
Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Monksland Public Realm Enhancement

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

BDP has been appointed on behalf of the client, Roscommon County Council, to prepare this Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report (also known as *Stage One AA*) to determine whether or not a Natura Impact Statement (NIS: *Stage Two AA*) is required for the proposed regeneration of the public realm in Monksland, Co. Roscommon, in accordance with the requirements of article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the “Habitats Directive”). This report addressed both the construction phase and its operation upon completion.

1.2. Report Structure

This report sets out the legislative context for the assessment process with reference to relevant guidelines and highlight the experience and qualifications of the author. It then details the proposed scheme and the works associated with this which are then interrogated to identify any possible effects which may be ecologically relevant. Following this, the metrics for the assessment of ‘significance’ of these effects are explained and applied to each of the European sites identified to be ecologically connected to the proposed scheme area. This assessment is undertaken in view of the conservation objectives and known sensitivities of the qualifying interests and special conservation interests for each European site. Other plans and projects are then considered to identify any likely combination effects which may result in significant adverse effects to European sites.

1.3. Legislative Context

The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the “favourable conservation status” of the habitats and species of European Community Interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives (Habitats Directive as above and Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds) with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designed to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. The two designations are collectively known as European sites. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect such sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA. These requirements are implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive States:

‘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’.

The AA process relates to the protection of species listed in Annex I and Annex II of the Habitats Directive which form the Natura 2000 network (Article 3(1)). Species breeding and resting places of species listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive are nationally protected in Ireland as per Articles 15 and 16 of the Habitats Directive. The species listed in Annex IV do not form part of the Natura 2000 network as they are not mentioned in Article 3(1) of the Directive which defines the Natura 2000 network.

Article 3(1) of the Habitats Directive states:

'A coherent European ecological network of special areas of conservation shall be set up under the title Natura 2000. This network, composed of sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, shall enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'.

AA is an assessment of the likely significant effects arising from a plan or project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, to assess if the plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the European site concerned including implications in view of the European site's conservation objectives. These sites consist of SACs and SPAs and provide the protection and long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. The AA process is concluded by the relevant competent authority in the formation of a determination in accordance with article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

1.4. Overview of the Habitats Directive and Appropriate Assessment Process

The Habitats Directive itself promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation, and compensatory measures. This approach aims to avoid any effects on European sites by identifying possible effects early in the plan or project making process and avoiding such effects. Second, the approach involves the application of mitigation measures, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If potential significant effects on the integrity of European sites remain, and no further practicable mitigation is possible, the approach requires the consideration of alternative solutions. If no alternative solutions are identified and the plan or project is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, then compensation measures are required for remaining adverse effects.

There are four main stages of the AA process.



Stage One: Screening

The process that identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment

The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse effects mitigation measures are required to avoid or minimise potential effects. The details of these mitigation measures are then assessed in the context of ecological integrity of the plan/project characteristics to ensure no significant adverse effects on European sites. If this assessment process shows there are no residual significant effects, then the process may end at this stage. However, if the likelihood of significant impact remains, then the process must proceed to Stage Three.

Stage Three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

An examination of alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoids adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site.

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain

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.

1.5. Approach

The AA screening is based on best scientific knowledge and has utilised ecological and hydrological expertise. The following guidance documents and sources of information were consulted:

- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG, 2010 rev.) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities;
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- European Community Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) – The Habitats Directive (European Commission 1992);
- European Commission (2021) Commission Notice – Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 (European Commission 1997);
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat’s Directive 92/43/EEC (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2000);
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat’s Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018);
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021) OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management;
- European Community Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) – The Habitats Directive;
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Maps;
- National Parks and Wildlife Services online MapViewer;
- National Parks and Wildlife Services data (downloaded GIS shapefiles), and;
- To review other planning applications in Co. Roscommon – Roscommon Planning Viewer.

The ecological desktop study that has been completed for the AA screening of the proposed project comprised the following elements:

- Identification of European sites within 15km of the site;
- Identification of European sites within 15km of the site with identification of potential pathways to specific sites (if relevant) greater than 15km from the site;
- Review of the NPWS site synopses and conservation objectives for European sites within 15km and for which potential pathways from the proposed site have been identified, and;
- Examination of available information on protected species.

Source-Pathway Receptor Model

Ecological impact assessment of potential effects on European sites is conducted following a standard source-pathway receptor model, where, in order for an effect to be established, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect is not of any relevance of significance.

- Source(s) – e.g., pollutant run-off from proposed public realm project;
- Pathway(s) – e.g., groundwater connecting to nearby qualifying wetland habitats, and;
- Receptor(s) – e.g., qualifying aquatic habitats and species of European sites.

For the purpose of this report, receptors are the ecological features that are known to be utilised by the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of a European site. A source is any identifiable element of the proposed Monksland Public Realm Enhancement Project that is known to interact with ecological processes. The pathways are any connections or links between the source and the receptor. This report provides information on whether direct, indirect and cumulative adverse effects could arise from the proposed public realm project.

1.6. Author Details

This report has been produced by Duncan Mackay an Associate at BDP.

Duncan Mackay is an Associate Town Planner with nearly 20 years' experience working in both local government and in the private sector. Duncan has particular expertise in the planning of major schemes and regeneration projects. He has extensive experience combining statutory planning expertise with practical knowledge of environmental assessments required to deliver planning consents. Duncan is the BDP lead consultant for environmental assessment and has lead SEAs and EIAs across the British Isles.

2. Description of proposed public realm project

2.1. Receiving Environment

The Site comprises some 7,275 sqm of brownfield land to the west of the Monksland Business Park (as shown in Figure 2.1). Though classified as brownfield land for the purpose of this assessment, the land has been used in part of the disposal of overburden and waste from the adjacent disused limestone quarry and has naturally regenerated to mixed scrub and rough grassland. The town of Monksland is a settlement with a significant amount of industrial and employment development adjacent to the M6 motorway and a short distance to the west of Athlone and the River Shannon. Monksland is a small commercial centre with a population of approximately 3,500 people.

The town is identified in the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 as part of the Regional Growth Area of Athlone (Policy 2.5). The proposed development is consistent with focussed growth in Monksland and the surrounding area as a significant new public amenity.. Monksland forms part of the wider Athlone Growth Area. There are a number of significant industrial and pharmaceutical sites around the town. Monksland is a mixed town with a number of small residential districts and employment areas spread around the local road network. Monksland is served by both the M6 motorway and the R362 main road. None of the nearby industrial development or proposed housing allocations are considered to have a cumulative impact with the proposed development.

The site is an area of naturally regenerated scrub land to the west of the Monksland Business Park. The site is bounded to the south by the Monksland Business Park 2 and to the north by residential gardens on Ceathru na Gloch. There are a number of mature trees to the north of the site. The site topography is varied, with a number of vegetated mounds across the site. These are assumed to be a result of the former quarry operations. Soil testing and site investigation is ongoing. For the purpose of this assessment, the site is assumed to comprise uncontaminated material from the winning and working of limestone.

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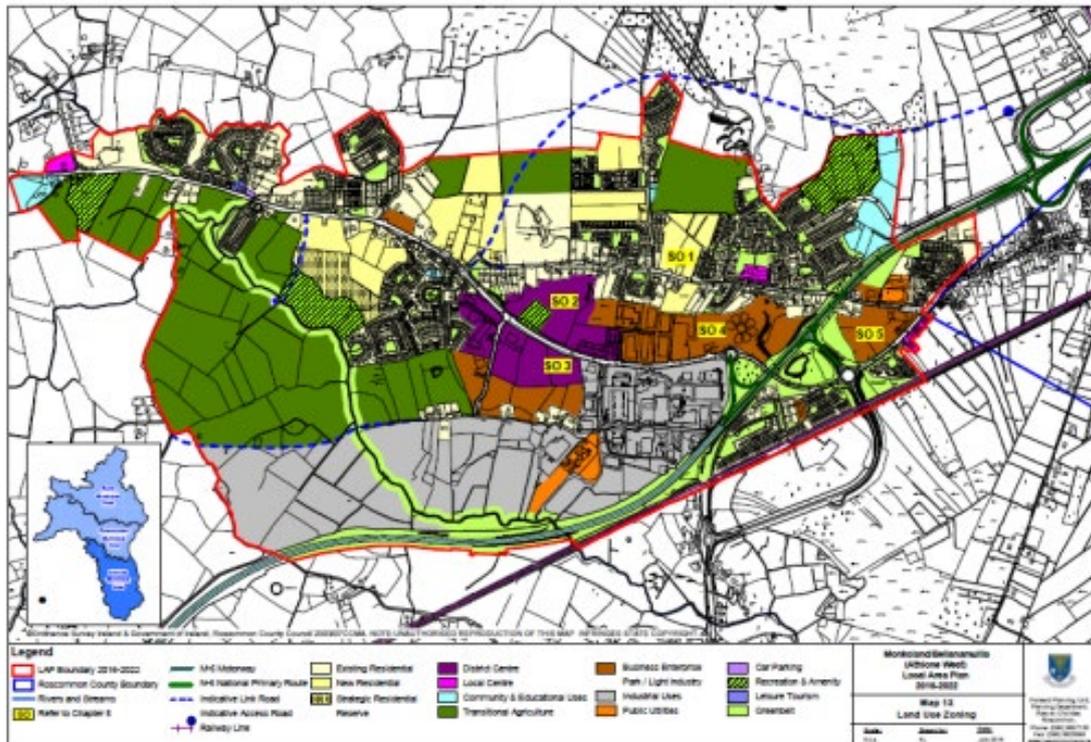


Figure 2.1.1. Monksland Land Use Zoning, Monksland/Balliniamulla Area Plan (Roscommon Council, 2014).

2.2. Details of Proposal

The proposal is to develop the land identified on Figure 2.3.2 as a new park. The total area of the development will be some 7,275sqm. The proposed park will comprise a number of elements including an outdoor stage and amphitheatre seating, pavilions and informal seating, skatepark, flexible games area and outdoor play equipment. Planting will comprise a mixture of parkland and managed lawn as well as a biodiversity garden. The proposals include the planting of over 50 trees as well as a shrub and ornamental planting. There will be 6 car parking spaces provided which will be accessed from the Monksland Business Park.



Figure 2.3.1. Site Plan



Figure 2.3.2 Proposed Plan

3. Screening for Appropriate Assessment

3.1. Introduction

This stage of the process identifies any likely significant effects on European sites from the project, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. A series of questions are asked 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.
- 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.

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. QIs 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 Annexes I and II of the Birds Directive. It is also vital that threats to the ecological/environmental conditions that are required to support QIs and SCIs are considered as 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):

"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 site's 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 of the Appropriate Assessment where they were deemed relevant to the European sites and their QIs/SCIs.

3.2. Identification of relevant European sites

This section of the screening process describes the European sites which exist within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) of the site. The Department of the Environment (2009) Guidance on AA recommends that a 15km zone to be considered. On a precautionary basis this radius has been adopted for this AA. A review of all sites within the ZOI has identified that in absence of significant hydrological links, the characteristics of the proposed public realm project will not impose effects beyond 15km. Sites beyond 15km which are designated for vagile species are identified to use isolated resources across the landscape; therefore, potential effects to such species at this scale are not identified to be significant due to the broad home range available to these species and the availability of alternate resources.

European sites that occur within 15km of the proposed public realm project are listed in Table 1 and illustrated in the Figure below.

In order to determine the potential effects of the proposal, information on the qualifying features, known vulnerabilities and threats to site integrity pertaining to any potentially affected European sites has been reviewed. Background information on threats to individual sites and vulnerability of habitats and species that was used during this assessment included the following:

- Ireland's Article 17 Report to the European Commission "*Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland*" (NPWS, 2019).
- Site Synopses¹; and
- NATURA 2000 Standard Data Forms²

The assessment takes consideration of the SSCOs of each of the sites within the ZOI. Since the conservation objectives for the European sites focus on maintaining the favourable conservation condition of the QIs/SCIs of each site, the screening process has focussed on assessing the potential effects of the proposed public realm project against the QIs/SCIs of each site. The conservation objectives for each site have been consulted throughout the assessment process.

¹ NPWS (2019); NPWS Database of protected site data and associated documents for each European site, available at: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites> (accessed 20th January 2023).

² NPWS (2019) NPWS Database of protected site data and associated documents for each European site; available at: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites> (accessed 20th January 2023).

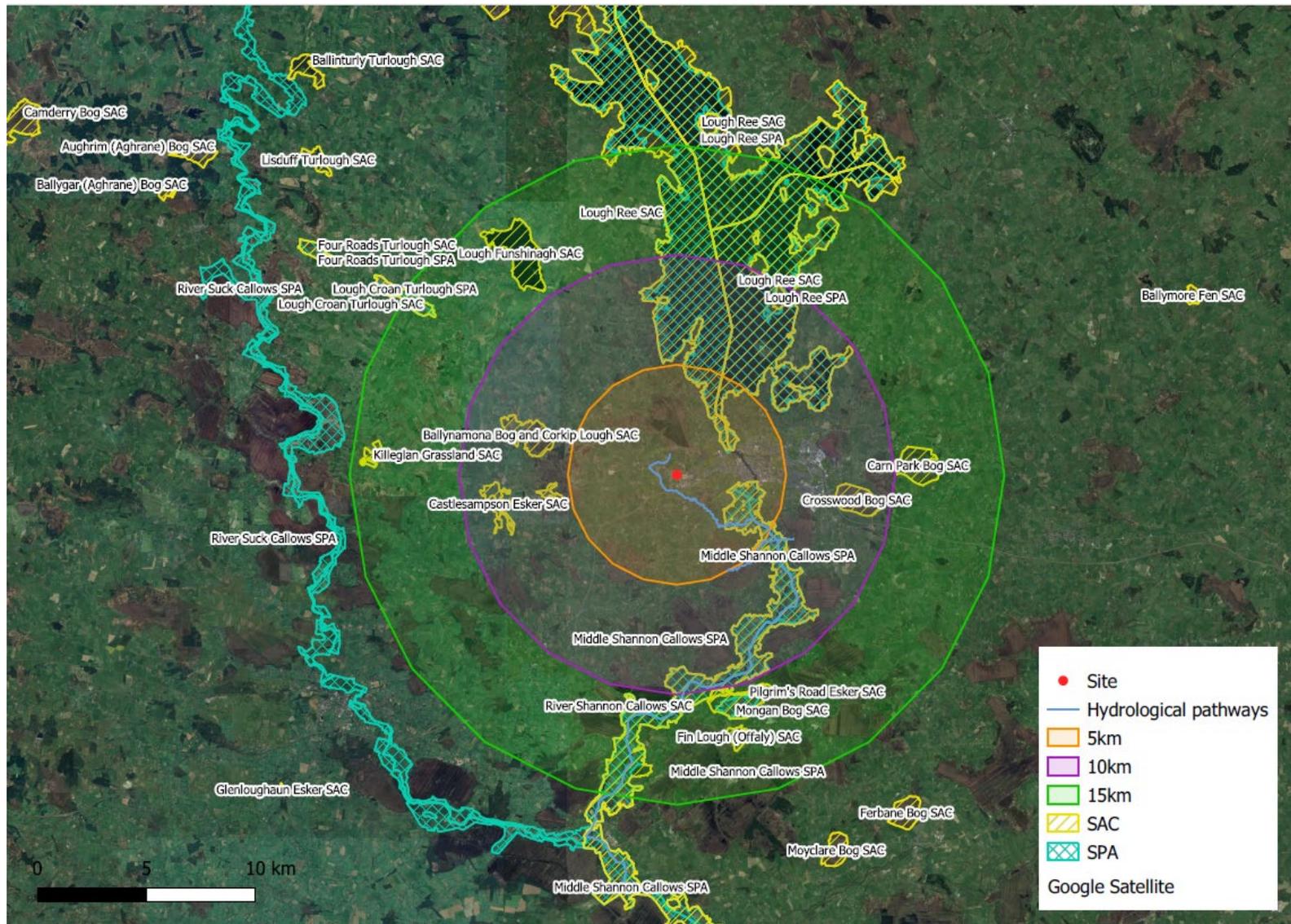


Figure 3.2.1 European sites within 15km of the proposed public realm site³

³ Source: NPWS (datasets downloaded September 2023).

3.3. Assessment criteria

3.3.1. Is the development necessary to the management of European sites?

Under the Habitats Directive, projects that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site do not require an AA. For this exception to apply, management is required to be interpreted narrowly as nature conservation management in the sense of Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive. This refers to specific measures to address the ecological requirements of annexed habitats and species (and their habitats) present on a site(s). This relationship should be shown to be a direct and not a by-product of the project, even if this might result in a positive or beneficial effect for a site(s).

The primary purpose of the proposed public realm project is not the nature conservation management of the sites, but generally to provide a new amenity for residents of Monksland. Therefore, the proposed public realm project would not be considered by the Habitats Directive to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of European designated sites.

3.3.2. Elements of the proposed public realm project with potential to give rise to effects

This screening assessment process identifies whether the changes brought about by the proposal are likely to cause any direct, indirect, or secondary effects (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European sites. During this assessment a number of factors have been taken into account including the sites' conservation objectives and known threats. The overall aim of the assessment is to attempt to predict the consequences that can be reasonably foreseen by implementation of the proposed public realm project.

For the purposes of this assessment the proposed public realm project is identified to have potential to have both construction and operational phase effects. The operational phase of the project will be consistent with the existing site use within an urban context. The operations of the public realm area will be consistent with existing operations on site; therefore, is not foreseen to interact with European sites. The construction phase elements of the project also introduce potential sources for effects to ecological processes such as:

- Disturbance effects through noise;
- Earthworks (removal of vegetation etc);
- Dust; and
- Surface water run-off.

The Construction phase will be small scale and temporary. The construction phase effects identified are considered in the context of European sites identified above, their sensitivities and conservation objectives.

3.3.3. Identification of potential effects and screening of sites

This section documents the final stage of the screening process. It has used the information collected on the sensitivity of each European site and describes any potential effects on European sites resulting from the proposed public realm project. This assumes the absence of any controls, conditions, or mitigation measures. In determining the potential for effects, a number of factors have been taken into account. Firstly, the sensitivity and reported threats to European sites. Secondly, the individual elements of the proposed public realm project and the potential effects they may cause on the sites considered. The elements of the proposed public realm project with potential to affect the integrity of European sites is presented in Table 3.1.

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

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

3.4. Characterising potential significant effects

This section of the report explains the metrics used when assessing if the potential effects (previously identified) will have significant implications for European sites. The following parameters are described when characterising impacts (following guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Environmental Protection Agency and National Roads Authority):

- Direct and Indirect Impacts - An impact can be caused either as a direct or as an indirect consequence of a Plan/Project.
- Magnitude - Magnitude measures the size of an impact, which is described as high, medium, low, very low or negligible.
- Extent - The area over that the impact occurs – this should be predicted in a quantified manner.
- Duration - The time that the effect is expected to last prior to recovery or replacement of the resource or feature.
 - Temporary: Up to 1 Year;
 - Short Term: The effects would take 1-7 years to be mitigated;
 - Medium Term: The effects would take 7-15 years to be mitigated;
 - Long Term: The effects would take 15-60 years to be mitigated; and
 - Permanent: The effects would take 60+ years to be mitigated.
- Likelihood – The probability of the effect occurring taking into account all available information.
 - Certain/Near Certain: >95% chance of occurring as predicted;
 - Probable: 50-95% chance as occurring as predicted;
 - Unlikely: 5-50% chance as occurring as predicted; and
 - Extremely Unlikely: <5% chance as occurring as predicted.

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines for ecological impact assessment (2016) define: an ecologically significant impact as an impact (negative or positive) on the integrity of a defined site or ecosystem and/or the conservation status of habitats or species within a given geographic area; and the integrity of a site as the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified.

The Habitats Directive requires the focus of the assessment at this stage to be on the integrity of the site as indicated by its Conservation Objectives. It is an aim of NPWS to draw up conservation management plans for all areas designated for nature conservation. These plans will, among other things, set clear objectives for the conservation of the features of interest within a site.

SSCOs 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 for appropriate attributes which define the character habitat. The maintenance of the favourable condition for these habitats and species at the site level will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Favourable conservation status of a species can be described as being achieved when: *'population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced or 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.'*

Favourable conservation status of a habitat can be described as being achieved when: *'its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing, and the ecological factors that 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'*.

A Generic Conservation Objective for a SAC is provided below:

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.

A Generic Conservation Objective for a SPA is provided below:

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.

3.4.1. Types of potential effects

EC guidance⁴ outlines the types of effects that may affect European sites. These include effects from the following activities:

- Land take
- Resource requirements (drinking water abstraction etc.)
- Emissions (disposal to land, water or air)
- Excavation requirements
- Transportation requirements
- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning

The 2001 European Commission AA guidance outlines the following potential changes that may occur at a designated site, which may result in effects on the integrity and function of that site:

- 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

The elements detailed above were considered with specific reference to each of the European sites identified below.

Loss/reduction of habitat area

There are no European sites present within the redline boundary and the closest European site is 2.2 km away. Similarly, there were no Annex I habitats or supporting habitat for Annex II species identified on site. Therefore, there will be no effects posed to European sites in this respect.

Habitat or species fragmentation

The site is already a hard surface site in an urban context and there are no direct surface hydrological connections to any European sites. Therefore, there are no ecological corridors connecting any of the European sites identified above. Similarly, there were no Annex I habitats or supporting habitat for Annex II species identified on site. Therefore, there will be no effects posed to European sites in this respect.

Disturbance to key species

None of the species and/or habitats identified in Table 3.1 were recorded on site. The nearest European site is 2.2 km away from the proposed site and therefore disturbance effects due to noise or lighting etc. are not present.

Reduction in species density

⁴ Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, European Commission Environment DG, 2001

There are no ecological corridors between the site and any European site. Similarly, there are no habitats identified on site of any ecological significance. As there is no supporting habitat and/or connectivity between the proposed public realm project and any European site, there will be no reduction in species density of any of the QI or SCI species.

Changes of indicators of conservation value

The site is 3.2 km from the closest European site, given the nature of the proposed work, the scale and the localised and temporary nature of the potential effect we believe the scope for impacts to be negligible. The potential effects are taken to be those typically arising from small scale construction activity; noise, dust and run-off from excavations. The operational impacts are deemed to be negligible. There are no direct hydrological linkages identified between the site and any European site. The works relate to provide for alterations to the former limestone quarry to the west of Monksland Business park. and there are no ecological pathways for effects between European sites and the proposed public realm project. Therefore, there are no sources for effects with pathways that will affect any conservation indicators related to European sites.

Climate change

The proposed works will not result in any additional greenhouse gas emissions to air during the operational phase, compared to the existing urban activities on site. The construction phase works will have increased temporary emissions which will be localised however, given the distance to the nearest European site these are determined to be negligible. Such effects upon greenhouse gas emissions will not affect changes projected to arise from climate change to the degree that it would affect the QIs or SCIs of the European sites considered.

Table 3.1. Screening assessment of the potential effects arising from the proposed public realm project

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (Km)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects
004017	Mongan Bog SPA	11.5	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No
004064	Lough Ree SPA	4	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No
004096	Middle Shannon Callows SPA	4	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No
004139	Lough Croan Turlough SPA	13.5	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No
000440	Lough Ree SAC	3.5	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No
001776	Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC	11	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No
002214	Killeglan Grassland SAC	14	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	
002336	Carn Park Bog SAC	12.5	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No

000576	Fin Lough (Offaly) SAC	12.8	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No
000580	Mongan Bog SAC	10.8	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No
000610	Lough Croan Turlough SAC	13.2	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No
001625	Castlesampson Esker SAC	6.2	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No
000611	Lough Funshinagh SAC	10.5	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No
002337	Crosswood Bog SAC	12.8	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No
002339	Ballynamona Bog and Corkip Lough SAC	6	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No
000216	River Shannon Callows SAC	4.1	There are no groundwater interactions identified from the proposed public realm project. There is no hydrological connectivity and given the distances involved there are no ecological pathways identified. Therefore, no further considerations are required.	No	No

3.5. Other plans and projects

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires an assessment of a plan or project to consider other plans or projects that might, in combination with the plan or project, have the potential to adversely affect European sites.

As part of this assessment each plan or project is considered within a radius of the red line boundary of the proposed area as defined by the ecologist. The distance of this radius works from a standard 200m, but can be extended if the ecologist deems it necessary depending on whether certain characteristics are present, such as:

- Direct or indirect connectivity to a European site;
- In close proximity to a European site;
- The proposal is of a substantial scale relative to the conditions and/or current works taking place in the surrounding landscape.

These factors are considered particular to each proposal for each particular location and specification. Considering the characteristics of the proposed development with respect to the scale and nature of the works, the 200m search for in-combination effects was deemed to be sufficient.

Plans of relevance in the context of this proposal include:

- Roscommon County Development Plan 2021-2027

Considering that the proposed development has a small-scale temporary construction phase and the operational phase is complimentary to the existing and neighbouring land uses, it is not foreseen that proposed development will have any significant in-combination effects with the above plans.

Projects of relevance to this development:

To identify projects for consideration for the in-combination effects section, the Roscommon County Council Planning Application database was used⁵. A review of all planning applications within the identified zone (200m) was conducted focusing on all applications within the past 5 years⁶.

None of the planning applications in the last 5 years were more than domestic in scale or would result in significant new construction and/or demolition. A number of change of use applications were noted in recent years relating to light industrial premises to office space, but there has been relatively little significant planning activity within 200m of the proposal site in recent years.

⁵ <https://www.eplanning.ie/RoscommonCC/SearchTypes>

⁶ Planning applications have a standard lifespan of 5 years as per Section 40 (3)(b) of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended; therefore, these are viewed to be the 'live' applications, all other projects are considered as part of the site context

4. Conclusion

This stage one screening for AA of the proposed new park at land adjacent to Monksland Business Park, Co. Roscommon demonstrates that the proposed public realm project is not likely to have any significant effects on any European site.

The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during the construction and operational phases as a result of the implementation of the project. Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the project characteristics, taking account of the processes involved and the distance of separation from the European sites, it has been evaluated that there are no likely significant adverse effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interest or the conservation objectives of any designated European site.

The proposed public realm project is approximately 4km away from the closest SAC and SPA. Given the nature of the proposed work, the scale and the localised and temporary nature of the potential effects, the proposed project will not lead to any significant effects in combination with effects arising from any other plans or projects.

It is concluded that the proposed public realm project is not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects on any designated European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This evaluation is made in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species for which these sites have been designated. Consequently, a Stage Two AA (NIS) is not required.