ROSS SWIFT ECOLOGY LTD.

Appropriate Assessment Screening

The Plots Town Park

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The proposed development of The Plots Town Park, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon will include the following;

- Provision of new access path, grassed areas, and wildflower meadow;
- Provision of Children's Active Recreation area;
- Provision of Outdoor Exercise Equipment, Plaza Style Skate Park Element and Aged Friendly Seating;
- Soft landscaping to include, trees, shrubs, hedging, flowers & grass;
- All surface water runoff will be directed to soft landscaping;
- All other ancillary site works.

1.1 DETAILED DESCRIPTION DEVELOPMENT

As part of the proposed amenity park the development will include a new 1200mm high metal and post rigid weld mesh fence along the perimeter. New free-standing walls, 1.0m, 1.2m and 1.5m high at the entrance and to the side and rear of bring banks. The existing bring bank will be moved to a new location further east with a set down area separated from parking traffic. There will be a recreation area for young children and play items for recreational use. An area for a future skate park. Play items to provide active recreation for 2–6-year-olds along the main pedestrian route. The proposed park will have a new lighting scheme and a landscape design. The existing spring will remain as part of the proposed works.

Ross Swift Ecology Ltd. has been appointed to prepare the relevant Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening, relative to the proposed development, which will allow the competent authority, to undertake AA of the redevelopment of the site at Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. This AA Screening Report presents the assessment of the likely significant effects, if any on designated European Sites as a result of the construction or operational phase of the proposed development.

1.2 STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

This report and assessment were undertaken by Dr Ross Donnelly-Swift who has a BSc (Hons) in Biology from Maynooth University NUI, an MSc in Environmental Science from Trinity College Dublin, and a PhD in Biosystems Engineering from University College Dublin. Ross has extensive ecological

knowledge gained from academic research and field work, from species-specific and protected species surveys for the completion of scientific and ecological reports.

2.0 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) seeks to conserve natural habitats and wild fauna and flora by the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EEC) seeks to protect birds of special importance by the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). It is the responsibility of each member state to designate SPAs and SACs, both of which will form part of Natura 2000, a network of protected sites throughout the European Community. SACs are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats (including priority types which are in danger of disappearance) and Annex II species (other than birds). SPAs are selected for the conservation of Annex I birds and other regularly occurring migratory birds and their habitats. The annexed habitats and species for which each site is selected correspond to the qualifying interests of the sites; from these the conservation objectives of the site are derived. An 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA) is a required assessment to determine the likelihood of significant impacts, based on best scientific knowledge, of any plans or projects on Natura 2000 sites. A screening for AA determines whether a plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site, in view of its conservation objectives. This AA Screening has been undertaken to determine the potential for significant effects on relevant Natura 2000 sites. The purpose of this assessment is to determine, the appropriateness, or otherwise, of the proposed development in the context of the conservation objectives of such sites.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive establishes the requirement for appropriate assessment when planning new developments that might affect a Natura 2000 site. 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."

Article 6(4) states:

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the [European] 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 of the compensatory measures adopted.

The screening determination must be based on scientific information relevant to the likely effects on the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites. The information should be up-to-date and based on the best available techniques and methods to estimate the presence and extent of effects. This is because if there is any scientific uncertainty as to the absence of significant effects, the project must be screened in for appropriate assessment.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment involves:

- Description of the project and area characteristics (existing environment);
- Identification and description of Natura 2000 sites that could potentially be affected, and compilation of information on their qualifying interests and conservation objectives;
- Assessment of likely effects – direct, indirect, and cumulative, undertaken on the basis of availability of objective information as necessary;
- Screening statement with conclusions.

OVERVIEW OF SCREENING AND APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

STAGE 1 Screening

Screening should be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation measures. If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overly complicated, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 AA.

STAGE 2 Appropriate Assessment

The Second stage of the AA process assesses the impact of the project or plan (either alone or in combination with other projects or plans) on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site, with respect to the conservation objectives of the site and its ecological structure and function. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) containing a professional scientific examination of the project or plan is required and includes any mitigation measures to avoid, reduce significant negative impacts.

STAGE 3 Assessment of Alternative Solutions

If the outcome of Stage 2 is negative with adverse impacts to the sites cannot be scientifically ruled out with the inclusion of mitigation measures, the plan or project should proceed to Stage 3 or be abandoned. This stage examines alternative solutions to the proposal.

STAGE 4 Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.

The final stage is the main derogation process examining whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project to adversely affect a Natura 2000 site, where no less damaging solution exists.

2.1 GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

This Appropriate Assessment Screening has been carried with reference to the following guidelines:

- OPR Practice Note PN01 (2021) Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management Office of the Planning Regulator;
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidelines for Planning Authorities. DoEHLG, 20010;
- Article 6 of the Habitats Directive – Rulings of the European Court of Justice. Final Draft September 2014;
- Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10 Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities;
- Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle. European Commission (2000);
- The Flora (Protection) (S.I. No. 235 of 2022).
- Managing Natura 2000 sites – The Provisions of Article 6 of The Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2000;
- EC Natura 2000 Spatial Planning. European Commission (2017);
- 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, 2002;
- Commission Notice "Managing Natura 2000 sites The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 21.11.2018;
- CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

2.2 DATA AND DESKTOP REVIEW

An ecological desktop study was completed for this report by Identification of European Sites within the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the proposed site boundary. The NPWS database was reviewed for the site synopsis and conservation objectives for European Sites identified to be in the Zone of Influence. Desktop research was carried out to gather information relating to European sites and to the habitats and species that they support. The following data sources were consulted;

- Tailte Éireann mapping and aerial photography;
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS);

- Google and Bing aerial imagery;
- EPA Envision Maps;
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC);
- National Planning Application Database;
- Water Quality Data from the EPA;
- Geological Survey of Ireland;
- Wetland Maps of Ireland;
- Environmental Sensitivity Mapping (Geohive);
- Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE ENVIRONMENT

As per Roscommon County Development Plan (CDP) 2022 – 2028, Ballaghaderreen is located towards the north-west of County Roscommon, approximately 46km from Roscommon town and 26km from Boyle towards the northeast. See Figure 3.1 for location. Ballaghaderreen is listed as a Self- Sustaining Growth Towns. These settlements provide important services and facilities for their own populations and surrounding rural hinterlands, as well as being important local employment centres. Roscommon CDP has set several targets to sustain and grow the local community and economy of Ballaghaderreen. Part of the plan is to revitalise the town centre through steering development towards existing sites within the town core which could be developed/redeveloped. Many of the central areas of Ballaghaderreen comprise of redundant, undeveloped and/ or underutilised brownfield/back land sites. This includes providing public amenities such a public park for recreational use by residents of the town centre.

A Flood Risk Assessment of this town has been carried *The Ballaghaderreen Settlement Plan*. The proposed amenity park is not within a flood zone. The Office of Public Works (OPW) flood risk mapping tool does not indicate the proposed public park is within a flood zone or liable to flooding within its prediction models for future flood events (low to high).

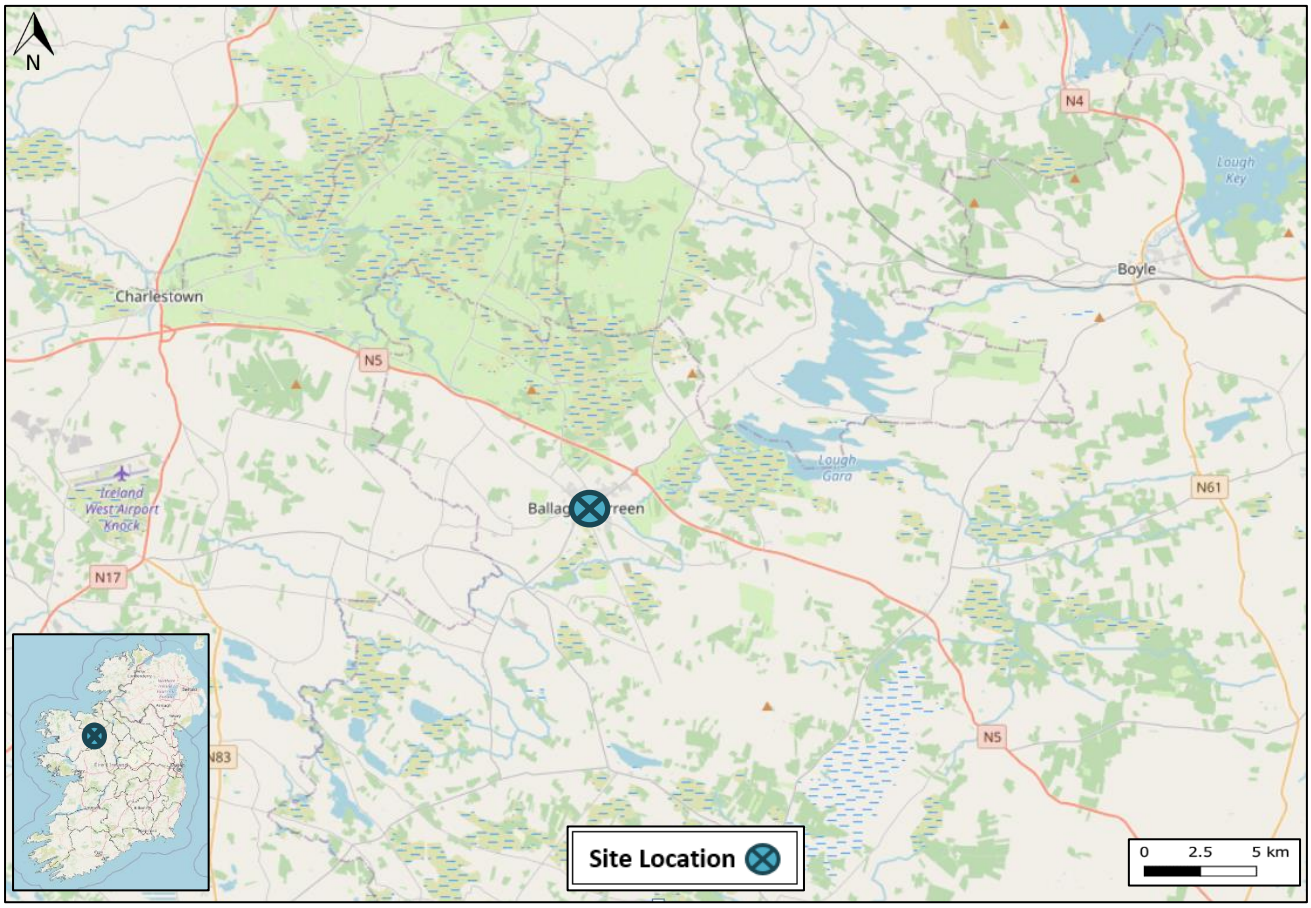

Figure 3.1: Location of proposed development site (Open Street Map ©)

Figure 3.2: Landcover surrounding proposed development site (Google Imagery ©)

3.1 SURFACE WATERBODIES

The development site is located within the Lung sub-catchment (Lung_ SC_020) which is part of the Upper Shannon Catchment (ID_26B). The Ballahaderreen (EPA Code – 26B28 – Order 1) watercourse is approximately 224m from the east boundary of the site. This flows in a south east direction for approximately 800m before merging with the Lung (EPA Code – 26L03 – Order - 4). The Lung River flows for a further 1.8km before merging with the Tullaghmore_or_Monstown_Demesne stream (EPA Code – 26T82 – Order – 1), at this confluence point the Lung River is classified as part of the Tullaghanrock Bog SAC. The Lung River flows for a further 1km in an easterly direction before merging with the Toobracken stream (EPA Code – 26T83 – Order – 1). The Lung River continues to flow for a further 200m before merging with an unnamed watercourse, from this confluence point the Lung River is classified as part of the Callow Bog SAC. At the east boundary of the site is an existing spring that flows into a drainage ditch (modified channel). See Figure 3.3. This watercourse will connect to the Ballahaderreen. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) do not actively monitor the ecological status of the Ballahaderreen watercourse. The EPA undertakes surface water monitoring along the Lung River and the most recent monitoring results are as follows: "*A significant discharge of pollution to the Lung River downstream of Ballaghaderreen was investigated in 2022 and the discharge of deleterious organic matter was found to have resulted in a serious decline in biological conditions at two of the investigated sites. Sewage fungus organisms were prolific for an extended reach downstream of the discharge point.*" Tables 3.1 shows the surface waterbodies and the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Status. Figure 3.4 shows the location of the site and WFD water quality from the last monitoring programme.

TABLE 3.1 SURFACE WATERBODIES AND WFD STATUS

RIVER	EPA CODE	ORDER	WFD STATUS
Ballahaderreen	26B28	1	At Risk
Lung River	26L03	4	At Risk

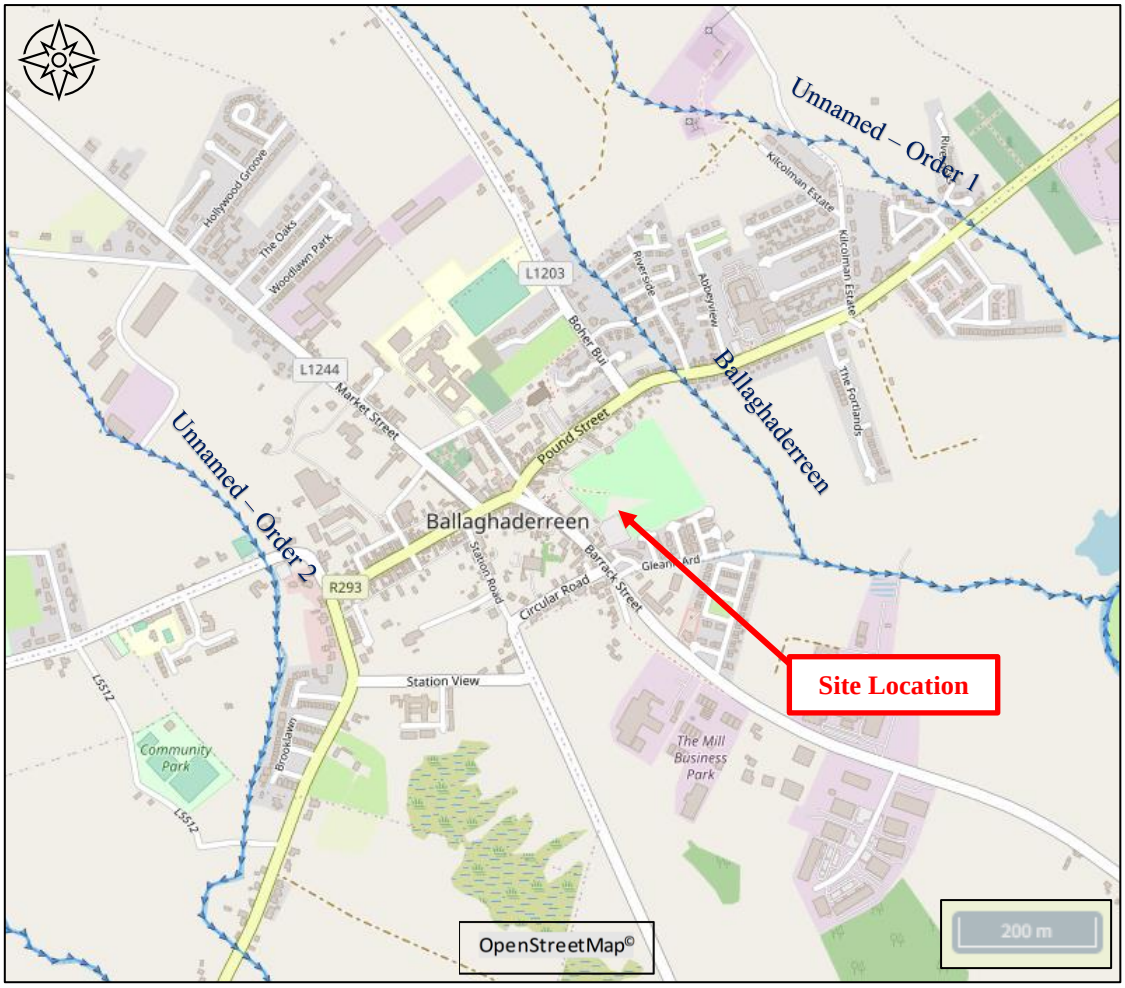

Figure 3.3 Mapped waterbodies within proximity to development site

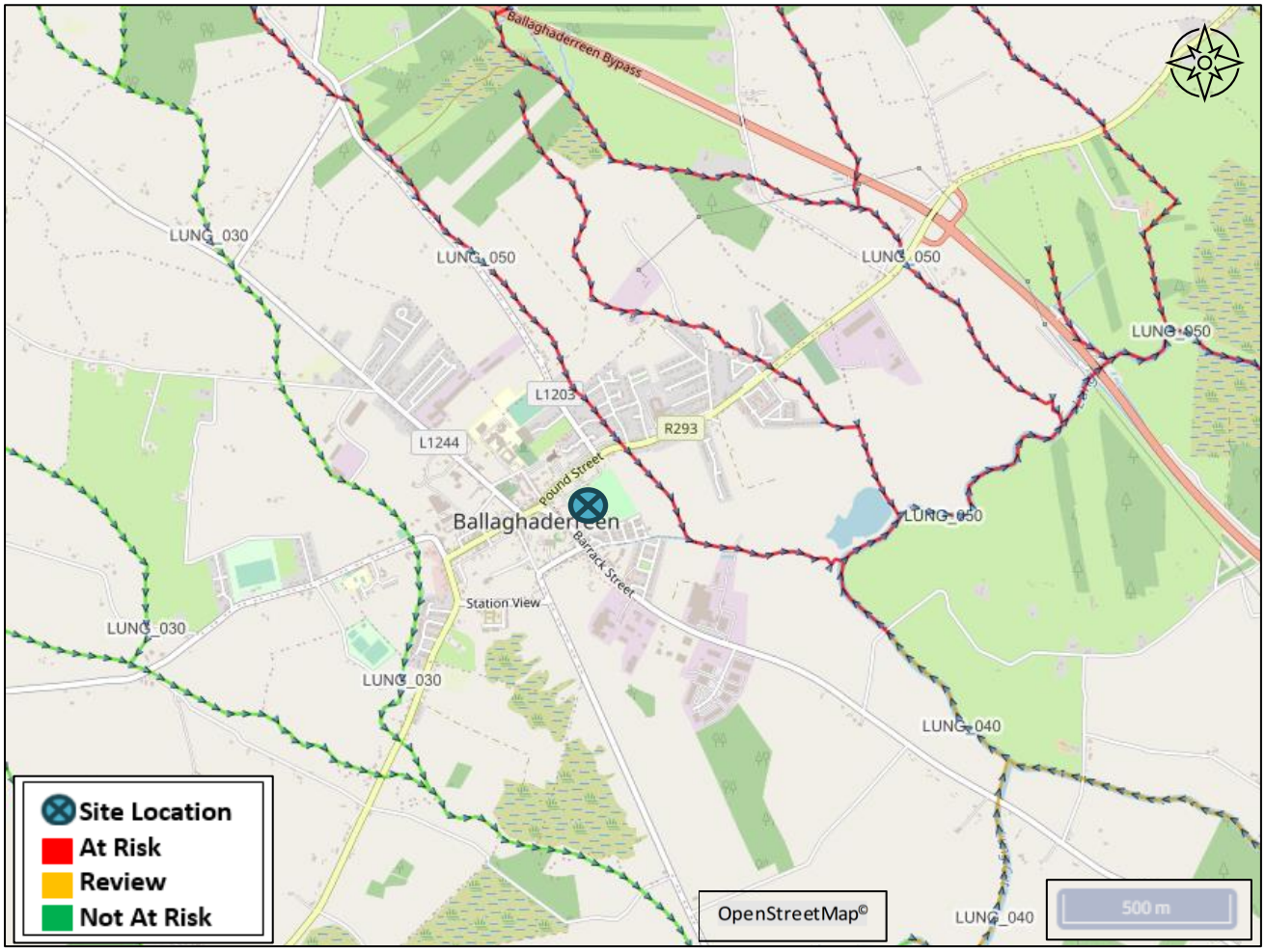

Figure 3.4: Water Quality Monitoring Programme 2019-2021

3.2 HABITATS

A site characterisation assessment was undertaken on the 21st October 2023 to examine the ecological context of the development site, by systematically walking the proposed site and boundaries and determining the habitats present. The habitat survey was undertaken in accordance with the standard methodology outlined in Fossitt's "*A Guide to Habitats in Ireland*", a hierarchical classification scheme based upon the characteristics of vegetation present. The Fossitt system also indicates when there are potential links with Annex I habitats of the E.U. Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). Cognisance was also taken of the Heritage Council guidelines, "*Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping*", (Smith *et al.,* 2011). During the ecological site assessment, the following habitats were observed;

The majority of the site is classified as buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3) with Annual Meadow-grass (*Poa annua*), Groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), Colt's Foot (*Tussilago farfara*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.) and Dock (*Rumex* spp.). Along the boundary of the site is recolonising bare ground (ED3) with Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Hawkweeds (*Hieracium* spp.), Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), Sow-thistle (*Sonchus* spp.), Thistle (*Cirsium* spp.), Vetch (*Vicia* spp.), Bent grasses (*Agrostis* spp.), Sedges (*Carex* spp.), Burdock (*Arctium*), Cleavers (*Galium aparine*), Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Couch-grass (*Elytrigia repens*), Moss (*Bryophyta*) with saplings of Willow (*Salix* spp.) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). Along the north and south boundary is mixed broadleaf/conifer woodland (WD2) habitat with tree species Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Elm (*Ulmus* sp.), Larch (*Larix decidua*), Oak (*Quercus* spp.), Spruce (*Picea* spp.), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Willow (*Salix* spp.), Cypress (*Cupressus* spp.), Horse-chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). The understory has Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Boxleaf Honeysuckle (*Lonicera nitida*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), Lords-and-ladies (*Arum maculatum*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Cotoneaster, Fuchsia (*Fuchsia magellanica*), Sedges (*Carex* spp.), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) and Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris* spp.). Along the west boundary is Hedgerow (WL1) habitat with Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Willow (*Salix* spp.) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). Other species commonly found in this habitat are Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Cleavers (*Galium aparine*), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and Dog-rose (*Rosa canina* agg.). There is an area of the dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2) habitat to the west of the site with Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Dock (*Rumex* spp.), Thistle (*Cirsium* spp.), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Buttercup (*Ranunculus* spp.) and Clover (*Trifolium* spp.). Along the east boundary is drainage ditches (FW4) habitat with flora such as Rushes (*Juncus* spp.), Fool's-water-cress (*Apium nodiflorum*), Buttercup (*Ranunculus* spp.), and Willowherb (*Epilobium* spp.). Also to the east is an area of Marsh (GM1) habitat with Willowherb (*Epilobium* spp.), Bent grasses (*Agrostis* spp.), Rushes (*Juncus* spp.), Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*), Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) Buttercup (*Ranunculus* spp.) and Horsetail (*Equisetum* spp.) with tree species Alder (*Alnus* spp.) and Willow (*Salix* spp.). The proposed development, comprising of buildings and artificial surfaces and recolonising bare ground can be considered to be modified and of low ecological value. All other habitats outside the boundary

are low to moderate ecological value. The drainage ditch is not a significant watercourse and would not support fish. No plant species of conservation significance or Third Schedule invasive plant species were noted within the site boundary. Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) was found along a laneway but is over 40m from the site boundary. The identified habitats at the proposed development site, as per the Fossitt habitat classification scheme, are summarised in Table 3.2 below. See Appendix for Photo Log of ecological site assessment.

Table 3.2: Summary of Habitats Identified at the Proposed Development Site

HABITAT CLASSIFICATION HIERARCHY		
LEVEL 1	**LEVEL 2**	**LEVEL 3**
F – Freshwater	**FW** – Watercourses	**FW4** – Drainage Ditches
G – Grassland and marsh	**GM** – Freshwater Marsh	**GM1** – Marsh
	GS – Semi-natural grassland	**GS2** – Dry meadows and grassy verges
W – Woodland and scrub	**WD** – Highly modified / non- native woodland	**WD2** –(Mixed) broadleaf/conifer woodland
	WL – Linear woodland / scrub	**WL1** – Hedgerows
E – Exposed rock and disturbed ground	**ER** – Exposed rock	**ED3** – Recolonising bare ground
B – Cultivated and built land	**BL** – Built land	**BL3** – Buildings and artificial surfaces

3.3 FAUNA

Given the urban area and woodland it would be expected that common grassland and hedgerow bird species would be present in the area. The drainage ditch would not offer preferred habitat for waterfowl. Bird species noted during the site walkover included Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*), Coal Tit (*Parus ater*), Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*), Magpie (*Pica pica*), Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*), Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalus caudatus*), Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*), Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), Great Tit (*Parus major*), Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*), Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*), Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*) and Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*). No bird is red, or amber listed under the BoCCI classification. None of the bird species recorded are listed under Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. During the site walkover

evidence of Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) noted within the site and a Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) was observed. Mammals, typical of that found throughout the rest of Ireland, which would be expected to be found in the general area include Badger (*Meles meles*), Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Pine Marten (*Martes martes*), Stoat (*Mustela erminea hibernica*), American Mink (*Mustela vison*), Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*), Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), Hedgehog (*Erinus europaeus*), Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*), Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*), Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus*), Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) and Bank Vole (*Myodes glareolus*).There was no evidence of badger or otter activity at the site or along the boundary.

Table 3.3 below lists the species of note recorded by the National Biodiversity Data Centre for hectad M69.

Species	Designation	Species	Designation
Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)	Annex II	Freshwater White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*),	Annex II & V
Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)	Annex I	Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*),	Wildlife Act
Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)	Annex II	Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	Annex IV
Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)	Annex I	Lesser Noctule (*Nyctalus leisleri*)	Annex IV
Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)	Annex II	Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu lato*)	Annex IV
Teal (*Anas crecca*)	Annex II	Badger (*Meles meles*)	Wildlife Act
Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)	Annex II	Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)	Wildlife Act
Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)	Annex II	Pine Marten (*Martes martes*)	Annex V
Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)	Annex I	Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)	Wildlife Act
Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)	Annex I	Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*)	Annex II
Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)	Annex II	Otter (*Lutra lutra*)	Annex II & IV
Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)	Annex I	Frog (*Rana temporaria*)	Annex V
Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)	Annex I	Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*)	Wildlife Act

4.0 NATURA 2000 SITES WITHIN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE

As per *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management* (OPR, 2021) the Zone of Influence (ZoI) is the criteria for screening any potential impact on the Natura 2000 network. A Zone of Influence (ZoI) for a project is established on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors within vicinity of the proposed development. The ZoI takes into account the potential for connectivity to ecological receptors through the Source- Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) model and assesses potential impacts of the proposed development on both immobile and mobile qualifying interests of identified European sites. Functional pathways can include the use of an application site for foraging by a QI/SCI species of an SAC or SPA. The Natura 2000 sites within the potential ZoI are shown in Figure 4.1.

Table 4.1: List of European Sites Within Potential Zone of Influence

SITE NAME	DESIGNATION	SITE CODE	DISTANCE	S-P-R	FIGURE 4.1
Tullaghanrock Bog	SAC	002354	2.3km NE	**Yes**	**1**
Callow Bog	SAC	000595	3.3km NE	**Yes**	**2**
Lough Gara	SPA	004048	5.6km NE	**Yes**	**3**
River Moy	SAC	002298	7.2km NW	No	4
Derrinea Bog	SAC	000604	9.5km SW	No	5
Ballanagare Bog	SAC	000592	10.7km SE	No	6
Bellanagare Bog	SPA	004105	10.8km SE	No	7
Drumalough Bog	SAC	002338	10.8km SW	No	8
Cloonshanville Bog	SAC	000614	12.2km E	No	9

Tullaghanrock Bog SAC (Site Code 002354), Callow Bog SAC (Site Code: 000595) and Lough Gara SPA (Site Code: 004048) are all within the ZoI due to a hydrological connection and will be assessed further within this report.

The proposed development site is in a separate catchment, Upper Shannon (Catchment ID – 26B) to The River Moy SAC (Site Code – 002298) which is located in the Moy & Killala Bay catchment (Catchment ID – 34). Drumalough Bog SAC (Site Code – 002338) and Cloonchambers Bog SAC (Site Code – 000600) are located within the Upper Shannon catchment (Catchment ID – 26D). Therefore, no direct hydrological connectivity exists between the site and the designated sites. Thus, given the distance from the proposed sites to the designated sites and lack of direct hydrological connectivity these sites have been screened out. The proposed development site is located in the Lung sub-catchment (SC_020). The Derrinea Bog SAC (Site Code – 000604are located in a separate sub-

catchment, the Lung (SC_010). Bellanagare Bog SAC (Site Code – 000592) lies between the Breedoge (SC_010) and Suck (SC_010) sub-catchments, Cloonshanville Bog SAC (Site Code – 000614) is located in the Breedoge (SC_010) sub-catchment. Therefore, no direct hydrological connectivity exists between the site and the designated sites. Thus, given the distance from the proposed sites to the designated sites and lack of direct hydrological connectivity these sites have been screened out. Ballanagare Bog SPA (Site Code: 004105) has been designated for Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) [A395]. However, given the distance and lack of direct hydrological connection there is no potential for a significant impact on this designated site. There is no Source-Pathway-Receptor with any other Natura 2000 site given the type of development (public amenity park), distance, lack of suitable habitats within the site or along the boundary (all modified habitats) and no hydrological or potential to impact the Qualifying Interests of these Natura 2000 sites, therefore they have been screened out.

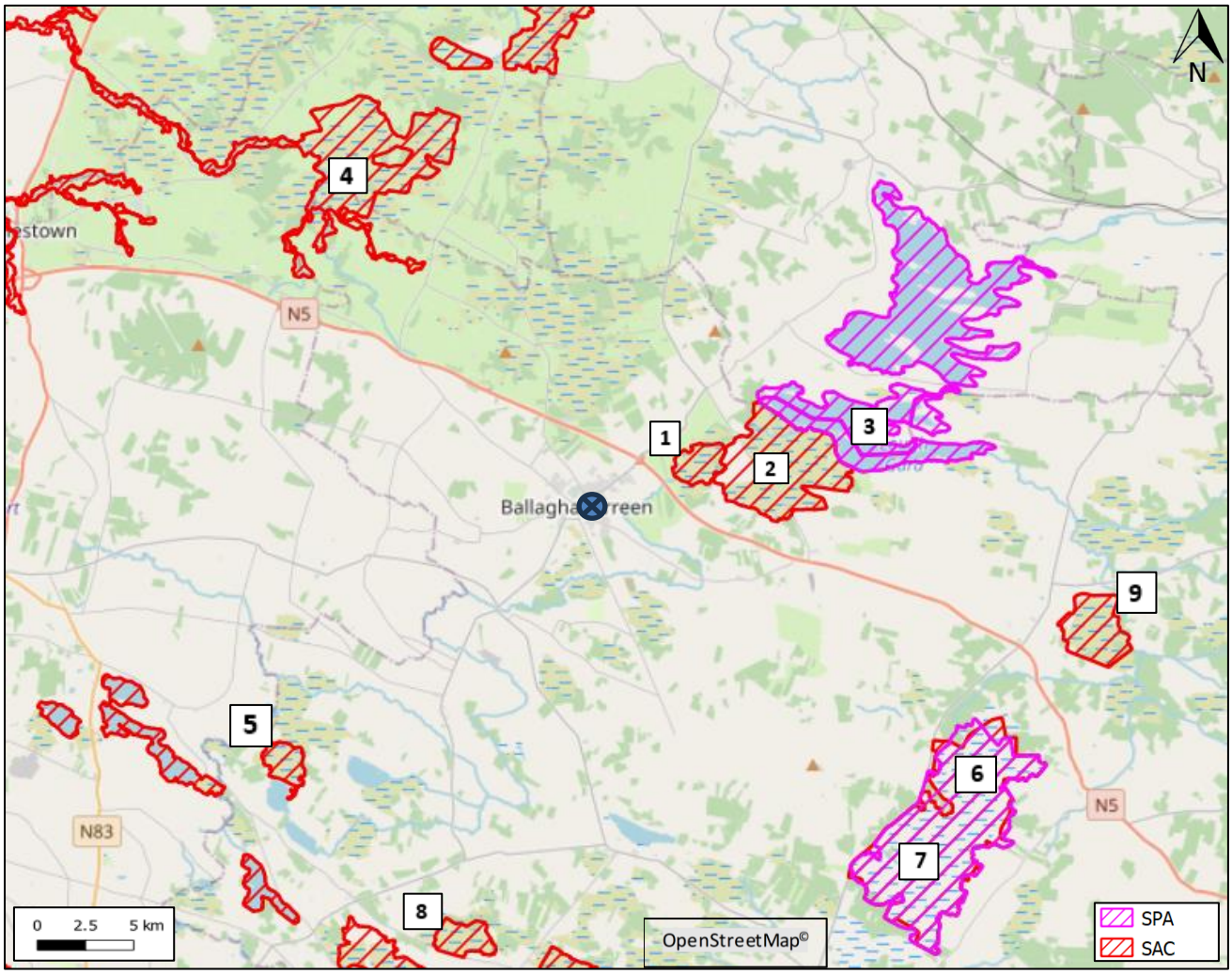

Figure 4.1: Natura 2000 sites within proximity to the development (Table 4.1 for assigned number)

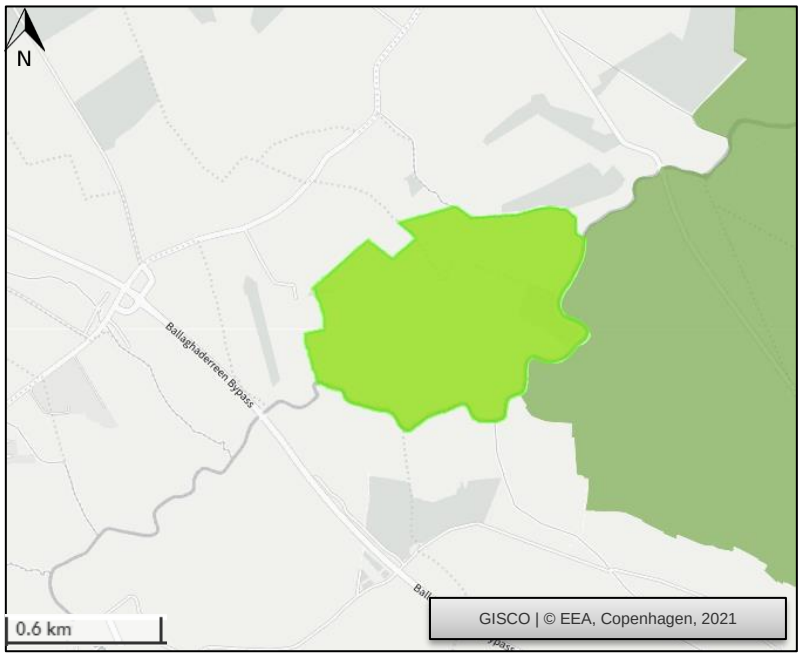

Figure 4.2: Tullaghanrock Bog SAC (002354) - Highlighted in Light Green

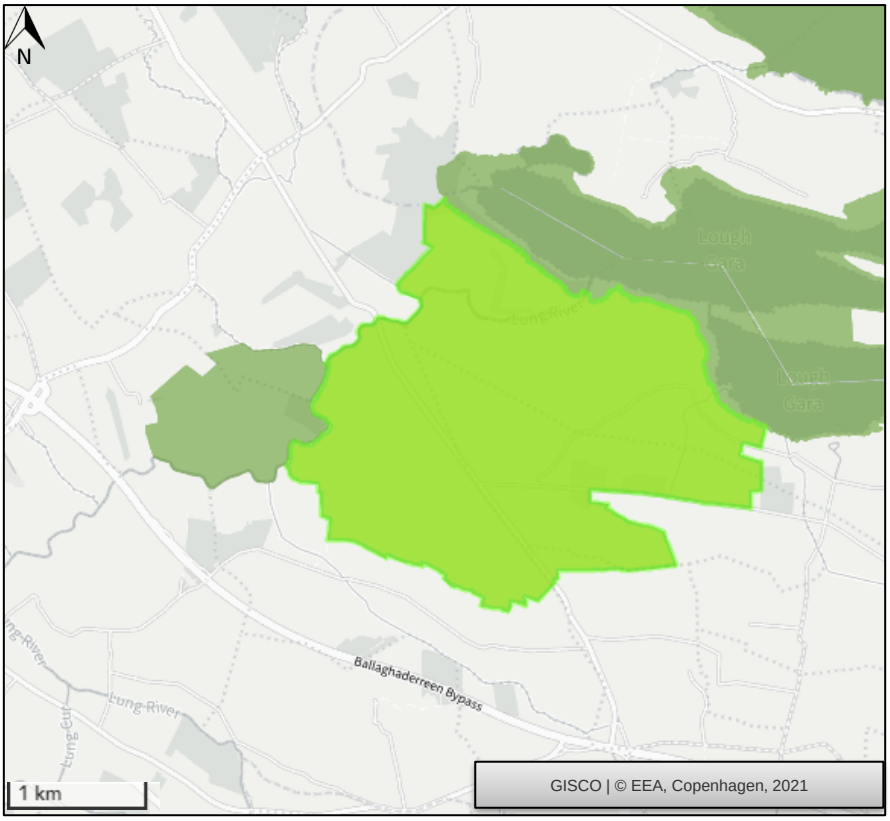

Figure 4.3: Callow Bog SAC (000595) - Highlighted in Light Green

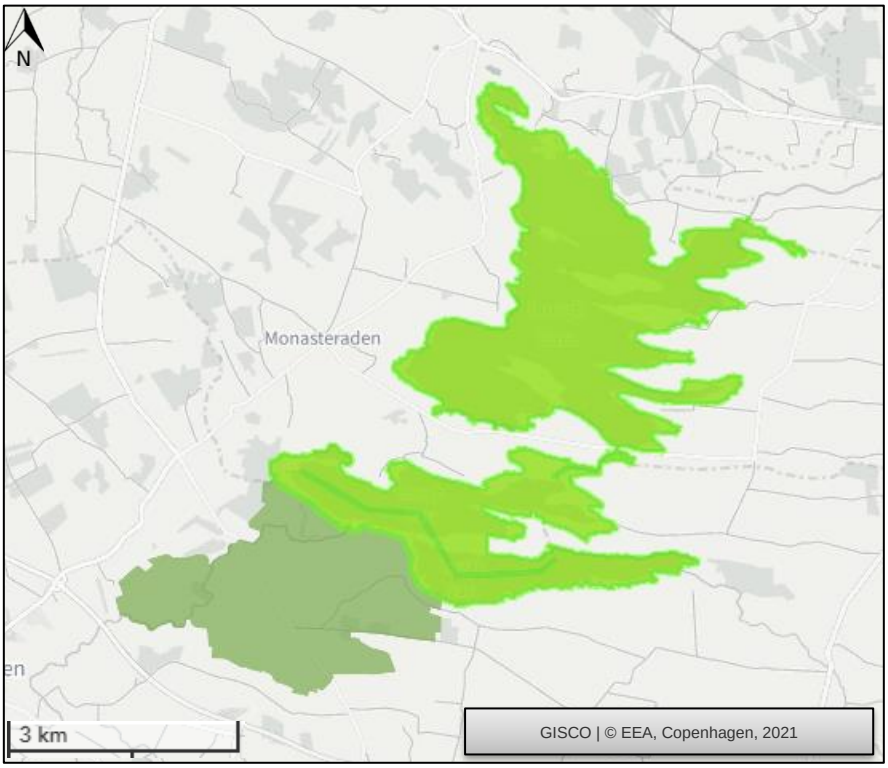

Figure 4.4: Lough Gara SPA (004048) - Highlighted in Light Green

4.1 TULLAGHANROCK BOG SAC (Site Code 002354)

Tullaghanrock Bog is situated approximately 5km east of Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon, and is located in the townlands of Tullaghan Rock and Creggan. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. 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 SAC selected for the following habitats and species listed on Annex I and Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive: See Figure 4.2. As per Table 4.2 below the site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

QUALIFYING INTERESTS
Habitats
Raised Bog (Active)* [**7110**]
Degraded Raised Bog [**7120**]
Rhynchosporion Vegetation [**7150**]

4.2 CALLOW BOG SAC (SITE CODE: 000595)

Callow Bog is located approximately 7km 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 includes both areas of high bog and cutover. The 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, and there are a number of tear pools to the north. 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. As per Table 4.3 below the site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

QUALIFYING INTERESTS
Habitats
Raised Bog (Active)* [**7110**]

Degraded Raised Bog [**7120**]
Rhynchosporion Vegetation [**7150**]

4.3 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 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 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. As per Table 4.4 below the site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species:

WATERFOWL
Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) **A038**
Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) **A395**

4.4 NATIONAL CONSERVATION STATUS OF QUALIFIYING INTERESTS

As per the Habitat's Directive, favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when: its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and 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 as defined below.

As per the Habitat's Directive, 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, and 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.

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. The conservation status of each habitat and species is listed in Table 4.5 below;

QUALIFYING INTERESTS	CONSERVATION STATUS
Tullaghanrock Bog SAC and Callow Bog SAC	
[7110] Raised Bog (Active)	Inadequate
[7120] Degraded Raised Bog	Inadequate
[7150] Rhynchosporion Vegetation	Inadequate
Lough Gara SPA	
[A038] Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)	Amber List
[A395] Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*)	Amber List

Sourced from the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (NPWS, 2019a) and Gilbert, et al (2021) Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2021-2026.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTAIL IMPACTS TO NATURA 2000 SITES

The threats to the integrity of the European sites and the lists of potential impacts that could arise as a result of the policy groupings, the impacts were grouped into the following categories which will be used to scope the potential impact on the QI of each site within the Zone of Influence. See Tables below (5.1 - All Qualifying Interests) and (5.2 - Qualifying Interests Within the Project Zone of Interest). Impacts on a Natura 2000 site can be from the following examples;

- Direct Habitat Loss within European site (development occurring on undeveloped sites.
- Indirect effects on the ecological networks supporting European sites (developments that cut off ecological corridors).
- Indirect threat to quality including changes to surface and ground water quality.
- Direct/Indirect threats to European sites by invasive species.

Under Regulation 49(2) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), save in accordance with a licence granted under paragraph (7), any person who plants, disperses, allows, or causes to disperse, spreads or otherwise causes to grow in any place specified in relation to any plant which is included in Part 1 of the Third Schedule shall be guilty of an offence. Materials containing invasive species such are considered “controlled waste”, and, as such, there are legal restrictions on their handling and disposal. Under Regulation 49(7) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, it is a legal requirement to obtain a license to move “vector materials” listed in the Third Schedule, Part 3. The following Third Schedule Invasive Flora were recorded in the NBDC (Hectad M69); Canadian Waterweed (*Elodea canadensis*), Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Nuttall's Waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*), Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Rhododendron Ponticum. There is no Third Schedule Invasives Species within the site boundary or its boundary.

Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) was noted approximately 40m from the site boundary. There will be no works at the location of this invasive species therefore there is no potential for this invasives species to spread from the proposed works.

TABLE 5.1 ALL QUALIFYING INTERESTS			
QUALIFYING INTEREST	**LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE**	**POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT**	**LISTED FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION**
TULLAGHANROCK BOG SAC			
[7110] Raised Bog (Active)*	The proposed development is located within the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of this qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019b). The nearest examples of these qualifying interests are located approximately 2.9km downstream of the proposed development (NPWS, 2012). Water quality attributes are listed as a conservation objective.	Yes	Yes
[7120] Degraded Raised Bog	The development site is located within the current distribution and current range of this qualifying interest. The conservation objectives for this Qualifying interest state "*The long-term aim for Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration is that its peat-forming capability is re-established; therefore, the conservation objective for this habitat is inherently linked to that of Active raised bogs (7110) and a separate conservation objective has not been set in Tullaghanrock Bog SAC*". The favourable reference range of this qualifying interest has not yet been set (NPWS, 2019b). The nearest examples of these qualifying interests could potentially occur 2.9km downstream of the proposed development (NPWS, 2012). There is no potential for a significant impact on this habitat from the proposed amenity park.	No	No
[7150] Rhynchosporion Vegetation	The proposed development is located within the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019b). The conservation objectives for this qualifying interest state "*Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion is an integral part of good quality Active raised bogs (7110) and thus a separate conservation objective has not been set for the habitat in Tullaghanrock Bog SAC*"). There is no potential for a significant impact on this habitat from the proposed amenity park.	No	No
CALLOW BOG SAC			
[7110] Raised Bog (Active)*	The proposed development is located within the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of this qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019b). The nearest examples of these qualifying interests could occur anywhere within the SAC	Yes	Yes

TABLE 5.1 ALL QUALIFYING INTERESTS			
QUALIFYING INTEREST	**LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE**	**POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT**	**LISTED FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION**
	which is approximately 4.1km downstream of the proposed development (NPWS, 2012). Water quality attributes are listed as a conservation objective.		
[7120] Degraded Raised Bog	The development site is located within the current distribution and current range of this qualifying interest. The favourable reference range of this qualifying interest has not yet been set (NPWS, 2019b). The conservation objectives for this Qualifying interest state "*The long-term aim for Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration is that its peat-forming capability is re-established; therefore, the conservation objective for this habitat is inherently linked to that of Active raised bogs (7110) and a separate conservation objective has not been set in Callow Bog SAC*". The favourable reference range of this qualifying interest has not yet been set (NPWS, 2019b). The nearest examples of these qualifying interests could potentially occur 4.1km downstream of the proposed development (NPWS, 2012). There is no potential for a significant impact on this habitat from the proposed amenity park. There is no potential to spread	No	No
[7150] Rhynchosporion Vegetation	The development site is located within the current distribution and current range of this qualifying interest. The favourable reference range of this qualifying interest has not yet been set (NPWS, 2019b). The conservation objectives for this qualifying interest state "*Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion is an integral part of good quality Active raised bogs (7110) and thus a separate conservation objective has not been set for the habitat in Callow Bog SAC.* The nearest examples of these qualifying interests could potentially occur 4.1km downstream of the proposed development (NPWS, 2012). There is no potential for a significant impact on this habitat from the proposed amenity park.	No	No
LOUGH GARA SPA			
[A038] Whooper Swan	Winter visitor. Feed predominantly on aquatic vegetation, agricultural grasslands, and cultivated land. Whooper Swan visit Ireland each Winter and nest in Iceland during the summer. Each year a small number of Whooper Swan stay in Ireland for the summer and there have been occasional breeding records on lakes in the midlands and north-	Yes	Yes

TABLE 5.1 ALL QUALIFYING INTERESTS			
QUALIFYING INTEREST	**LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE**	**POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT**	**LISTED FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION**
	west. They are found mostly on lowland open farmland around inland wetlands, regularly seen while feeding on grasslands and stubble. Water quality would have an impact on this species.		
[A395] Greenland White-fronted Goose	Scarce Winter visitor. Feed predominantly on plant material taking roots, tubers, shoots, and leaves. Grasses, clover, spilt grain, winter wheat and potatoes are popular foods. Forages over peat bogs, dune grassland, and occasionally salt marsh, with the use of agricultural grassland increasing in recent years. Winters in Ireland and Scotland. Highly gregarious. Traditionally occurred in peatland areas, though now mostly seen feeding on intensively managed grasslands. Water quality would have an impact on this species.	Yes	Yes

Additional information on birds sourced from **Birdwatch Ireland** and **Birdlife International**.

TABLE 5.2 QUALIFYING INTERESTS WITHIN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE			
CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	**THREATS AND PRESSURES (NPWS 2019)** H = HIGH IMPORTANCE M = MEDIUM IMPORTANCE	**KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**	**POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT**
[7110] Active raised bogs*	• **A02** Conversion from one type of agricultural land use to another (H) • **A19** Application of natural fertilisers on agricultural land (H) • **A20** Application of synthetic (mineral) fertilisers on agricultural land (M) • **A06** Abandonment of grassland management (e.g., cessation of grazing or of mowing) (M) • **A14** Livestock farming (without grazing) (M)	• **CA03** Maintain existing extensive agricultural practices and agricultural landscape features	**No** No potential for a significant impact on water quality as there is no potential for significant groundwater contamination or significant runoff (sediments or hydrocarbons) from the development site that would enter any watercourse or drainage system that is hydrologically connected to the SAC.

TABLE 5.2 QUALIFYING INTERESTS WITHIN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE			
CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	**THREATS AND PRESSURES**	**KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**	**POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT**
[A038] Whooper Swan [A395] Greenland White-fronted Goose	None listed	• Prevent hunting. • Management of existing protected areas. • Fisheries management to ensure long term sustainability of fish stocks.	**No** No potential for a significant impact on water quality as there is no potential for significant groundwater contamination or significant runoff (sediments or hydrocarbons) from

TABLE 5.2 QUALIFYING INTERESTS WITHIN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE			
CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	**THREATS AND PRESSURES (NPWS 2019)** H = HIGH IMPORTANCE M = MEDIUM IMPORTANCE	**KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**	**POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT**
		• Reduction of marine litter on coasts and within the water column. • Stop drainage schemes on wetlands.	the development site that would enter any watercourse or drainage system that is hydrologically connected to the SPA. The proposed development does not contain any habitats suitable for foraging or roosting waterfowl.

6. IN COMBINATION EFFECTS

Plans, programmes, and projects related to sectors outside of local authority land use planning will also undergo Appropriate Assessment as required. Such procedures associated with this are overseen by the relevant governmental competent authority. The proposed development does not contain any habitats or species associated with the Tullaghanrock Bog SAC, Callow Bog SAC, and Lough Gara SPA. There will be no impact on water quality, air quality, disturbance to species or any other significant impact that would cause an adverse effect on the qualifying interests of these protected sites. The Roscommon County Council planning system. There are residential, commercial, industrial and infrastructure projects within the town of Ballaghaderreen. As there are no anticipated significant risks from the proposed development and the type of works, given the scale and nature of recent nearby developments, the type of development (amenity park) it is considered that there would be no potential in-combination that will cause a significant impact to the Natura 2000 network.

7.0 SCREENING STATEMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

The proposed development was screened to determine whether or not its implementation would result in significant adverse impacts on the Natura 2000 site network. It has been determined that the plan would not result in significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites and, therefore, Appropriate Assessment is not required. There is a Source-Pathway-Receptor with Tullaghanrock Bog SAC, Callow Bog SAC, and Lough Gara SPA however there is no potential for the proposed development to impact on the habitats and species via the drainage ditch and the Lung catchment.

Accordingly, having carried out the Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening, the competent authority may determine that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of the Development is not required as it can be excluded, on the basis of objective scientific information following screening under this Regulation 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, that the Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European site.

This report presents a Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening for the development, outlining the information required for the competent authority to screen for appropriate assessment and to determine whether or not the development, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, in view of best scientific knowledge, is likely to have a significant effect on any European or Natura 2000 site. It is considered that there would be no significant risk of negative impact, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, to the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. Therefore, a Natura Impact Statement is not required. It can be objectively concluded that no significant effects arising from the development are likely to occur in relation to Tullaghanrock Bog SAC, Callow Bog SAC, and Lough Gara SPA or indeed any other Natura 2000 site in Ireland.

8.0 REFERENCES

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9.0 APPENDIX

SITE LAYOUT

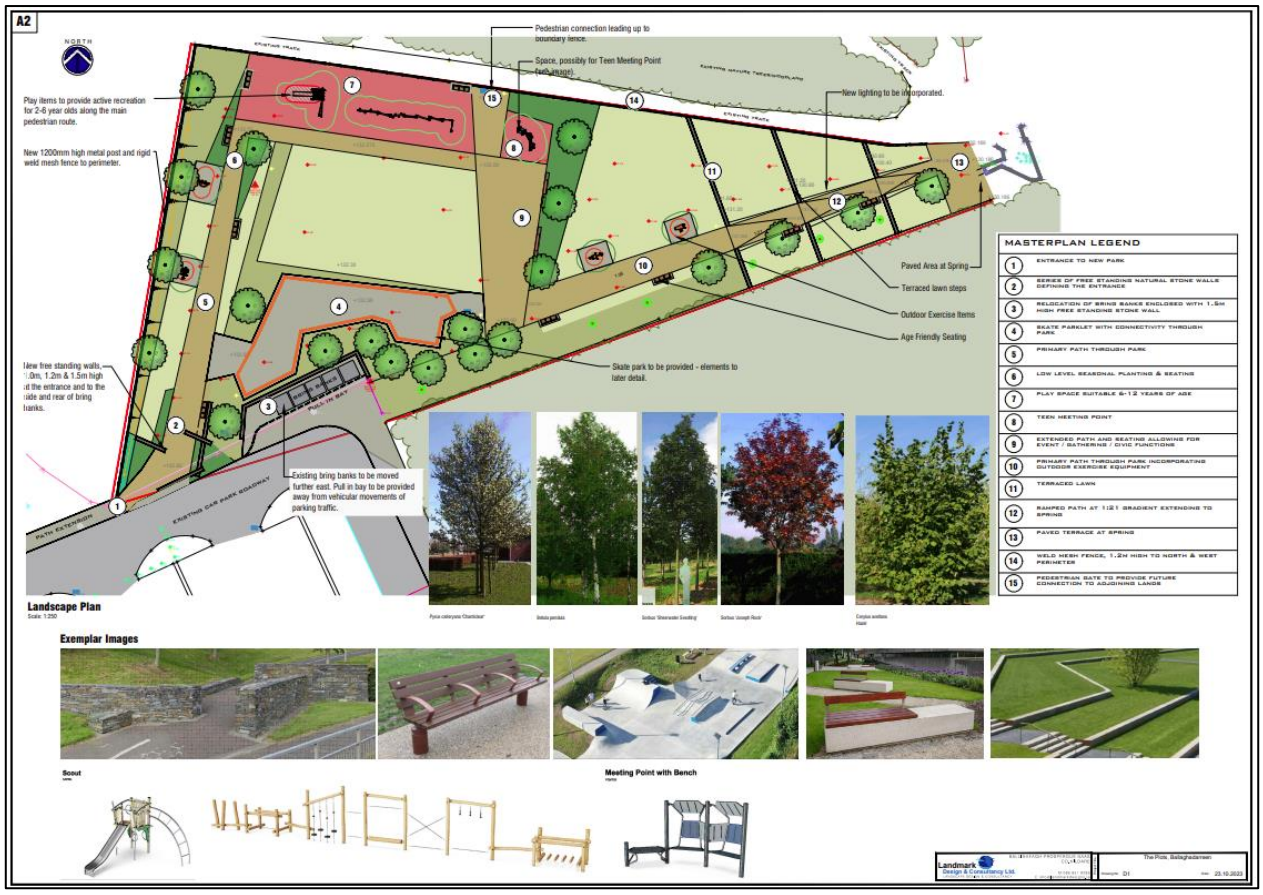
A2
NORTH
Pedestrian connection leading up to boundary fence.
Space, possibly for Teen Meeting Point (tech. assist).
New lighting to be incorporated.
Play items to provide active recreation for 2-6 year olds along the main pedestrian route.
New 1200mm high metal post and rigid weld mesh fence to perimeter.
Paved Area at Spring
Terraced lawn steps
Outdoor Exercise Items
Age Friendly Seating
Skate park to be provided - elements to later detail.
New free standing walls, 1.0m, 1.2m & 1.5m high at the entrance and to the side and rear of bring banks.
Existing bring banks to be moved further east. Pull in bay to be provided away from vehicular movements of parking traffic.
EXISTING CAR PARK ROADWAY
PATH EXTENSION
MASTERPLAN LEGEND
1 ENTRANCE TO NEW PARK
2 SERIES OF FREE STANDING NATURAL STONE WALLS DEFINING THE ENTRANCE
3 RELOCATION OF BRING BANKS ENCLOSED WITH 1.5m HIGH FREE STANDING STONE WALL
4 SKATE PARKLET WITH CONNECTIVITY THROUGH PARK
5 PRIMARY PATH THROUGH PARK
6 LOW LEVEL SEASONAL PLANTING & SEATING
7 PLAY SPACE SUITABLE 6-12 YEARS OF AGE
8 TEEN MEETING POINT
9 EXTENDED PATH AND SEATING ALLOWING FOR EVENT / GATHERING / CIVIC FUNCTIONS
10 PRIMARY PATH THROUGH PARK INCORPORATING OUTDOOR EXERCISE EQUIPMENT
11 TERRACED LAWN
12 RAMPED PATH AT 1:21 GRADIENT EXTENDING TO SPRING
13 PAVED TERRACE AT SPRING
14 WELD MESH FENCE, 1.2M HIGH TO NORTH & WEST PERIMETER
15 PEDESTRIAN GATE TO PROVIDE FUTURE CONNECTION TO ADJOINING LANDS
Landscape Plan
Exemplar Images
Scout
Meeting Point with Bench
Landmark Design & Consultancy Ltd.
The Plots, Ballaghaderreen
Drawing No: 01
Date: 25.10.2022

PHOTO LOG OF SITE ASSESSMENT ON THE 21ST OCTOBER 2023

Figure A1: View of site towards the north east boundary

Figure A2: View of along the south east boundary

Figure A3: View of site facing west

Figure A4: East boundary with location of spring

Figure A5: Boundary with existing carpark

Figure A6: Recolonising flora within site boundary

Figure A7: Woodland to north of site boundary

Figure A8: Grassy verge to the west of site boundary

Figure A9: Location of Japanese Knotweed (40m away)

Figure A10: Marsh area to east of site boundary

Figure A11: Woodland to south of site boundary

Figure A12: Woodland to north of site boundary