



Mill Road, Corbally, Limerick
Sustainable Transport Improvements

Screening Report for Appropriate
Assessment

Doherty Environmental Consultants Ltd.

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Mill Road, Corbally

Sustainable Transport Improvements

Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

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For and on behalf of

Doherty Environmental Consultants
Ltd

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Limerick City & County Council have commissioned Doherty Environmental Consultants (DEC) Ltd. to complete a Stage 1 Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment for the provision of sustainable transport improvements along the Mill Road, Corbally, Limerick. The location of the project is shown on Figure 1.1 while Figure 1.2 provides an aerial view of the project.

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment forms Stage 1 of the Habitats Directive Assessment process and is being undertaken in order to comply with the requirements of the Habitats Directive Article 6(3). The function of this Screening Report is to identify the potential for the project to result in likely significant effects to European Sites and to provide information so that the competent authority can determine whether a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required for the project.

1.1 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

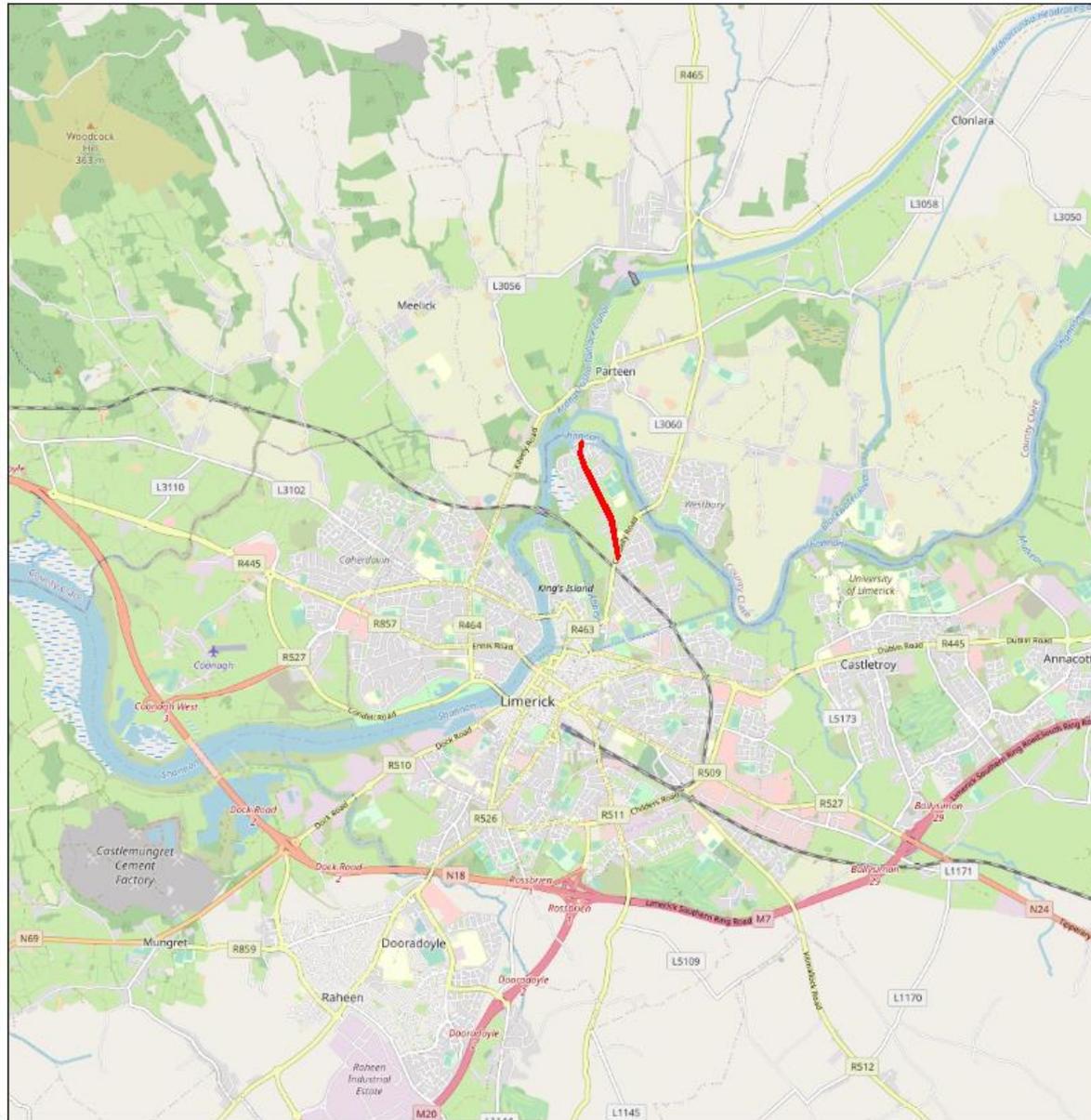
This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment is being prepared in order to enable the competent authority to comply with Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive). It is prepared to assess whether or not the project alone or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect on any European Site in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European Sites and specifically on the habitats and species for which the sites have been designated.

1.1.1 Requirement for an Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive

According to Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 – 2015, the competent Authority has a duty to:

- Determine whether the proposed Project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of one of more European Sites; and, if not,
- Determine if the Project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the European Site(s) in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of the site(s).

This Report contains a Screening for Appropriate Assessment and is intended to examine and address all issues regarding the construction and operation of the Project and to inform and allow the competent authority to comply with the Habitats Directive. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive defines the requirements for assessment of projects and plans for which likely significant effects on European Sites may arise. The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 – 2015 (the Habitats Regulations) transpose into Irish law Directive 2009/147/EC (the Birds Directive) and Council Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive) lists habitats and species that are of international importance for conservation and require protection. The Habitats legislation requires competent authorities, to carry out a Screening for Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects that, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site’s conservation objectives. This requirement is transposed into Irish Law by Part 5 of the Habitats Regulations and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).



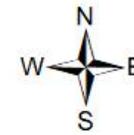
Mill Road, Corbally

Figure 1.1

Site Location

 Site Boundary

0 125 250 Km



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Mill Road, Corbally

Figure 1.2

Aerial View of Project Site

 Site Boundary

0 0.15 0.3 Km



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Date	04/08/2020
Data Source	Bing

2.0 SCREENING METHOD

The function of the Screening exercise is to identify whether or not the proposal will have a likely significant effect on European Sites. In this context “likely” refers to the presence of doubt with regard to the absence of significant effects (ECJ case C-127/02) and “significant” means not trivial or inconsequential but an effect that has the potential to undermine the site’s conservation objectives (English Nature, 1999; ECJ case C-127/02 &). In other words any effect that compromises the conservation objectives for the site would constitute a significant effect.

The nature of the likely interactions between the project and the conservation objectives of European Sites will depend upon the sensitivity of the sites qualifying features of interest to potential impacts arising from the project; the current conservation status of the European Sites and its qualifying features of interest; and any likely changes to key environmental indicators (e.g. habitat structure; vegetation community) that underpin the conservation status of the site and its associated qualifying features of interest, in combination with other plans and projects.

This Screening exercise has been undertaken with reference to respective National and European guidance documents: Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (2010) and *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats directive*

92/43/EEC and relevant European and National case law. The following guidance documents were also of relevance during this Screening Assessment:

- Managing Natura 2000 Sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats directive 92/43/EEC. European commission (2018).

The EC (2001) guidelines outline the stages involved in undertaking a Screening exercise of a project that has the potential to have likely significant effects on European Sites. The methodology adopted for this Screening exercise is informed by these guidelines and was undertaken in the following stages:

1. Describe the project and determine whether it is necessary for the conservation management of European Sites;

2. Identify European Sites likely to be influenced by the project;
3. Screen the project against established assessment criteria to determine if it has the potential to affect European Sites; and
4. Identify other plans or projects that, in combination with the project, have the potential to affect European Sites.

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The project involves the provision of sustainable transport improvements to a circa 1,450m stretch of the Mill Road, Corbally.

The project will comprise the following:

- The increase in width of existing footpaths on the eastern side of Mill road from 1.2m to a shared area for pedestrian and cyclists of varying width from 2.2m to 3.5m.
- The retention of existing car parking adjacent to Scoil Ide
- The replacement of an existing 1.2m wide footpath with rubbing strip of varying width on western side of Mill Road
- The demolition of an existing stone wall that currently forms the eastern boundary of the Mill Road along a section of the road and its replacement with a new stone wall that will be set back 5m from the road verge.
- The provision of a shared pedestrian and cycle surface between the Mill road verge and the replacement stone wall.
- The installation of a 225m section of shared surface between cars/pedestrian and cyclists with the retention of existing building and boundary walls.
- The provision of a 5.0m wide carriageway along the scheme

3.2 APPROACH TO THE PROJECT WORKS

Given that the project is linear in nature involve works along the Mill Road for a stretch of approximately 1,450m the works will proceed on a staged basis to minimise disruption to local traffic, residents and schools. The works will be completed in discrete individual stages and once one stage is complete the next stage will be commenced. This approach will also minimise the works being undertaken along the Mill road at any one time to a discrete area.

3.3 PLANT & CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS REQUIRED

The type of plant and machinery required will be typical civil engineering road construction plant for earthworks and paving, and is likely to include:

- 360 degree 20 tonne Excavators (crawler track machines)
- Rubber-tyred Excavators 6 tonne JCB
- 3 tonne Mini Diggers
- 6 tonne Dumpers
- 7.5 tonne multi-purpose truck
- 20 tonne and 30 tonne delivery trucks (importation of rock and bitumenous paving materials)
- Teleporter for erection of lighting columns
- Site Vehicles (4x4 wheel short base and vans)
- Compactor plates
- 1 tonne hand roller
- 6 tonne vibrating Rollers
- 10 tonne dead weight rollers
- Blawknex Paving Machine

- Bitumen Boiler/Hot Box
- Oil Tanker/Sprayer
- Road Planing Machine
- Extruded Kerb Laying Machine
- Road Saws/Con Saws/chain saws
- Bark Mulchers
- Air Compressors
- Jack Hammers
- Stihl Saws
- Small tools/hand tools
- Traffic Management Signs, Cones & Barriers
- Herras Fencing
- Mobile Traffic Lights
- Road Sweeper & Water Tank Truck
- PPE

All machinery will be inspected and certified to be free of leaks and weeps prior to mobilisation on site.

The materials will be typical civil engineering road construction materials consisting of cement, sand, gravel of various aggregate sizes, recycled stone, imported and reused rock fill, imported and reused top soil, concrete blocks, paviors and sets, natural stone paviors and sets, precast concrete kerbs, manhole bases, covers, precast concrete culverts, pipes, precast concrete services chambers, PVC-u ducts & chambers, PVC-u drainage channels with galvanised steel covers, galvanised metal chamber covers, galvanized, powder-coated street lighting columns and traffic signal poles, galvanised steel sign posts and metal traffic signs, bituminous road

paving materials, thermoplastic road marking materials, LED lighting lanterns & electrical equipment, traffic signals & controller electronic equipment, galvanised metal field gates, driveway gates and posts.

3.4 SITE PERSONNEL

At its peak it is expected that there will be between 10 and 20 personnel on site full time. The personnel will consist of general operatives, skilled operatives and tradesmen, apprentice tradesmen, machine operators, truck drivers, engineers, technicians, surveyors and construction managers.

3.5 DURATION OF CONSTRUCTION PHASE

It is estimated that the construction process will take up to 3 months.

3.6 BASELINE ECOLOGY AT THE PROJECT SITE

3.6.1 Habitats

The project is located within an urban setting within the inner suburbs of Limerick City. The dominant land cover occurring within and adjacent to the project footprint is buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3). Amenity grassland (GA2) in the form of green playing areas associated with St Munchin's College, the Mill road Fairy Garden and residential gardens occur to the east and west of the Mill Road. Areas of improved agricultural grassland occur to the west of the Mill Road, along its south extent.

3.6.2 Fauna

The footprint of the proposed improvement works does not support habitats that could be relied upon by sensitive fauna species, such as special conservation interest wetland bird species or otters of the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA or the Lower River Shannon SAC. The project footprint is of low ecological value for fauna.

3.7 IS THE PROJECT DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH OR NECESSARY FOR THE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN SITES

Given the description of the proposed project in Section 3 above it is clear that the project is not directly connected with or necessary for the management of any European Sites.

4.0 IDENTIFY EUROPEAN SITES LIKELY TO BE INFLUENCED BY THE PROJECT

Current guidance on undertaking EU Habitats Directive Article 6 Assessments advises that all European Sites occurring within a 15km radius of a project site should be included within a Screening Assessment (Scott Wilson et al., 2006; DOEHLG, 2010). The guidelines go on to state that for certain projects this distance could be much less than 15km, and in some cases less than 100m, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects.

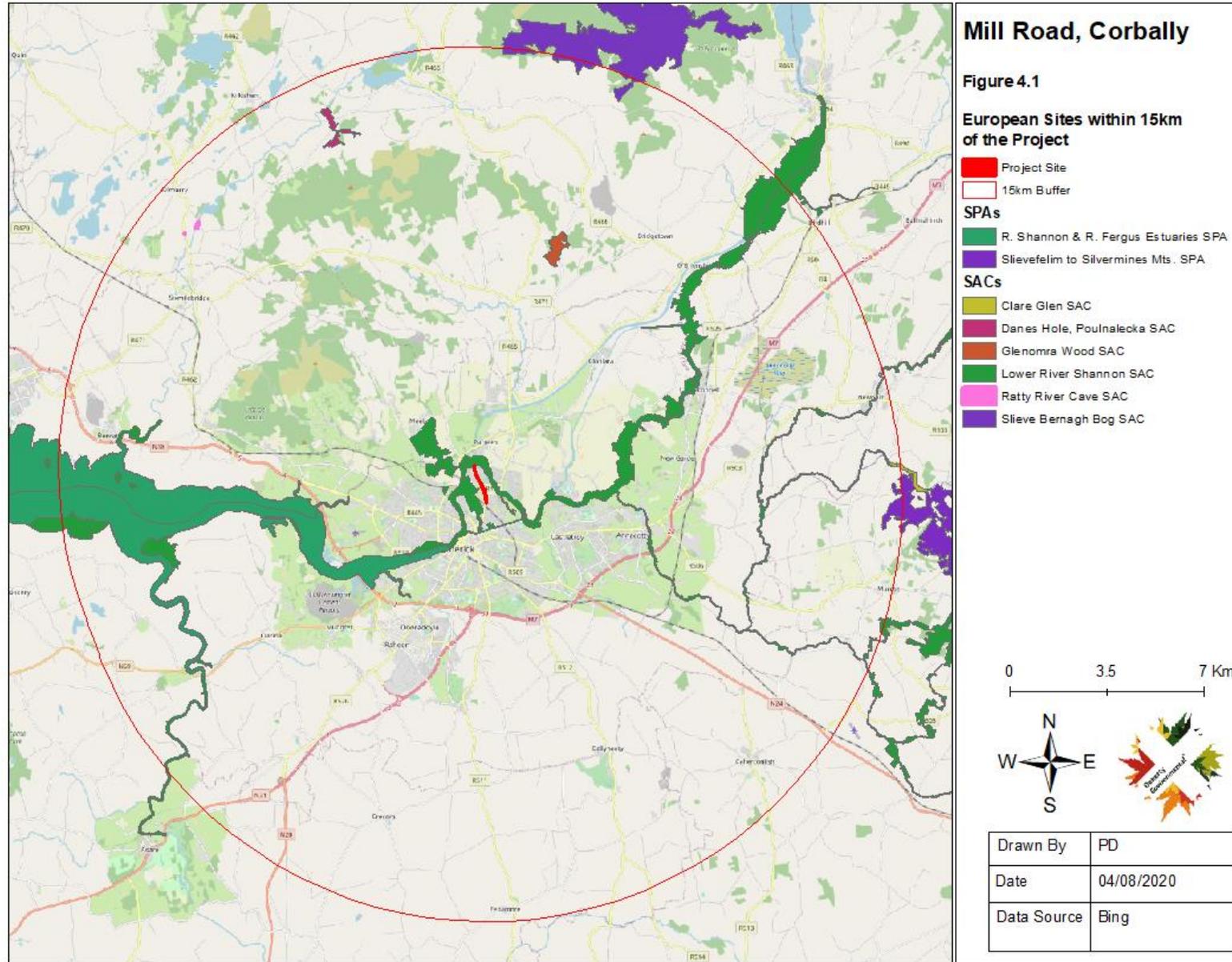
Given that the project will be confined to existing areas of made ground and will involve the enhancement of existing road and footpath surfaces to accommodate increased pedestrian and cycling modes of transport in a safer road layout within a restricted area, the zone of influence of the project will be limited to the project footprint and immediate surrounding area.

Eight European Sites occur within the wider area (i.e. within 15km) surrounding the project site. These comprise two SPAs and six SACs. The SPAs are the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA and the Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains SPA, while the SACs are the Lower River Shannon SAC; Clare Glen SAC; Danes Hole SAC; Glenomra Wood SAC; Ratty River Cave SAC; Slieve Bernagh Bog SAC.

With the exception of the Lower River Shannon all other European Sites listed above are located at a remote distance from the project site. The River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA is located approximately 2km to the southwest of the project site while all other European Sites are located over 7.5km from the project site. Figure 4.1 shows the location of all European Sites occurring within a 15km radius of the project. None of these European Sites are linked to the project site via any pathways and there will be no potential for the project to result in negative impacts to these European Sites. As such these European Sites do not occur

within the zone of influence of the project and are screened out from further examination at this stage.

The Lower River Shannon SAC is located approximately 25m to the north. The location of the Lower River Shannon European Sites with respect to the project site are shown on Figure 4.2. While the project is located outside the Lower River Shannon Sac and is not connected to this SAC given the proximity of the project site to the SAC further consideration of the project's potential to result in likely significant effects to this SAC is outlined in the remaining sections of this Screening Report.



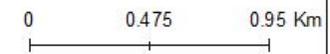


Mill Road, Corbally

Figure 4.2

Relationship between the Project and Lower River Shannon SAC

- Project Site
- Lower River Shannon SAC



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Date	04/08/2020
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4.1 OVERVIEW OF THE LOWER RIVER SHANNON SAC

Lower River Shannon SAC is designated as a SAC for its role in supporting a range of qualifying habitat and species. This SAC is a very large site stretches along the Shannon valley from Killaloe in Co. Clare to Loop Head/ Kerry Head, a distance of some 120 km. The site thus encompasses the Shannon, Feale, Mulkear and Fergus estuaries, the freshwater lower reaches of the River Shannon (between Killaloe and Limerick), the freshwater stretches of much of the Feale and Mulkear catchments and the marine area between Loop Head and Kerry Head. Rivers within the sub-catchment of the Feale include the Galey, Smearlagh, Oolagh, Allaughaun, Owveg, Clydagh, Caher, Breanagh and Glenacarneay. Rivers within the sub-catchment of the Mulkear include the Killeenagarrieff, Annagh, Newport, the Dead River, the Bilboa, Glashacloonaraveela, Gortnageragh and Cahernahallia.

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):

[1110] Sandbanks

[1130] Estuaries

[1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats

[1150] Coastal Lagoons*

[1160] Large Shallow Inlets and Bays

[1170] Reefs

[1220] Perennial Vegetation of Stony Banks

[1230] Vegetated Sea Cliffs

[1310] *Salicornia* Mud

[1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows

[1410] Mediterranean Salt Meadows

[3260] Vegetation of flowing waters

[6410] *Molinia* Meadows

[91E0] Alluvial Forests*

[1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) [1095] Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*)

[1096] Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*)

[1099] River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*)

[1106] Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*)

[1349] Bottle-nosed Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)

[1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

4.1.1 Documented Threats & Pressures to Lower River Shannon SAC

The threats and pressures to this SAC have been documented in the Standard Natura 2000 Data Form for the site (NPWS, 2017). The documented threats and pressures to this SPA are as follows:

Fertilisation: The source of pollution is assumed to be linked to the agricultural improvement referred to in the SAC Site Synopsis.

Urbanisation, human habitation: Given the pattern of human habitation in the vicinity of the SAC, this threat relates to existing and proposed urbanized areas located adjacent to the SAC.

Air pollution: Associated with existing and proposed human activities in the vicinity of the SAC.

Discharges: Associated with existing and proposed discharges from both point and diffuse sources to the River Shannon.

Eutrophication: Associated with existing and proposed point and diffuse sources discharging to the River Shannon.

Polderisation; and

Reclamation of land from sea, estuary and marsh.

4.2 DOES THE LOWER RIVER SHANNON SAC OCCUR WITHIN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PROJECT

As the Lower River Shannon SAC is buffered from the project site by approximately 25m at its northern terminus by an existing road, low wall and amenity grassland verge, the project will not have the potential to result in direct impacts to this European Site. Thus this Screening exercise focuses on investigating whether the project will have the potential to result in indirect effects to Lower River Shannon SAC or effect mobile species associated with this SAC beyond the its boundary and within the footprint of the project.

A source-pathway-receptor model has been used to establish whether or not the Lower River Shannon SAC occurs within the zone of influence of potential indirect impacts. Under such a model the project, as described in Section 3 of this Screening Statement, represents the source.

Potential impact pathways are restricted to hydrological pathways. No other pathways such as noise disturbance, visual disturbance or emissions to atmosphere will arise due to the minor scale of the project and its location within an existing urban environment that is subject to ongoing human activities. In addition, due to the location of the project site within an urban setting and the absence of suitable habitat within the project footprint to support qualifying species of the SAC, there will be no potential for it to interact with such species outside the boundary of their European Sites.

The receptors represent the Lower River Shannon SAC and its associated qualifying features of interest.

The Lower River Shannon and its associated qualifying features are likely to occur in the zone of influence of the project only where hydrological pathways establish a link between the project and the European Site.

Table 4.1 provides a determination as to whether the Lower River Shannon SAC occurs within the zone of influence of the project. This determination has been undertaken in line with the following assessment questions:

- Is there a hydrological pathway link between the Project site and the Lower River Shannon SAC?

- Does the hydrological pathway have the potential to function as an impact that could result in negative impacts to water quality and aquatic habitats and fauna of the Lower River Shannon SAC

Table 4.1: Examination of whether or not the Lower River Shannon occurs within the zone of influence of the Project

Hydrological Pathway	Do hydrological pathway have the potential to function as an impact pathway?	Do European Sites occur within the Projects Zone of Influence?
<p>Yes. surface water draining the project site drains to existing road drains along the Mill Road which convey surface water to the River Shannon.</p>	<p>No. the project will be small in scale and will involve the demolition of existing footpath surfaces and stone walls, minor excavations for the provision of foundations for new shared surfaces and traffic signals and the construction of a stone wall. The works associated with the project are considered to be minor and will not generate significant quantities of contaminants such as suspended solids that could become entrained in surface water runoff and conveyed to the River Shannon. Any small quantities of suspended solids that could be discharged to the River Shannon will be imperceptible within this watercourse and will be immediately diluted and dispersed within the watercourse.</p> <p>In addition, the project will require minor quantities of potential polluting materials such as cement-</p>	<p>No. While the project site is connected to the River Shannon via existing surface water drains this hydrological pathway will not have the potential to function as an impact pathway to the SAC. As such this SAC is not considered to occur within the zone of influence of the project.</p>

	<p>based products, fuel, oil and construction lubricants.</p> <p>The risk of such materials becoming entrained in surface water runoff and discharged to the River Shannon is considered to be negligible and given the small quantities required for the project in the remote event of a minor spillage of such materials they will be become immediately diluted and dispersed within the River Shannon.</p>	
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Table 4.1 above examines the relationship between the project site and the Lower River Shannon SAC. As noted within this table no European Sites occur in close proximity to the project site. While the project site is linked to the Lower River Shannon SAC it will not have the potential to negatively affect the status of this SAC. The Source-Pathway-Receptor model has not identified the presence of an impact pathway linking the project site to this European Site.

The absence of any potential impact pathways will eliminate the potential for this project to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. A Screening Matrix, in line with European Commission (2001) guidelines is provided below in Table 5.2.

Table 4.2: Screening Matrix for Project

Screening Criteria	Assessment
Brief description of the project or plan	The project and associated activities are described in Section 3 above.
Brief description of the European Sites	The European Sites occurring in the wider surrounding area are identified and briefly described in Section 4.2 above.
Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European Sites.	The project is located approximately 25m from the nearest point of the Lower River Shannon SAC. No functional impact pathways link the project site to this SAC. The project will result in works confined to existing areas of made artificial ground. The works will be small in scale and will not have the potential to result in significant negative environmental effects or negatively affect the status of the Lower River Shannon SAC.
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European Sites site by virtue of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • size and scale; • land-take; • distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site; 	The project will not have the potential to result in direct, indirect or secondary impacts to European Sites. The project is small in scale and relates to the alterations to existing areas of made artificial surfaces.

Screening Criteria	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resource requirements (water abstraction etc.); • emissions (disposal to land, water or air); • excavation requirements; • transportation requirements; • duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.; 	<p>The project will not result in any land take from the Lower River Shannon SAC or any other European Sites or habitat that is relied upon by qualifying species of the Lower River Shannon SAC or any other European Sites.</p> <p>The project site is located approximately 25m from the River Shannon which is a key feature of the SAC.</p> <p>Given the absence of any functional impact pathways the project will not have the potential to result in any perceptible emissions to River Shannon.</p> <p>Any excavations required for the project will be restricted to the footprint of the project site which is entirely comprised of existing made ground in an urban setting.</p> <p>The project will not involve any perceptible changes to vehicular transport in the local area and will have the potential to result in an increase in sustainable, non-vehicular modes of transport which will in turn have the potential to result in positive impacts for air quality and climate.</p> <p>The works will be completed over a short time frame and given that the works will be restricted to an urban environment with high levels of human activity outside the boundary of the Lower River Shannon SAC and in areas not suitable for supporting mobile qualifying species of the SAC there will be no potential for</p>

Screening Criteria	Assessment
	these works to result in disturbance to the SAC and its qualifying features of interest.
<p>Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>The project will not:</p> <p>have the potential to result in a reduction in habitat area of any qualifying habitats or wetland habitats of the Lower River Shannon SAC;</p> <p>there are no functional impact pathways linking the project site to the aquatic habitats of the Lower River Shannon SAC upon which qualifying habitat and qualifying species of the SAC rely and there will be no potential for the project to disturb these habitats and species within the river.</p> <p>The project will have the potential to result in positive impacts for air quality and climate by enhancing infrastructure for non-vehicular modes of transport which will provide conditions for a reduction in dependency on vehicular transport.</p>
<p>Describe the potential for the project alone or in combination with other plans or projects to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>	<p>Given that the project is located outside the boundary of the Lower River Shannon SAC and is buffered from the SAC by an existing public road and an area of amenity grassland; that it is small in scale and is not linked to the Lower River Shannon SAC via impact pathways and that this SAC has been found to lie outside the zone of influence of the project there will be no potential for the project to combine with any other project to result in cumulative negative impacts to the SAC.</p>
<p>Describe any likely impacts on the European Sites site as a whole in terms of:</p> <p>interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site;</p>	<p>For reasons set out above the project will not have the potential to interfere with key relationships that define the structure and function of the Lower River Shannon SAC.</p>

Screening Criteria	Assessment
interference with key relationships that define the function of the site	
Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss; • fragmentation; • disruption; • disturbance; • change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.). 	For reasons set out above the project will not have the potential to result in such effects to European Sites.
Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.	The project will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.

5.0 SCREENING STATEMENT CONCLUSION: FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

During the Screening of the proposed project which involves the provision of sustainable transport improvements along the existing Mill Road at Corbally it was found that eight European Sites occur within a 15km radius of the project site. The nearest European Site, the Lower River Shannon SAC, to the project site is located approximately 25m to the north. All other European Site are located at a remote distance (over 2km) from the project site and were identified as lying outside the zone of influence of the project at an early stage of this screening exercise. While the Lower River Shannon SAC is located within close proximity to the project it to has been identified as lying outside the zone of influence of the project. This SAC is buffered from the project site by an existing public road, a low wall and an area of amenity grassland. The works associated with the project are small in scale and will be restricted predominantly to the footprint of the Mill Road. The presence of existing road drains that conveys surface water runoff from the Mill Road to the River Shannon has been identified in

this screening report but is not representative of an impact pathway. This is due to the small scale works of the works associated with the project; the staged approach to the works which will be completed discrete individual sections before moving on to the next section; the small quantities of potential polluting materials required for the works; the negligible risk of the release of such materials via surface water runoff to the River Shannon; and in the unlikely event of a spill the imperceptible impact of any surface water runoff to the water quality of the River Shannon due to the capacity of this large water body to assimilate, dilute and disperse any minor surface water runoff flows discharging to the river via road drains along the Mill Road.

In light of the findings of this report it is the considered view of the authors of this Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment that it can be concluded by Limerick City & County Council that the project is not likely, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, to have a significant effect on any European Sites in view of their Conservation Objectives and on the basis of best scientific evidence and there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to that conclusion.

REFERENCES

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