobius pallipies* from the River Boyle close to where it flows out of Lough Gara. This c. 6km upstream of the proposed site.
There are records of otter from the River Boyle both upstream and downstream of Boyle town.
There are no records of Freshwater Pearl Mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera* from this watercourse.
There are no records of Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* from this watercourse.
Bat Conservation Ireland records -No bat roosts have been previously recorded adjacent to this site.
No Japanese knotweed was recorded on site. A few Buddliah bushes were recorded.

7. DESCRIPTION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.1 Potential Habitats Affected

Sediment Control:
The construction of the proposed Boyle Library building could result in debris, mortar and sediment entering the River Boyle and being washed downstream along the watercourse. An Environmental Method Statement needs to be prepared which outlines measures such as the placement of silt fencing along the river bank to prevent sediment entering the watercourse

7.2 Potential Species affected

The proposed development will not affect any protected species. The proposed works will have no direct disturbance impact on any of the birds listed as Qualifying Interests within Lough Gara SPA (Whooper swan and Greenland white-front goose) c. 6km upstream. Neither will it have any direct disturbance impact on Lough Arrow SAC (Little Grebe and Tufted Duck & Wetland and waterbirds).
Otters are known to be present on this watercourse. Otters will not be adversely affected by the proposed works.

Consultation with National Biodiversity Data Centre maps confirms that there are previous records of Freshwater crayfish *Austromotabobius pallipies* 6km upstream from this watercourse. Therefore sediment control is necessary.

7.3 Environmental Risks and Control Procedures

The Environmental Method statement must include procedures to assess and manage environmental risks such as oil spills and other pollutants. A spill kit must be kept on site. A signed copy of the Environmental Method Statement will be submitted to the District Conservation Officer of the NPWS and to IFI. Advance notice of all works and associated Method Statements to be provided to NPWS and IFI.

Invasive species

All machinery, vehicles and equipment brought on site are to be treated for potential contamination with biohazards such as invasive species.
A spill kit will be available on site.

8. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Under the Habitats Directive, plans that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site do not require AA. The primary purpose of this project is to construct a new library building on site and is not connected in any way to the management of a European site.
The proposed building project will have low level environmental effects during the construction phase. The construction phase will result in temporary environmental effects through noise pollution, increase traffic volumes, dust, etc. The existing site is predominantly built land and disturbed land. The site is hydrologically isolated from all European sites, except Lower River Shannon SAC which lies c. 57 km downstream. The effects to the ecological integrity of this site are determined to be negligible.

In determining the potential for significant effects a number of factors have been taken into account. This assumes the absence of any controls, conditions or mitigation measures.
Firstly, the sensitivity and reported threats to European sites were evaluated. Secondly, the individual elements of the proposed project and the potential effects they may cause to the sites were considered. The elements of the proposed project with potential to cause effects to the integrity of European sites are presented in Table 2.

Sites are screened out based on one or a combination of the following criteria:

- Where it can be shown that there are no pathways for effects such as hydrological links between activities of the proposed project and the European site being screened.
- Where the site is located at a distance from proposed project such that effects are not foreseen and
- Where known threats or vulnerabilities at a site cannot be linked to potential effects that may arise from the proposed project.

The following parameters are described when characterizing impacts - **Direct and Indirect Impacts**, **Magnitude** size of an impact (high, medium, low, very low, negligible), **Extent** (the area over which the impact occurs), **Duration** Time impact is

expected to last (Temporary (up to 1 year), Short term effects would take 1-7 years to be mitigated), Medium term (effects would take 7-15 years to mitigate), Long term (effects would take 15-60 years to be mitigated), Permanent (effects would take 60+ years to be mitigated) and **Likelihood** the probability of the effect occurring (Certain/Near certain >95% chance of occurring, Probable 50 – 95% chance of occurring, Unlikely 5-50% chance of occurring, Extremely unlikely <5% chance of occurring).
The Habitats Direct requires the focus of the assessment at this stage to be on the integrity of the site as indicated in its Conservation objectives. It is an aim of NPWS to draw up conservation management plans for all areas designated for nature conservation, with clear objectives for the conservation of the features of interest within a site.
Site Specific Conservation Objectives have been prepared for a number of European sites. These detailed SSCOs aim to define favourable conservation condition for the qualifying habitats and species at that site by setting targets which define the character habitat.

EU guidance outlines the type of effects that may affect European sites. These effects are listed in Table 3.
Table 3 summarises the project's construction, operation and decommissioning phases, with special reference to their impact, if any, on any Natura 2000 site (European Commission 2001) - Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites – methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6 (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC

- Size and Scale
- Land-take
- Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site
- Resource requirements (Water abstraction etc)
- Emissions (disposal to land, water or air)
- Excavation requirements
- Transportation requirements
- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc
- Reduction of habitat area
- Disturbance to key species
- Habitat or species fragmentation
- Reduction in species density
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc)
- Climate change
- Key relationships that define the structure of the sites
- Key relationships that define the function of the sites

Table 2 - Likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the proposed works (either alone or in combination with any other plans or projects) on Natura 2000 sites within 15km radius of the site by virtue of:

ITEMS	PROJECT FEATURES	DIRECT OR

		INDIRECT IMPACT ON NATURA 2000 SITES?
Size, scale & land-take	This project is classified as a small-scale development. No land situated within a Natura 2000 site will be within the landtake for this project.	No Impact
Distance from Natura 2000 site	The closest Natura 2000 site is Lough Gara SPA which is situated c. 6km upstream of the proposed site.	No impact
Resource requirements (water extraction etc.)	There are no resource requirements such as water extraction required for this project. Therefore, no interactions with resources necessary for the maintenance of the ecological integrity of any European site.	No impact
Emissions (disposal to land, water or air)	Emissions before and after the scheme are not expected to increase significantly. Existing emissions can be expected to increase during the construction period, including noise levels and dust . However, given the distance between the closest European site and the proposed small scale development these are expected to be negligible. Drainage for the site will be managed by existing site surface water drainage system. There are pathways to the Lower River Shannon SAC, however this SAC is c. 57km downstream. The ecological integrity of the Lower River Shannon SAC will not be affected. No mitigation measures are necessary to ensure the protection of the ecological integrity of any European site.	No impact
Excavation requirements	There are no major excavation works planned	No impact
Transportation	Minor temporary increase in traffic	No impact

requirements	during the construction phase	
Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc	At present, the duration of this project is unknown. The construction phase will be temporary, the development will be a permanent feature. There will be no decommissioning phase. No pathways for effects on European sites.	
Reduction of habitat area	None within any Natura 2000 site	No impact
Disturbance to Key Species	None of the species and/or habitats identified in Table 2 were recorded on site. The nearest European site is c. 6.3 km distant and upstream of the proposed site. No active bat roosts were identified on site	
Habitat or Species Fragmentation	The existing site has negligible ecological value comprised predominantly of built structires and disused lands. The nearest European site is c.6.3km from the siteThere are no habitat features present on site that are consistent with those of the European sites identified within the zone of influence.	No impact
Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value (water quality etc)	No pathways for effects to a European site identified within the Screening Assessment process	No impact
Climate Change	Due to the nature and scale of the proposed development, the effects on climate are not anticipated to be significant	No impact

SITE	SITE CODE	DISTANCE FROM SITE	QUALIFYING FEATURES (Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests)	POTENTIAL EFFECTS	PATHWAY FOR SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS	POTENTIAL FOR IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS
Lough Gara SPA	004048	c.6.2 km to south west	Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038] Greenland White-fronted Goose (Answer albifrons flavirostris) [A395]	**No site specific threats were identified by NPWS**. The SCI species are sensitive to hydrological characteristics and land use management activities. There are no hydrological pathways between the project and this SPA. These species are also sensitive to disturbance effects however distances of 1-1.5km are known to be sufficient to ensure disturbance effects are not observed. Therefore, there are no sources or pathways for effects to the ecological integrity of this site	No	No
Lough Arrow SPA	004050	c. 6.9 km to north	Little Grebe (Tachybaptus ruficollis) [A004] Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula) [A061] Wetlands and Waterbirds [A999]	**No site specific threats were identified by NPWS.** The SCI species are sensitive to hydrological characteristics and land use management activities. There are no hydrological pathways between the project and this SPA. These species are also sensitive to disturbance effects however distances of 1-1.5km are known to be sufficient to ensure disturbance effects are not observed. Therefore, there are no sources or pathways for effects to the ecological integrity of this site	No	No
Lough Arrow SAC	001673	c. 6.5km to north	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp.	**No site specific threats were identified by NPWS.** This habitat type is sensitive to	No	No

			[3140	hydrological characteristics and land use management activities. This project will not introduce any land use change at this site. There are no hydrological pathways between the project area and the SAC and no sources for effects to the SAC.		
Bricklieve Mountains & Keishcorran SAC	001656	c. 7.1km km to north west	Turloughs [3180] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (*important orchid sites) [6210] Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis) [6510] Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (Thlaspietea rotundifolii) [8120] Euphydryas aurinia (Marsh fritillary) [1065] Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]	Fertilisers and land use management are identified as the main threat to this SAC – burning, turf cutting, drainage etc Turloughs are sensitive to groundwater interactions. There are no works proposed that will have long term interactions with groundwater quality This habitat type is sensitive to hydrological characteristics and land use management activities. The species for which the site is designated are hydrologically sensitive. The project will not introduce any land use change at this site. There are no hydrological pathways between the project area and the SAC and no sources for effects to the SAC	No	No
Cloonshanville Bog SAC	000614	c. 11km to south west	Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] Bog woodland [91D0]	Land use management activities such as afforestation and dredging are known threats to the site. This habitat type is sensitive to hydrological characteristics and land use management activities. The project will not introduce any land use change at this site. There	No	No

				are no hydrological pathways between the project area and the SAC and no sources for effects to the SAC		
Callow Bog SAC	000595	c. 13 km to south west	Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]	Land use management activities such as afforestation and dredging are known threats to the site This habitat type is sensitive to hydrological characteristics and land use management activities. The project will not introduce any land use change at this site. There are no hydrological pathways between the project area and the SAC and no sources for effects to the SAC	No	No
Unshin River SAC	001898	c. 14.2 km to north	Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (*important orchid sites) [6210] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-padion, Alnion incanae,	**No site-specific threats were identified by NPWS.** Land use management activities such as afforestation and dredging are known threats to the site This habitat type is sensitive to hydrological characteristics and land use management activities The species for which the site is designated are hydrologically sensitive. The project will not introduce any land use change at this site. There are no hydrological pathways between the project area and the SAC and no sources for effects to the SAC	No	No

			Salicion albae) [91E0] Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]			

9. IN-COMBINATION/CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Cumulative impacts or effects are changes in the environment that result from numerous human-induced, small-scale alterations. As noted in the Department's Guidance document for Planning Authorities, Appropriate Assessment must take account of cumulative effects, as these effects often only occur over time, plans or projects that are completed, approved but uncompleted, or proposed (but not yet approved).
Thecharacteristic of the proposed project are foreseen to have very low effects oto and European sites. Therefore the in-combination effects do not need to be considered as per CIEEM guidelines 2016
However following a precautionary approach all projects proposed within the receiving environment within the last 5 years have been assessed. Table 3 outlines projects within the surrounding area of the proposed Boyle Library projectthat were considered may interact with the proposed project to casuse in combination effects to European sites.

A search of planning applications in the vicinity of the proposed Boyle Library site within the past 5 years was conducted on Roscommon County Council's Planning website.

Plan No. 18340 (2018)
Development address: Warren\Drum , Carrick Road , Boyle
Description: the development will consist of

(i) the change of use of existing garage to convenience shop use (gross floor area for change of use 84 sq. m.)
(ii) alterations to internal building layout including provision of customer seating area, relocation of existing hot and cold deli, alterations to the North, South and East elevations and all associated works at

This is a small scale project with no risk of in-combination effects on any European site..

Plan No. 21240 (2021)
Location: Warren/Drum , Carrick Road , Boyle
Description: permission for development which will consist of the change of use of existing convenience shop to include part off-licence use (gross floor area for off-licence use 18 sq.m.), alterations to shop front elevation and associated works at
This is a small scale project with no risks of in combination effects on any European site.

Plan No. 17166 (2017)
Location: Mocmoyne Td. Boyle , Co. Roscommon
Description: for the change of use of part of existing mill building from production of grain and maize products to a whiskey distillery (floor area 739.58 sq.mtrs.) incorporating the installation of plant, together with minor alterations/works to existing building (which is on the record of protected structures - Reg. No. 3180439) together with all ancillary site works and services.
This is a relatively large scale project upstream of the proposed site. There is no risk of in-combination effects on any European site.

10. SCREENING STATEMENT

This Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment has investigated the proposed new library building and its potential effects on Natura 2000 sites in terms of their qualifying interests or conservation objectives, within a 15km radius. There are seven Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed site. However, only one – Lough Gara SPA (6.2 km upstream) - is hydrologically linked to the proposed work site.

Following objective analysis of the proposed construction project, and assuming all codes of best practice and management are complied with, this Appropriate Assessment (Stage 1) concludes the following:

1. It is possible to conclude that there would be no significant effects, no potentially significant effects and no uncertain effects if the project were to proceed.

It is therefore the determination of this report that it is not necessary to proceed to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process. The preparation of a Natura Impact Statement is not required.

10. REFERENCES

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NPWS (2014) Site Synopsis Lough Gara SPA

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Wildlife Act 1976 including all other amendments 1979 – 2010. Number 39 of 1976 and Number 38 of 2000. Dublin: Government Publications.

Websites

www.npws.ie – website of the national Parks and Wildlife Service

www.nbdc.ie – website of the National Biodiversity Data Centre

www.epa.ie – website of the Environmental Protection Agency

APPENDIX

SITE SYNOPSIS
SITE NAME: LOUGH GARA SPA
SITE CODE: 004048

Lough Gara is located on the Co. Sligo/Roscommon border south-west of the Curlew Mountains and between the towns of Boyle and Ballaghaderreen. Most of the lake is in Co. Sligo, but two sections in the south and north-east lie within Co. Roscommon. It 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 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. The shallow lake margins support extensive reed swamps dominated by Common Reed (Phragmites australis) and Bottle Sedge (Carex rostrata), with occasional Bulrush (Typha latifolia). In the southernmost part of the lake, clumps of Common Club-rush (Scirpus lacustris) are particularly abundant.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Whooper Swan and Greenland Whitefronted Goose. Lough Gara is used regularly by an internationally important population of Greenland White-fronted Goose (mean peak of 510 individuals over the five winters 1995/96 to 1999/2000). An internationally important population of Whooper Swan also uses the site (mean peak of 321 for the 5 year period 1994/95 to 1998/99), with high numbers present in the winter of 1996/97 (peak of 654). A range of other species occurs, including Great Crested Grebe (16), Mute Swan (38), Wigeon (593), Teal (44), Mallard (157), Shoveler (18), Pochard (41), Tufted Duck (49), Goldeneye (20), Golden Plover (270), Lapwing (75) and Lesser Black-backed Gull (172) - all figures are mean peaks for the two winters 1995/96 to 1996/97.

Lough Gara SPA is of high ornithological importance principally on account of the internationally important populations of Greenland White-fronted Goose and Whooper Swan that are associated with the lake. 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. Lough Gara is a Ramsar Convention site and a Wildfowl Sanctuary

(2014)