Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

Landscape Filling at Ballygrennan Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road

DEC Ltd.

December 2019

Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

Landscaping Filling at Ballygrennan

Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road

Document Stage	Document Version	Prepared by
Draft	1	Ruth Minogue MCIEEM
Draft Final	2	Pat Doherty MSc, MCIEEM

Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Doherty Environmental Consultants (DEC) Ltd. have been commissioned by the Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) to undertake a Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment for proposed landscape filling in the townland of Ballygrennan (i.e. the project) for the planning approved Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road. Figure 1.1 shows the broader location of the proposed landscape filling area, while Figure 1.2 shows a higher resolution aerial image of the proposed fill area to the east of the approved road scheme.

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 determine if it can or cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European Site. This Screening Report has been prepared to provide information to the competent authority to assist them in their determination as to whether a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required for the project.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

The overall Coonagh to Knocklisheen Distributor Road (CKDR) Scheme which received An Bord Pleanála approval in 2011 is described as follows:

The proposed Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road scheme will provide a new high quality dual carriageway on the north western outskirts of Limerick City linking Coonagh Roundabout on the N18 with the Knockalisheen Road at a point close to the Limerick Clare county boundary. The total length of new dual carriageway will be approximately 2.6kms. The proposed scheme will also include the following elements from south to north commencing at Coonagh Roundabout:

Coonagh

Landscape Filling

Figure 1.1

Project Site Location

Area of Fill

0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Km

N
W E
S

Drawn By	PD
Date	19/11/2019
Data Source	Bing

Coonagh Landscape Filling

Figure 1.2

Aerial View of Landscape Filling Area

Landscape Fill Area

Approved Road Corridor

0 0.03 0.06 0.12 Km

N W E S

Drawn By	PD
Date	29/11/2019
Data Source	Bing

Moyross Link Road: a two way carriageway of approximate length 600metres which will link the new distributor road with the Moyross area. The junction of the link road with the distributor road will be in the form of a roundabout.

Ballygrennan Railway Bridge: new bridge to carry the distributor road across the existing rail line which runs to the north of the Moyross area.

Knockalisheen Road Roundabout: new roundabout at the northern end of the route which will link the distributor road to the Knockalisheen Road.

Further to the above, the CKDR scheme will also include significant improvement works to the Knockalisheen Road extending from its roundabout intersection with the proposed distributor road over a length of approximately 1.8kms southwards to its junction with the Long Pavement Road at Watch House Cross. These improvement works will primarily involve widening of the existing road to accommodate cycle paths and improved pedestrian facilities but will also include carriageway reconstruction and improvement of existing junctions. A significant element of these works will be the replacement of the bridge where the Knockalisheen Road crosses over the existing railway line at Ballynanty with a new bridge which will facilitate road widening and improved sight lines on its approaches.

An Advanced Works Contract was completed in 2018 which included for the first 300m section of the dual carriageway, a new roundabout at Tesco and the construction of an embankment for a further 650m of future dual carriageway. The Advanced Works Contract also included for site clearance along the route, drainage/ culvert installations, diversion of utilities and fencing/wall construction along the CPO boundary.

The remainder of the CKDR Scheme is to be completed under a single Main Contract and includes the following:

- 2.2km of new urban dual carriageway road with 2 x 7.0m carriageways, footways, cycleways, verges and embankment construction works.

- 0.6km of new urban single carriageway road with footways, cycleways and verges (Moyross Link Road).
- 2.0km of major improvements to an existing urban single carriageway road with footways, cycleways and verges (Knockalisheen Road).
- 1.0km of minor improvements to existing rural single carriageway roads (Cratloe Road).
- 2 road over railway bridges (New bridge at Ballygrennan and a re-constructed bridge at Ballynanty).
- 3 new roundabouts (Cratloe Road, Moyross Link Road and Knockalisheen Road Roundabouts).
- 2 Traffic Signal Controlled Junctions in conjunction with the upgrade of the Knockalisheen Road.

Associated works will include;

- provision of pedestrian/cyclist crossing facilities in accordance with DMURS;
- diversion of live services including foul sewers, watermains, gasmains and telecomms;
- new surface water sewer systems;
- site clearance and fencing;
- masonry and reinforced concrete retaining walls;
- reinforced earth retaining walls;
- culverts;
- road pavements;
- kerbing, footway/cycleway construction;
- traffic signs and road markings; and
- road lighting.

1.2 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.

1.2.1 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 assess 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).

2.0 STAGE 1 SCREENING METHOD

This Screening Report has been prepared in order to comply with the legislative requirements outlined in Section 1.1 above and aims to establish whether or not the proposed residential development, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, will be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site's conservation objectives. 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 European Site's conservation objectives (English Nature, 1999; ECJ case C-127/02). In other words any effect that compromises the conservation objectives of a European Site and interferes with achieving 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 these sites and their reasons for designation to potential impacts arising from the project; the current conservation status of the features for which European Sites have been designated; and any likely changes to key environmental indicators (e.g. habitat structure; vegetation community) that underpin the conservation status of European Sites, in combination with other plans and projects. This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken with reference to respective National and European guidance documents:

Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG 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 recent European and National case law.

The following guidance documents were also of relevance during the preparation of this Screening Report:

- A guide for competent authorities. Environment and Heritage Service, Sept 2002. Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010). DEHLG.

- 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 92/42/EEC. European Commission (2001).

- 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 Report for Appropriate Assessment for projects. The methodology adopted during the preparation of this Screening Report 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 that could be influenced by the project;

3. Where European Sites are identified as occurring within the zone of influence of the project identify potential effects arising from the project and screen the potential for such effects to negatively affect European Sites identified under Point 2 above; 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 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT SITE

The habitats present within the footprint of the project site consists of Improved agricultural grassland (GA1)/Wet Grassland (GS4).

A summary of a habitats from the 2010 EIS is as follows and applies to the area immediately surrounding the development site:

Section 7.2.2 General Description of the Study Area

The majority of the route from Coonagh to Knockalisheen runs at the western fringe of sub-urban Limerick crossing low-lying land of neglected pasture (a mosaic of species-poor wet grassland and dry neutral grassland) with occasional scrubby hedgerows. North-east of the Limerick to Ennis rail line, the topography is more undulating as the route enters an area of smaller fields separated by tree-lines and dense hedgerows north of Castle Park Estate before joining the Knockalisheen Road.

The scheme also involves the upgrade of the Knockalisheen Road as far as Watchhouse Cross. This stretch of road is uniformly low-ling and is partially bordered to the east by Knockalisheen Marsh (a proposed Natural Heritage Area and part of the Lower River Shannon candidate Special Area of Conservation), while the wooded grounds of the derelict Castle Park Estate, a protected structure, fringe the western side of the road. A small block of wetland, also within the Lower River Shannon candidate Special Area of Conservation, occurs immediately north of Watchhouse Cross.

[page 7/4] Hedgerows and Treelines

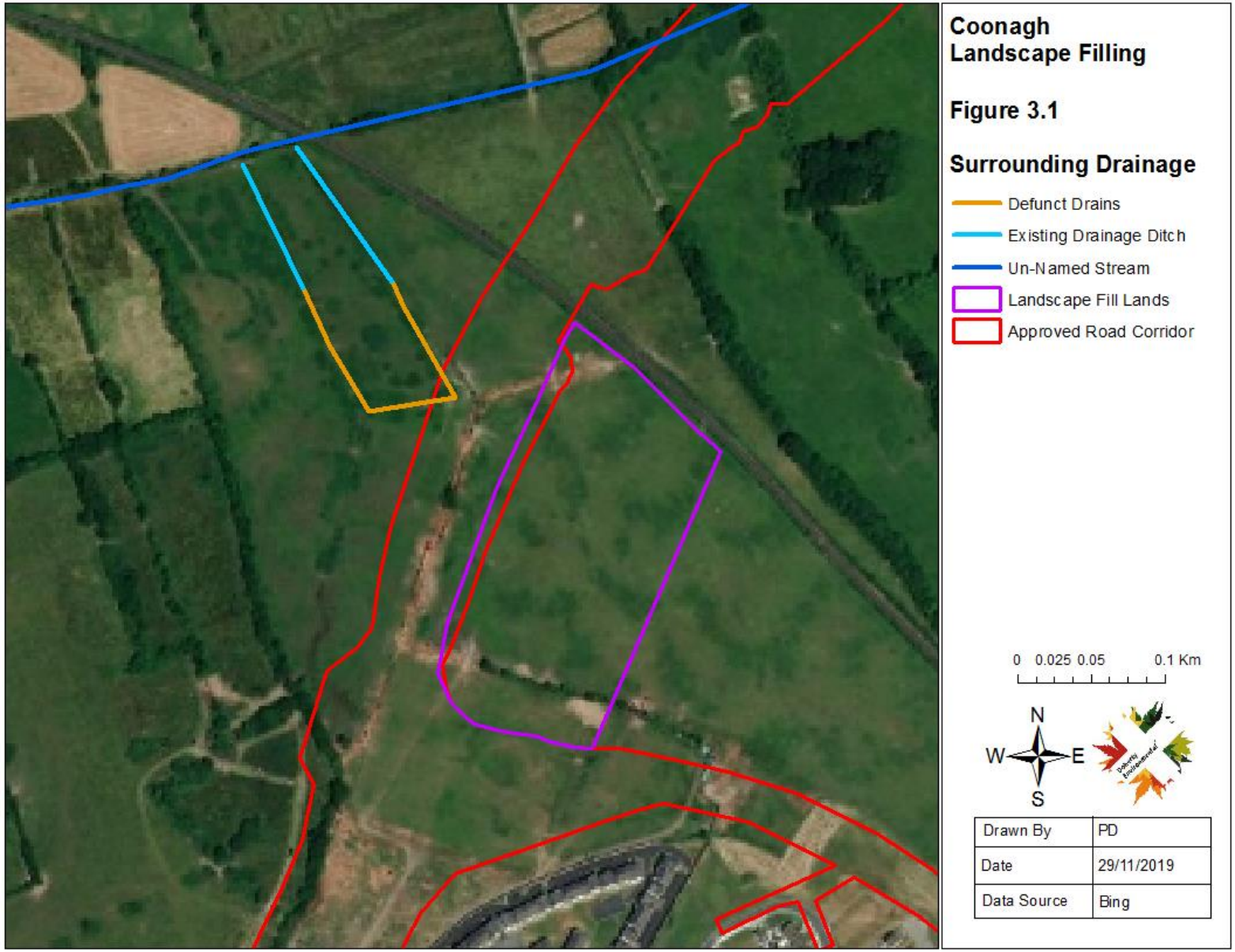
In the section between Coonagh and the rail line (chainage 0 to1, 880), field boundaries are primarily low scrubby hedgerows (WL1) comprised of willow, hawthorn, and blackthorn with abundant briar. Elder and ash are both occasional as small trees. The ground flora is typically poorly developed due to the dense nature of the hedgerow.

As noted above the footprint of the proposed landscape fill lands consist of poorly drained improved agricultural pasture with patches of wet grassland also occurring. Old field drains occur to the west of the proposed landscaping fill lands and these run north, northwest to an un-named stream occurring approximately 250m to the northwest of the proposed landscape fill area. These drains will be separated from the proposed landscape fill lands by the approved CKDR. The un-named stream, into which the existing drains connect, drains into the Crompaun River, the lower stretches of which are located within the Lower River Shannon SAC. During a site visit to the project site and landscape fill area in November 2019 the drains occurring to the west of the landscape fill area were representative of terrestrialised ditches closer to the approved road corridor. These are defunct drainage ditches and no water flow was noted in these sections of the drains. The vegetation which has built up in these drains impeded the flow of any surface water. The drains become more estabished and less terrestrialised further west nearer their confluence points with the un-named stream. The nearest point of a drain with potential to convey flowing water is estimated to be over 120m from the nearest point of the proposed landscape fill lands and over 55m from the approved CKDR road corridor. Figure 3.1 illustrates the drainage features surrounding the proposed landscape fill lands.

Given the level ground, the absence of any drains supporting flowing water and a significant buffer area of 120m from the landscape fill area and 55m from the approved CKDR corridor, it is expected that all surface water drainage from the landscape fill lands will drain to ground at and in the immediate surrounding area.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The lands are located to the south of the Limerick to Galway railway line and to the east of the CKDR Scheme in the townland of Ballygrennan, Limerick. The approved distributor road at this location will be constructed on a raised embankment with the road level rising from the proposed Moyross Link Road Roundabout to a high point on the new Ballygrennan bridge over the Limerick to Galway railway line. The proposed road levels alongside the project lands will vary from 3m up to 9m above existing ground level. It is proposed to infill the area between the approved distributor


Coonagh
Landscape Filling
Figure 3.1
Surrounding Drainage
Defunct Drains
Existing Drainage Ditch
Un-Named Stream
Landscape Fill Lands
Approved Road Corridor
0 0.025 0.05 0.1 Km
N
W
E
S
Drawn By PD
Date 29/11/2019
Data Source Bing

road embankment running down to meet existing ground level which will help to blend the distributor road into the landscape as you approach the road from the Moyross direction.

The overall landscape fill volume comprising of the excavated soil and stone is 26,000m^3 within the original CPO boundary and 39,000m^3 on lands outside the CPO. This is equivalent to c. 47,000 tonnes within the original CPO boundary and c. 72,000 tonnes outside the CPO.

3.2.1 Features of the proposed development

The approach to the road development will be as per the approved CKDR Scheme of 2010, and is not repeated here unless necessary. The features of the development in relation to the inert excavated soil and stone material for use in landscaping on land now owned by LCCC are as follows:

3.2.1.1 Duration of works.

Works on the project site would likely be on-going for the entire duration of the CKDR Scheme which is planned to be competed under one contract of approximate duration 30 months.

3.2.1.2 Approach to works.

Works would involve transporting inert spoil (soil and rocks) from throughout the CKDR Scheme site via truck or site dumper with this material then being placed as fill on the project site via tracked dozer or a number of excavators. The exact method would largely depend on the moisture content of the material to be placed (ie: dryer material being spread with a dozer and wet material being handled multiple times via excavator)

3.2.1.3 Location of works compound

Site management offices are likely to be remote from the project site.

3.2.1.4 Anticipated machinery and staff

1 Tracked Dozer and 2-4 Excavators.

4.0 IS THE PROJECT NECESSARY FOR THE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN SITES

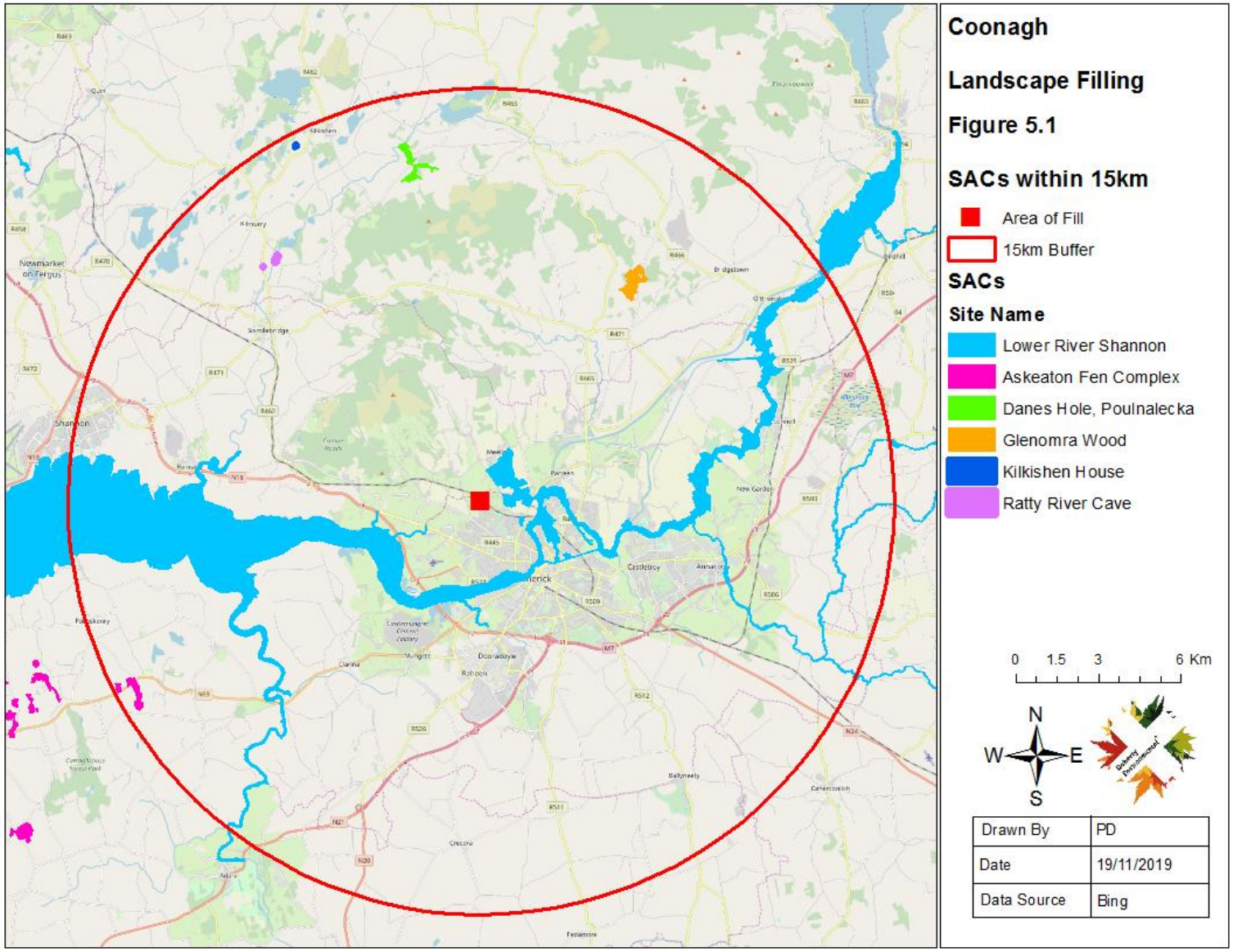
The project has been described in Section 3 of the Screening Report and it is clear from the description provided that the project is not directly connected with or necessary for the future conservation management of any European Sites.

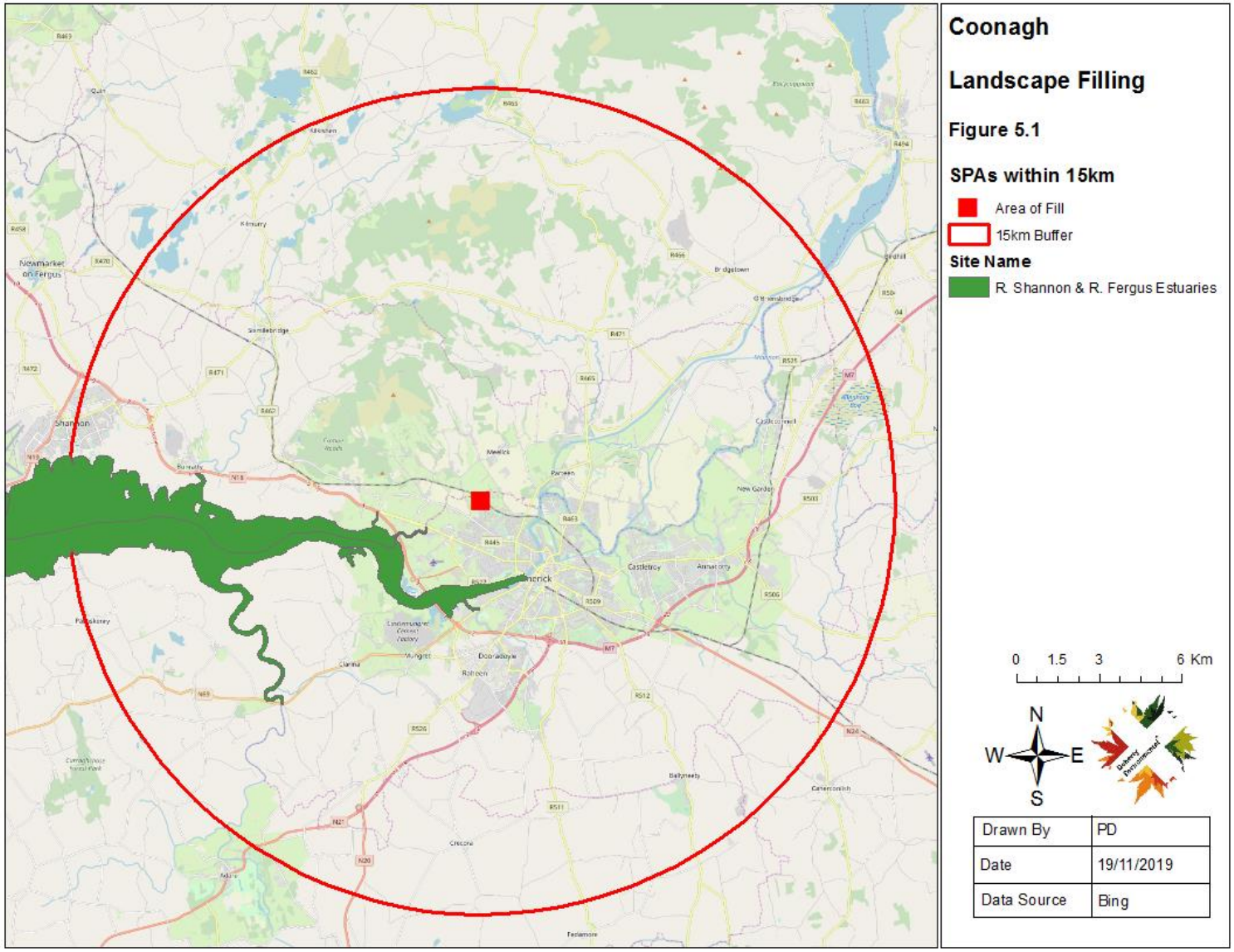
5.0 EUROPEAN SITES OCCURRING WITHIN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PROJECT

Current guidance recommends that all European Sites occurring within 15km of project sites should be identified at the outset of an impact assessment process. A total of 7 European Sites have been identified in the surrounding 15km area. Table 5.1 lists these European Sites and the spatial relationship between each of these sites and the project site is shown on Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2.

In addition to the European Sites occurring within a 15km area of the project site the DEHLG 2010 guidelines on Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland also advise that where the potential exists for a hydrological pathway to occur between the project site and European Sites beyond the 15km distance, then these sites should also be included as part of the Screening Assessment. European Sites outside the 15km buffer of the project site have been considered, and due to the scale, size, location and nature of the project and the absence of any potential impact pathways connecting the project site to other European Sites at a distance of greater than 15km, no such sites occur within the zone of influence of the project.

No surface water features are present in the immediate vicinity of the project site. The nearest surface water stream is an un-named stream occurring approximately 250m to the northwest of the proposed landscape fill area. As noted above the nearest point of an existing drainage ditch is located over 120m to the west of the landscape fill lands.


Coonagh
Landscape Filling
Figure 5.1
SACs within 15km
Area of Fill
15km Buffer
SACs
Site Name
Lower River Shannon
Askeaton Fen Complex
Danes Hole, Poulnalecka
Glenomra Wood
Kilkishen House
Ratty River Cave
0 1.5 3 6 Km
N
W
E
S
Drawn By PD
Date 19/11/2019
Data Source Bing



Coonagh

Landscape Filling

Figure 5.1

SPAs within 15km

Area of Fill

15km Buffer

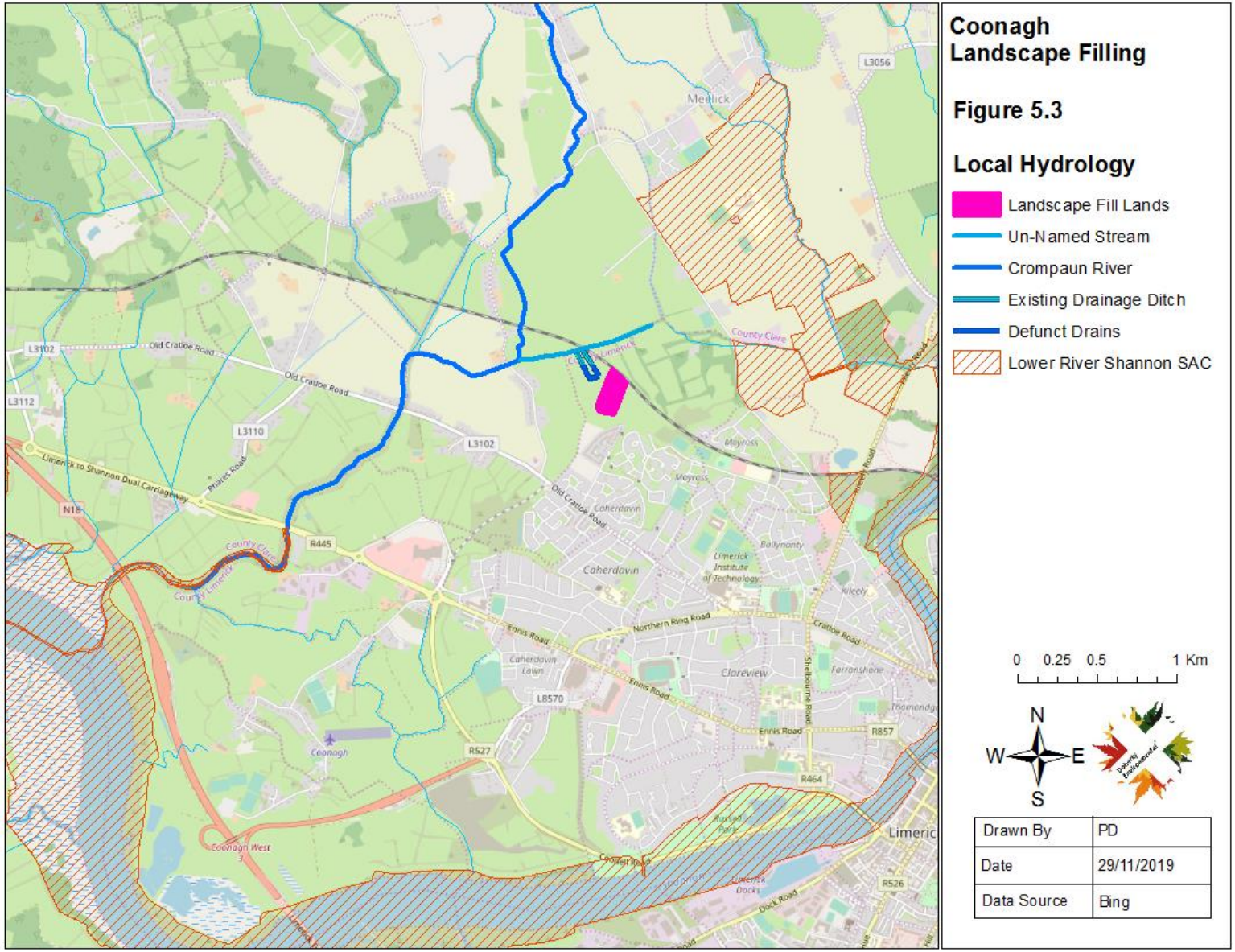
Site Name

R. Shannon & R. Fergus Estuaries

0 1.5 3 6 Km

N W E S

Drawn By	PD
Date	19/11/2019
Data Source	Bing


Coonagh
Landscape Filling
Figure 5.3
Local Hydrology
Landscape Fill Lands
Un-Named Stream
Crompaun River
Existing Drainage Ditch
Defunct Drains
Lower River Shannon SAC
0 0.25 0.5 1 Km
N
W
E
S
Drawn By PD
Date 29/11/2019
Data Source Bing
Meelick
Old Cratloe Road
Limerick to Shannon Dual Carriageway
Caherdavin
Moyross
Ballynonty
Limerick Institute of Technology
Northern Ring Road
Ennis Road
Clareview
Shelbourne Road
Cratloe Road
Coonagh
Coonagh West
Limerick Docks
Dock Road
County Clare
County Limerick
L3056
L3102
L3112
L3110
N18
R445
L8570
R527
R857
R464
R526

The location of the un-named stream and drains with respect to the landscape filling lands is shown on Figure 3.1 above. The surrounding surface water hydrology with respect to the Lower River Shannon SAC is shown on Figure 5.3. There are no surface drains or other potential hydrological pathways connecting the project site to the Crompaun River and the Lower River Shannon SAC. In addition the project site is located on level ground and there will be no potential for the drainage of surface water over land in the direction of these drains and the un-named stream.

The qualifying features of interest of the SACs and the special conservation interests of the SPAs listed in Table 5.1 below are provided in Appendix 1.

The next step of this Screening exercise is to identify which, if any of these sites, occur within the zone of influence of the proposed project. As the nearest European Site (Lower River Shannon SAC) is buffered by a distance of approximately 900m from the project site, the project will not have the potential to result in direct impacts to European Sites.

European Sites occur within the zone of influence of the project where pathways connect the project site to these European Sites. Potential pathways are restricted to hydrological pathways. Other emissions that could be generated by the project, such as noise, lighting, emissions to atmosphere or the presence of people during the construction phase and operation phase, will not have the potential to influence European Sites due to the distance of approximately 900m between the project site and the nearest European Site.

The interaction between the project site and mobile qualifying species (such as birds) of European Sites, outside the boundary of the European Sites can also be representative of pathway connecting a project site to a European Site. However such a pathway is not considered to occur for this project. The proposed landscape fill area is located within circa 250m of a residential complex and is actively grazed by livestock (namely horses) which are routinely managed by the livestock owners. No evidence indicating the presence of special conservation interest bird species of the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA at this location was reported during surveys during the preparation of the EIA for the approved road scheme. In addition no special conservation interest bird species of the SPA were identified as occurring

at or in the vicinity of the project site during a site survey completed on the 5th November 2019. Furthermore it is noted that the landscape filling will be completed during the construction phase of the road, which has been found not to have the potential to result in significant disturbance to the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA and its associated wetland bird species. For these reasons the potential for the presence of special conservation interest bird species to occur in the vicinity of the proposed landscape filling operations is considered to be low and will not represent a potential impact pathway during the project operations.

The receptors represent European Sites and their associated qualifying features of interest/special conservation interests. Table 5.1 provides a determination as to whether each European Site (as listed in Table 5.1) occur within the zone of influence of the project. This determination has been undertaken by addressing the question as to whether the hydrological pathway connects the project site to European Sites in the wider surrounding area.

Table 5.1: Identification of European Sites occurring within the Zone of influence of the Project

European Sites	Distance from Project Site	Is there a Hydrological Pathway connecting the project site to the European Site?	Do European Sites occur within the Projects Zone of Influence?
Lower River Shannon SAC	0.88km	No. No hydrological pathway connects the project site to this SAC. The nearest point of this SAC is located approximately 900m to the east of the project site. There are no surface water features occurring within the immediate vicinity of the proposed landscape filling area. The nearest watercourse is located approximately 250m to the northwest of the proposed landscape fill lands. Two drainage ditch drain run east to west through grassland to the west of the site and drain into this un-named stream. These ditches are terrestrialised towards their eastern limit and the nearest point of existing drainage ditch from the proposed landscape fill lands is approximately 120m (and 55m from the nearest point of the CKDR). As shown on Figure 5.3 above the un-named stream to the west of the landscape fill lands eventually drains into this SAC. However the project site is buffered from this stream by approximately 250m (and 120m to the nearest point of an existing drainage ditch) of level agricultural grassland that does not permit the potential for drainage waters from the fill materials area to drain to this stream. In light of the above it is considered that there is no hydrological pathway connecting the project	No. No impact pathways connect the project site to this European Site.

European Sites	Distance from Project Site	Is there a Hydrological Pathway connecting the project site to the European Site?	Do European Sites occur within the Projects Zone of Influence?
		site to any surface water features that could in turn connect the project to this SAC. Furthermore it is noted that given the buffer distance of approximately 55m from the CKDR and the nearest point of an existing drainage ditch, coupled with the range of measures to be implemented during the construction phase of the approved road (as detailed in the EIAR Ecology Chapter and Appropriate Assessment for the approved road) the proposed deposition of inert soil and stone for landscaping at the landscape fill lands will not have the potential to combine with the approved road scheme to result in negative cumulative impacts to this SAC.	
River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA	2km	No. No hydrological pathway connects the project site to this SPA. The nearest point of this SAC is located approximately 2km to the southwest of the project site. There are no surface water features occurring within the immediate vicinity of the proposed landscape filling area. The nearest watercourse is located approximately 250m to the northwest of the proposed filling area. Two drainage ditch drain run east to west through grassland to the west of the site and drain into this un-named stream. These ditches are terrestrialised towards their eastern limit and the nearest point of existing drainage ditch from the proposed landscape fill lands is approximately 120m (and 55m from the nearest point of the CKDR). As shown on	No. No impact pathways connect the project site to this European Site.

European Sites	Distance from Project Site	Is there a Hydrological Pathway connecting the project site to the European Site?	Do European Sites occur within the Projects Zone of Influence?
		Figure 5.3 above the un-named stream to the west of the landscape fill lands eventually drains into this SPA. However the project site is buffered from this stream by approximately 250m (and 120m to the nearest point of an existing drainage ditch) of level agricultural grassland that does not permit the potential for drainage waters from the fill materials area to drain to this stream. In light of the above it is considered that there is no hydrological pathway connecting the project site to any surface water features that could in turn connect the project to this SPA. Furthermore it is noted that given the buffer distance of approximately 55m from the CKDR and the nearest point of an existing drainage ditch, coupled with the range of measures to be implemented during the construction phase of the approved road (as detailed in the EIAR Ecology Chapter and Appropriate Assessment for the approved road) the proposed deposition of inert soil and stone for landscaping at the landscape fill lands will not have the potential to combine with the approved road scheme to result in negative cumulative impacts to this SPA.	
Glenomra Wood SAC	9.1km	No. This SAC is located at a remote distance from the project site and there is no hydrological pathway connecting the project site to this SAC.	No. No impact pathways connect the project site to this European Site.

European Sites	**Distance from Project Site**	**Is there a Hydrological Pathway connecting the project site to the European Site?**	**Do European Sites occur within the Projects Zone of Influence?**
Ratty River Cave SAC	11.2km	No. This SAC is located at a remote distance from the project site and there is no hydrological pathway connecting the project site to this SAC.	No. No impact pathways connect the project site to this European Site.
Danes Hole, Poulnalecka SAC	11.7km	No. This SAC is located at a remote distance from the project site and there is no hydrological pathway connecting the project site to this SAC.	No. No impact pathways connect the project site to this European Site.
Askeaton Fen Complex SAC	14km	No. This SAC is located at a remote distance from the project site and there is no hydrological pathway connecting the project site to this SAC.	No. No impact pathways connect the project site to this European Site.
Kilkishen House SAC	14.4km	No. This SAC is located at a remote distance from the project site and there is no hydrological pathway connecting the project site to this SAC.	No. No impact pathways connect the project site to this European Site.

Table 5.1 above shows that the seven European Sites occurring within a 15km radius of the project site do not occur within the zone of influence of the project site. The Source-Pathway-Receptor model has not identified the presence of a hydrological impact pathway linking the project site to any of these European Sites.

The absence of any potential impact pathways will ensure that this project does not have the potential, either alone or in combination with other projects, to result in likely significant effects to European Sites or the local environment surrounding the project site. A Screening Matrix, in line with European Commission (2001) guidelines is provided below in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Screening of the Project's potential to negatively affect European Sites

Assessment Criteria	
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on European Sites by virtue of:	
Size and Scale	The project is small is size and scale, comprising the deposition of landscape fill material on to an area of level ground comprised of improved agricultural grassland adjacent to the planning approved Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road. The project will completed as part of the works associated with the approved road scheme and will no represent a significant alteration to the works associated with the construction phase of the scheme.
Land-take	The project does not involve any land-take from European Sites.

Distance from the nearest European Sites or key features of the site	The project site is buffered from the nearest European Site, the Lower River Shannon SAC, by approximately 900m. There are no hydrological pathway connecting the project site to this SAC or the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA which is located approximately 2km to the southwest.
Resource requirements	No resources associated with any European Sites will be required for, or utilized by the proposed project.
Emissions	**Wastewater Discharge** The project will not result in the generation of wastewater. **Surface Water Drainage** Surface water draining from the area of fill will drain to ground in the adjacent improved agricultural grassland. The area of inert spoil disposal is located on level ground and there will be no potential for drainage waters from the fill area to drain over land (approximately 250m) in the direction of the un-named stream to the northwest of the project site.
Excavation requirements	No. No excavations are required for the project.
Transportation requirements	The project is small in scale and will not result in any perceptible change to the traffic and transport to and from the project site.
Duration of construction,	The deposition of landscape fill at the project site will be undertaken during the construction phase of the approved road scheme and is

operation etc.	expected to last for approximately 18 months.
Other	The project will not have the potential to result in any other impacts to European Sites.
In-Combination Effects	Other projects have been identified in the wider area surrounding the proposed landscape fill lands. These are as follows: REF: 19905, Knockalisheen ,Co. Clare: to construct 1) Club House incorporating changing rooms and meeting room with Klargester biodisc sewage treatment plant and Ash Environmental Technologies with Wastewater Drip Distribution System in playing area; 2) Playing pitch with associated drainage works, alterations to the site levels; 3) A 30m x 45m Astroturf training pitch; 4) Car Parking to support playing pitches, site boundary fencing, provision of 2 no. vehicle entrances and all associated site work REF:17340, Pass Road, Co. Clare: To construct a single storey extension to the rear of existing dwelling and associated site works REF:16597, Pass Road, Co. Clare: or the construction of a sun room and associated site works and RETENTION Permission for the existing brick facade on the front elevation at Cnoc an Doire. pe771315: Demolition of Country Club Bar and construction of a mixed use development consisting of 1 no. 2 storey block and 1 no. 3 storey block with the following overall accommodation; 120sqm of public bar space and associated service accommodation; 1136sqm of commercial space with 800sqm (units 1-5 inclusive of Bank) for commercial retail and 336sqm (units 6-9) for commercial non-retail; 7 no. 2 bedroom duplex apartments and 5 no. single storey 2 bedroom apartments, external storage areas; associated car parking & deliveries areas; new

	entrance location; sewage treatment plant & all associated site works REF:18948, Limerick: a two storey extension to the side of the house consisting of utility, bathroom, living room at ground floor level and bedroom, bathroom, walk in closet at first floor level. REF: 18227, Limerick: the construction of a single storey extension to the rear of the existing dwelling, conversion of attic space to habitable accommodation and the provision of rooflights to the front and rear elevations together with all associated incidental and site works. As the project is not predicted to have the potential to result in any negative emissions to surface watercourses and is no connected in any way via impact pathways to European Sites in the wider surrounding area, there will be no potential for it to combine with these other projects to result in likely significant effects to conservation status of European Sites and their qualifying features of interest in the surrounding area.
Describe any likely changes to the European Sites arising as a result of:	
Reduction of habitat area	The proposed development will not result in a reduction in area of any habitats occurring within any European Sites in the wider surrounding area.
Disturbance of key species	The proposed project will not result in disturbances to key species designated as qualifying features of interest for surrounding European Sites.
Habitat or species fragmentation	The project will not have the potential to result in habitat or species fragmentation within any European Sites occurring in the wider

	surrounding area.
Reduction in species density	The project will not result in a reduction in the densities of any key species supported by surrounding European Sites
Changes in key indicators of conservation status	Due to the absence of impact pathways between the project site and surrounding European Sites, the project is not predicted to result in changes to key indicators, such as the range and extent of Annex 1 qualifying habitats, water quality underpinning the status of Annex 1 habitats and/or the range, distribution and density of Annex 2 species.
Describe any likely impacts on the European Sites as a whole in terms of:	
Interference with key relationships that define the structure and function of the site.	The project will not have the potential to interfere with the key relationships that define the structure and function of European Sites.
Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of: Loss Fragmentation Disruption Disturbance Change to key elements of the Site (e.g. water quality	The risk of a pollution event occurring onsite during the project is predicted to be negligible. The project will not present a risk to the water quality status of the un-named stream occurring 250m to the northwest of the project site, the Crompaun River, which receives waters from the un-named stream or the Shannon estuary into which the Crompaun River flows. There will be loss or fragmentation of, or disturbance or disruption to, qualifying habitats or qualifying species of any European Sites occurring

etc.)	in the wider surrounding area.
Describe from the above the elements of the project or plan or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale of magnitude of impacts is not known.	
It has been concluded that likely significant effects to the European Sites will not arise as a result of the implementation of the proposed project. Therefore a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.	

6.0 SCREENING STATEMENT CONCLUSION: FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

During the Screening of the proposed project at Ballgrennan it was found that seven 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 900m from the project site. All of these European Sites (and their associated qualifying features of interest/special conservation interests) are adjudged to be located outside the zone of influence of the project.

No hydrological pathway occurs between the project site and European Sites in the surrounding area and there are no potential impact pathways connecting the project to such sites. Given the absence of potential impact pathways there will be no potential for the project to result in likely significant effects to the conservation objectives of any European Sites occurring in the surrounding area.

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 LCCC 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.

This Screening has resulted in a Finding of No Significant Effects and as such a Stage II Appropriate Assessment is not required.

REFERENCES

Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) (2008) Circular letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08.

Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) (2010). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects. Guidance for Local Authorities.

English Nature (1999). Habitats *regulations guidance note no. 3 (HRGN No. 3). Determination of Likely Significant Effect under The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994*.

European Commission (2000). *Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. Luxembourg.

European Communities (2001). *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*. Luxembourg.

European Commission (1992). EU Habitats Directive.

APPENDIX 1: QUALIFYING FEATURES OF INTEREST OF EUROPEAN SITES OCCURRING WITHIN THE WIDER SURROUNDING AREA

A total of 16 European Sites were identified as occurring within a 15km radius of the project site. Table A1.1 below lists the qualifying features of interest of each of these European Sites.

Table A1.1: Qualifying Features of Interest European Sites occurring within a 15km radius and downstream of the Project

European Sites	Qualifying Features Of Interest
Lower River Shannon SAC	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time [1110]
	Estuaries [1130]
	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]
	Coastal lagoons [1150]
	Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]
	Reefs [1170]
	Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]
	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]
	Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]
	Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330]
	Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410]
	Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260]
	Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410]
	Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]
	Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]
	Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095]
	Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096]
	Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099]
	Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]
	Tursiops truncatus (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]
	Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]

River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA	Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017]
	Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038]
	Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046]
	Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048]
	Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050]
	Teal (Anas crecca) [A052]
	Pintail (Anas acuta) [A054]
	Shoveler (Anas clypeata) [A056]
	Scaup (Aythya marila) [A062]
	Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula) [A137]
	Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]
	Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141]
	Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142]
	Knot (Calidris canutus) [A143]
	Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149]
	Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156]
	Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157]
	Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160]
	Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162]
	Greenshank (Tringa nebularia) [A164]
	Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179]
	Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]
Glenomra Wood SAC	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]
Ratty River Cave SAC	Caves not open to the public [8310]
	Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]
Danes Hole, Poulnalecka SAC	Caves not open to the public [8310]
	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]
	Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]
Askeaton Fen Complex SAC	Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210]
	Alkaline fens [7230]
Kilkishen House SAC	Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]