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# Appropriate Assessment Stage 1: Screening

Proposed Accelerated Social Housing Scheme  
***Ballymakenny West***

## Document Details

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## 1 Introduction

This report comprises information in support of screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in line with the requirements of Article 6[3] of the EU Habitats Directive (EC 92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora; the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010; and the European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended.

This screening exercise aims to determine whether the proposed works associated with the creation of a Social Housing Scheme in Ballymakenny West, Co. Louth has the potential to significantly impact upon the conservation objectives and overall integrity of any Natura 2000 sites. This assessment is based upon a desk study and fieldwork carried out by suitably qualified ecologists. Also included is a general assessment of the ecological status of the site and the potential impacts of the proposed works on the ecology of the surrounding area, including Designated Sites.

The Competent Authority is obliged to examine the likely significant effects individually or in combination, of the proposed development on European Designated Sites in light of their specific qualifying interests and conservation objectives. If AA screening determines that there is likely to be significant effects on one of these sites, then full AA must be carried out for the proposed works, including the compilation of a Natura Impact Statement to inform the decision-making.

Section 4 of the report comprises the AA Screening that specifically focuses on the potential for impacts on Natura 2000 sites deemed to be at risk from the proposed development.

## 2 Background to Screening for Appropriate Assessment

### 2.1 European Designated Sites

Sites designated for the conservation of nature in Ireland include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs);
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs);
- Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), and;
- proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)

SPAs and SACs form the Natura 2000 network of sites. It is these sites that are of relevance to the screening process for this Appropriate Assessment Screening. SPAs and SACs are prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. SPAs and SACs are designated under EU Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), as amended.

All European Designated Sites (henceforth simply referred to as “Designated Sites”) that are connected to the proposed works were considered during the desktop study in order to assess the potential for significant effects upon their Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives. Where no connection was identifiable, the nearest site(s) were considered. This stage of the process is used to determine whether any of the Designated Sites (specifically SACs and SPAs) may be ‘screened out’. That is, whether they can be regarded as not being relevant to the process of Appropriate Assessment of the project, having no potential to be significantly impacted.

## 2.2 Legislative Context

The methodology for this screening statement is clearly set out in a document prepared for the Environment DG of the European Commission entitled ‘Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6 paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC’ (Oxford Brookes University, 2001). This report and contributory fieldwork were carried out in accordance with guidelines given by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009, amended February 2010).

The assessment process is given in Articles 6[3] and 6[4] of the Habitats Directive and is commonly referred to as “Appropriate Assessment” or AA. Article 6 of the Habitats Directive sets out provisions which govern the conservation and management of Natura 2000 sites. Article 6[3] and 6[4] of the Habitats

Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6[3] establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

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

“If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the 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 social or economic nature, the Member State 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. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

It is the responsibility of the proponent of the plan or project to provide the relevant information (ecological surveys, research, analysis etc.) for submission to the ‘competent national authority’. If satisfied that the information is complete and objective, the competent authority will use this information to screen the project, i.e. to determine if an AA is required and to carry out the AA, if one is deemed necessary. The competent authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned.”

The appropriate assessment process has four stages. Each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. If, for example, the conclusions at the end of Stage One are that there will be no significant impacts on the Natura 2000 site, there is no requirement to proceed further. The four stages

are:

1. screening to determine if an appropriate assessment is required;
2. appropriate assessment;
3. consideration of alternative solutions, and;
4. imperative reasons of overriding public interest/derogation.

### **Stage 1: Screening for AA**

The aim of screening is to assess firstly if the plan or project is directly connected with or necessary to the management of Designated Site(s); or in view of best scientific knowledge, if the plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on a Designated Site. This is done by examining the proposed plan or project and the conservation objectives of any Designated Sites that might potentially be affected. If screening determines that there is potential for significant effects or there is uncertainty regarding the significance of effects then it will be recommended that the plan or project is brought forward to the next stage of the AA process.

### **Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment**

The aim of stage 2 of the AA process is to identify any adverse impacts that the plan or project might have on the integrity of relevant Designated Sites. As part of the assessment, a key consideration is 'in combination' effects with other plans or projects. Where adverse impacts are identified, mitigation measures can be proposed that would avoid, reduce or remedy any such negative impacts and the plan or project should then be amended accordingly, thereby avoiding the need to progress to Stage 3.

### **Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions**

If it is not possible during Stage 2 of the AA process to conclude that there will be no adverse effects on site integrity, Stage 3 of the process must be undertaken which is to objectively assess whether alternative solutions exist by which the objectives of the plan or project can be achieved. Explicitly, this means alternative solutions that do not have adverse impacts on the integrity of a Designated Site. It should also be noted that EU guidance on this stage of the process states that, 'other assessment criteria, such as economic criteria, cannot be seen as overruling ecological criteria' (EC, 2002). In other words, if

alternative solutions exist that do not have adverse impacts on Designated Sites; they should be adopted regardless of economic considerations. This stage of the AA process should result in the identification of the least damaging options for the plan or project.

#### **Stage 4: Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)/Derogation**

This stage of the AA process is undertaken when it has been determined that a plan or project will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Designated Site, but that no alternatives exist. At this stage of the AA process, it is the characteristics of the plan or project itself that will determine whether or not the competent authority can allow it to progress. This is the determination of ‘overriding public interest’. It is important to note that in the case of Designated Sites that include in their qualifying features ‘priority’ habitats or species, as defined in Annex I and II of the Directive, the demonstration of ‘overriding public interest’ is not sufficient and it must be demonstrated that the plan or project is necessary for ‘human health or safety considerations’. Where plans or projects meet these criteria, they can be allowed, provided adequate compensatory measures are proposed. Stage 4 of the process defines and describes these compensation measures.

### **2.3 Appropriate Assessment Screening Report**

This report provides stage one: screening for appropriate assessment. It aims to establish whether a plan or project is likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites. The study is based on a preliminary impact assessment using both publicly available data and data collected during site visits and ecological surveys. This is followed by a determination of whether there is a risk that the effects identified could significantly impact any Natura 2000 sites, and if so an AA is required. The need to apply the precautionary principle in making any key decisions in relation to the tests of AA has been confirmed by European Court of Justice case law. Therefore, where significant effects are likely, possible or uncertain at screening stage, AA will be required.



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## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Desk Study

A desktop study was carried out as part of this screening process. This included a review of available literature on the site and its immediate environs. Sources of information included the National Parks and Wildlife Service databases on protected sites and species data, and from the Environmental Protection Agency on watercourses.

### 3.2 Data Used to Carry Out the Assessment

The following sources of data were employed:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Appropriate Assessment Tool
- EPA Maps (to identify watercourses, hydrology and Natura 2000 site boundaries)
- NPWS protected species database and online mapping
- National Biodiversity Data Centre
- An Bord Pleanála's online database

### 3.3 SPR Model

This assessment was carried out with regard to the source-pathway-receptor (SPR) approach, a standard tool in environmental assessment. The SPR concept in ecological impact assessment relates to the idea that for the risk of an impact to occur, a source is needed (a development site); an environmental receptor is present (a lake); and finally there must a pathway between the source and the receptor (a watercourse linking the development site to the lake). Even though there might be a risk of an impact occurring, that does not necessarily mean that it will occur, and even if it does occur, it may not be significant. Identification of a risk means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the risk and the characteristics of the receptor.

In this instance, the most relevant receptors are any relevant Natura 2000 sites with connectivity of the proposed works. These were considered during the desktop study stage of this screening assessment in

order to assess the potential for significant effects upon their Qualifying Interests (QIs), Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) and Conservation Objectives (COs). This stage of the process is used to determine whether any of the Natura sites may be ‘screened out’. That is, that they can be regarded as not being relevant to the process, having no potential to be significantly affected or impacted upon.

### 3.4 Field Survey

The field survey was carried out in June 2023 and January 2024. Baseline ecological conditions were assessed. Habitats were classified according to Fossitt (2000). Where applicable, the habitat types and species usage were recorded (Smith et al. 2011; Scannell and Synnott, 1987; Wyse Jackson et al. 2016). Habitats were classified and dominant plant species noted according to the guidelines given by the JNCC (2010) with reference to Smith et al. (2011) & Scannell and Synnott (1987).

## 4 Screening of Designated Sites

### 4.1 Project Description and Site Location

The proposed house scheme is part of the Accelerated Delivery programme for residential social housing construction within County Louth. This overall scheme involves the fast tracking of a number of social housing developments with the county to help alleviate the shortage of social housing stock within the county.

The Ballymakenny West site is located on the Ballymakenny Road on the Northern edge of Drogheda. The site is currently croplands surrounded by hedgerows to its west and northwest. Adjacent to the south and west of the site is further housing developments. To the north is the McCloskey’s Bakery and to the east is the Ballymakenny Road and Ballymakenny Collage. No sensitive ecological receptors were noted within or directly adjacent to the subject site. The closest receptor is the Tullyeskar River which is found 70m from the site north western boundary. The closest European designated site is the River Boyne and Blackwater SAC which is 1.6km south of the subject site.

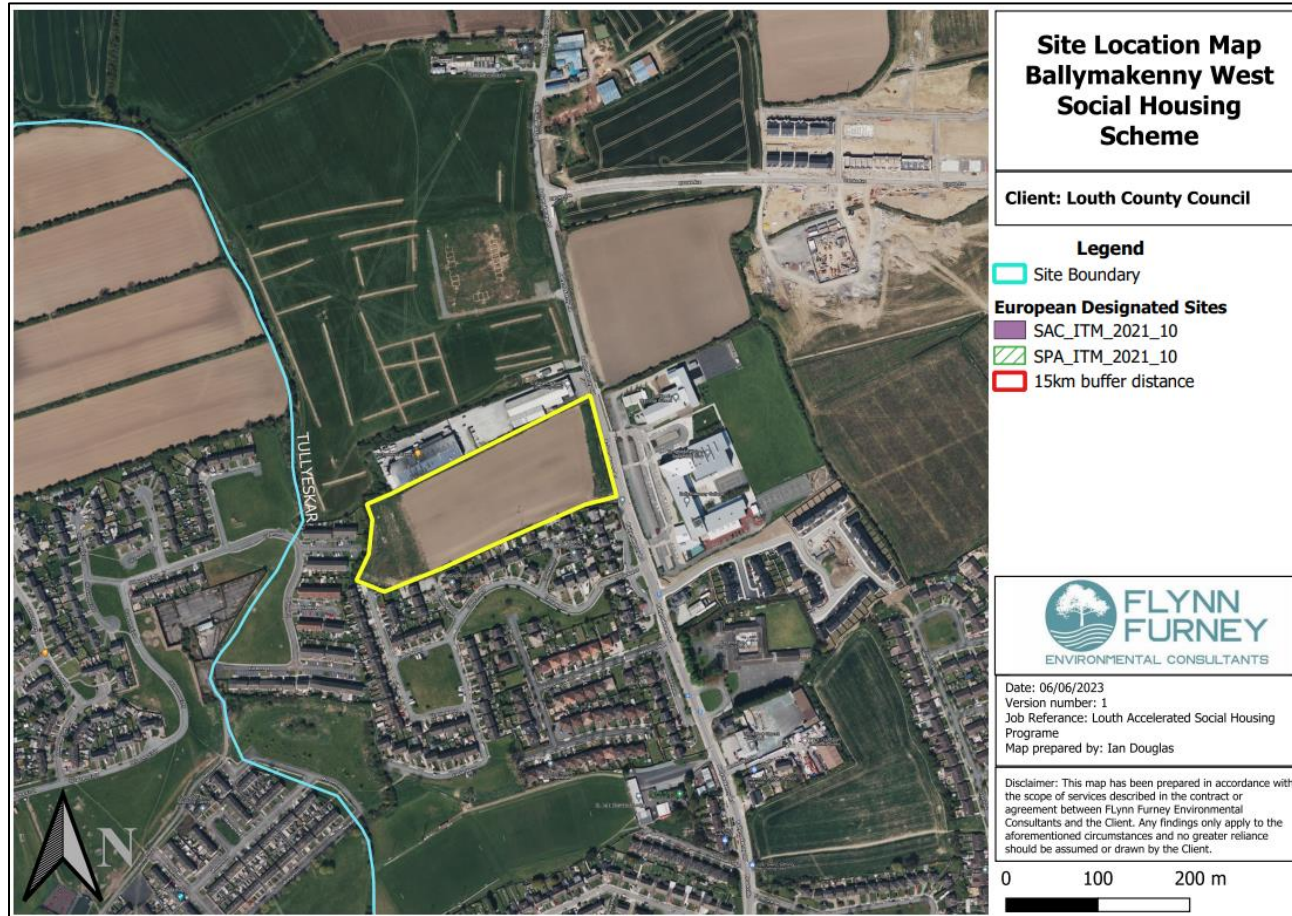


Figure 4.1 Overview of the works area, local water courses and the sites local context



Figure 4.2 Proposed Development site layout

## 4.2 Receiving Environment

The proposed development site is composed entirely of **Arable Land (BC1)** at the time of surveys these lands were growing Barley. Hedgerows exist along the western boundary and northwestern boundary of the development site. Hedgerows usually contained Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), and Hazel (*Ulmus spp*). Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) were abundant throughout. A large bank separates the subject site from the Ballymakenny Road this was vegetated with Rape (*Brassica napus*) and lesser amounts of Black Medick (*Medicago lupulina*), Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) and Cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*).

### 4.2.1 Water Courses and Groundwater

No water courses or water bodies are found within the subject site. The closest is the Tullyeskar River which is found 70m from the site north western boundary. This water course eventually discharge into the Boyne. Water quality with the Tullyeskar is recorded as moderate under the latest round of water quality monitoring by the EPA<sup>1</sup>. No connectivity exists between the subject site and this water course. This watercourse does not have any connectivity to any Designated Sites.

Groundwater vulnerability is a term used to represent the natural ground characteristics that determine the ease with which infiltrating water and potential contaminants may reach groundwater in a vertical or sub-vertical direction. Subsoil permeability indicates how readily water from the surface can permeate through to the groundwater below. Groundwater vulnerability was assessed using publicly available data sets from the Geological Survey of Ireland GIS web viewer<sup>2</sup>. Groundwater vulnerability was low under the site and within and surrounding area. No groundwater dependant habitats or species are found within or surrounding the subject site. Given the lack of Natura 2000 sites locally, any potential impacts to groundwater are not likely to lead to significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites.

### 4.2.2 Birds

A dedicated bird survey was not carried out, all birds seen and heard were typical countryside species. No

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=7e8a202301594687ab14629a10b748ef>

bird nesting or roosting habitat will be disturbed as a result of the proposed works. No optimal habitat for wetland or wading birds occurs within the subject site or its surrounds.

#### 4.2.3 Mammal Activity

No other mammal activity, such as holes, trails, burrows or scatt, were found during this survey, though it is possible that mammals use this area for navigation and occasionally foraging. No suitable habitat for Otter (*Lutra lutra*) occurs within the subject site or its surrounds.

#### 4.2.4 Invasive Species

The Wildlife Acts, 1976 and 2000, contain a number of provisions relating to Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS), covering several sections and subsections of the Acts. It is prohibited, without a licence, to plant or otherwise cause to grow in a wild state, in any place in the State, any species of flora, or the flowers, roots, seeds or spores of invasive flora listed on the Third Schedule. Articles 49 and 50 of the aforementioned Acts set out the legal implications associated with alien invasive species and Schedule 3 (the Third Schedule) of the regulations lists non-native species subject to the restrictions of Articles 49 and 50, which make it an offence to plant, disperse, allow dispersal or cause the spread of invasive species.

No Third Schedule invasive species were found during the course of this survey within the project area or adjacent to it.

#### 4.2.5 Proposed Works

The Ballymakenny West site is located in a Regional Growth Centre as defined in the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027. Currently, the development is proposed to include:

The construction of 97no. houses including 12no. 2-bed bungalows, 40no. two storey 2-bed houses, 30no. two storey 3-bed houses, 13no. two storey 4-bed houses, and 2no. 3-bed bungalows.

The development will also include the construction of a new entrance onto the Ballymakenny Road; provision of new cycleway, footpath, and public lighting along the Ballymakenny Road; new estate roads and homezones within the site; 120no. car parking spaces including both on-street and in-curtilage parking; cycle parking; hard and soft landscaping including public open spaces, playground, and private gardens; boundary treatments; ESB substation; lighting; laying of underground sewers, mains and pipes; underground pump station and attenuation tanks; and all associated works.

The site area is 2.93 hectares and the density is 33 dwellings per hectare. The proposed development will also include 14.5% public open space. General works associated with the proposed development include:

- The removal of soil and overburden material
- Connection to services including water, wastewater, stormwater, electricity and broadband, where applicable
- The construction of 97 social housing units
- The installation of SuDS infrastructure including attenuation tanks, oil/ petrol interceptors bio-retention systems/ rain gardens and tree pits
- Landscaping and;
- All associated site works.

Attenuation tanks will only be used as a last resort where other measures are not feasible. They will be provided on site and will have the capacity for site storage for 1/100 storm and 20% climate change with hydrobrake connection to mains. Petrol/ oil interceptors will be included in the overall drainage design. Bio-retention systems/ rain gardens and tree pits will be included in the landscape design but are not included in SuDS calculation due to impermeable ground conditions and poor infiltration however they will still contribute to overall SuDS.

### 4.3 Zone of Influence and Potential Impacts or Effects

The proposed works have the potential to result in a number of direct and indirect effects. These are set out in Table 4.1, which identifies the “zones of influence” for each effect (i.e. the area over which effects may occur).

**Table 4.1 Potential impacts, effects and their zone of influence**

Potential Impact and Effect	Description	Zone of Influence
Land-take resulting in habitat loss or degradation.	The permanent loss of the habitat present in the footprint of the works and access routes.	Lands within the proposed footprint of works and access routes. This also includes supporting habitat types and areas.

<p>Changes in water quality and quantity/distribution resulting in habitat loss or degradation.</p>	<p>Reduction in the quality of retained habitat or loss of habitat from surrounding areas as a result of surface water pollution.</p>	<p>Changes in surface water quality, as a result of works, associated with the proposed development within local water bodies, wetlands or supporting habitat areas.</p>
<p>Noise or vibration resulting in disturbance.</p>	<p>Direct impact on feature species reducing their ability to forage or breed.</p>	<p>Generally assessed within 500m of the proposed works (e.g. for wintering birds), but can be significantly lower (e.g. 150m for otter underground sites).</p>



#### 4.4 Nearby Designated Sites

SACs and SPAs form the European/Natura 2000 network of sites. It is these sites that are of relevance to the screening process for the Appropriate Assessment. SPAs and SACs are prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. SPAs and SACs are designated under EU Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), as amended.

**Table 4.2 Source - Pathway - Receptor Assessment**

Site Name Designation Site Code	Qualifying Interests	Distance	Likely Zone of Impact Determination
River Boyne And River Blackwater SAC [002299]	Alkaline fens [7230]  Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ( <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> ) [91E0]  <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1099]  <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]  <i>Lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]	1.6km	The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effects.  There are no surface water features present within or adjacent to the development site that could provide hydrological connectivity between the subject site and this SAC.

			<p>The potential for indirect effect can be ruled out due to the lack of hydrological connectivity between the subject site and this designated site, the nature of the sites' conservation objectives and the limited size and scale of the proposed development.</p>
<p>River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA [004232]</p>	<p>Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>) [A229]</p>	<p>3.6km</p>	<p>The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SPA and there is no potential for direct effect.</p> <p>There are no surface water features present within or adjacent to the development site that could provide hydrological connectivity between the subject site and this SPA</p>
<p>Boyne Estuary SPA [004080]</p>	<p>Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048]</p> <p>Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130]</p> <p>Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</p> <p>Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]</p>	<p>2km</p>	<p>The potential for indirect effects on the terrestrial QIs (wetlands) can be ruled out due to the terrestrial nature of the habitats, and the intervening distance between the development site and the SPA.</p> <p>No wetland areas and open water habitats are found within or surrounding the subject site that could support feeding, navigation</p>

	<p>Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]</p> <p>Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143]</p> <p>Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144]</p> <p>Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]</p> <p>Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]</p> <p>Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169]</p> <p>Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) [A195]</p> <p>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>		<p>or roosting habitat for any birds of this SPA.</p> <p>Noise and disturbance impacts associated with the proposed development are unlikely to have any significant effect given the distance between the subject site to this SPA</p>
<p>Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC [001957]</p>	<p>Estuaries [1130]</p> <p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</p> <p>Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]</p> <p>Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</p>	<p>2.6km</p>	<p>The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effects.</p> <p>There are no surface water features present within or adjacent to the development site that could provide hydrological connectivity between the subject site and this SAC.</p>

	<p>Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330]</p> <p>Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]</p> <p>Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]</p> <p>Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</p>		<p>The potential for indirect effect can be ruled out due to the lack of hydrological connectivity between the subject site and this designated site, the nature of the sites' conservation objectives and the limited size and scale of the proposed development.</p>
<p>River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA [004158]</p>	<p>Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130]</p> <p>Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137]</p> <p>Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</p> <p>Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143]</p> <p>Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144]</p> <p>Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184]</p>	<p>8.6km</p>	<p>The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SPA and there is no potential for direct effect.</p> <p>There are no surface water features present within or adjacent to the development site that could provide hydrological connectivity between the subject site and this SPA</p> <p>The potential for indirect effects on the terrestrial QIs (wetlands) can be ruled out due to the terrestrial nature of the habitats, and</p>

	Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]		<p>the intervening distance between the development site and the SPA.</p> <p>No wetland areas and open water habitats are found within or surrounding the subject site that could support feeding, navigation or roosting habitat for any birds of this SPA.</p> <p>Noise and disturbance impacts associated with the proposed development are unlikely to have any significant effect given the distance between the subject site to this SPA</p>
Clogher Head SAC [001459]	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] European dry heaths [4030]	10.3km	<p>The proposed development is located outside the boundary of this SAC and there is no potential for direct effects.</p> <p>There are no surface water features present within or adjacent to the development site that could provide hydrological connectivity between the subject site and this SAC.</p>

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			<p>The potential for indirect effect can be ruled out due to the lack of hydrological connectivity between the subject site and this designated site, the nature of the sites' conservation objectives and the limited size and scale of the proposed development.</p>
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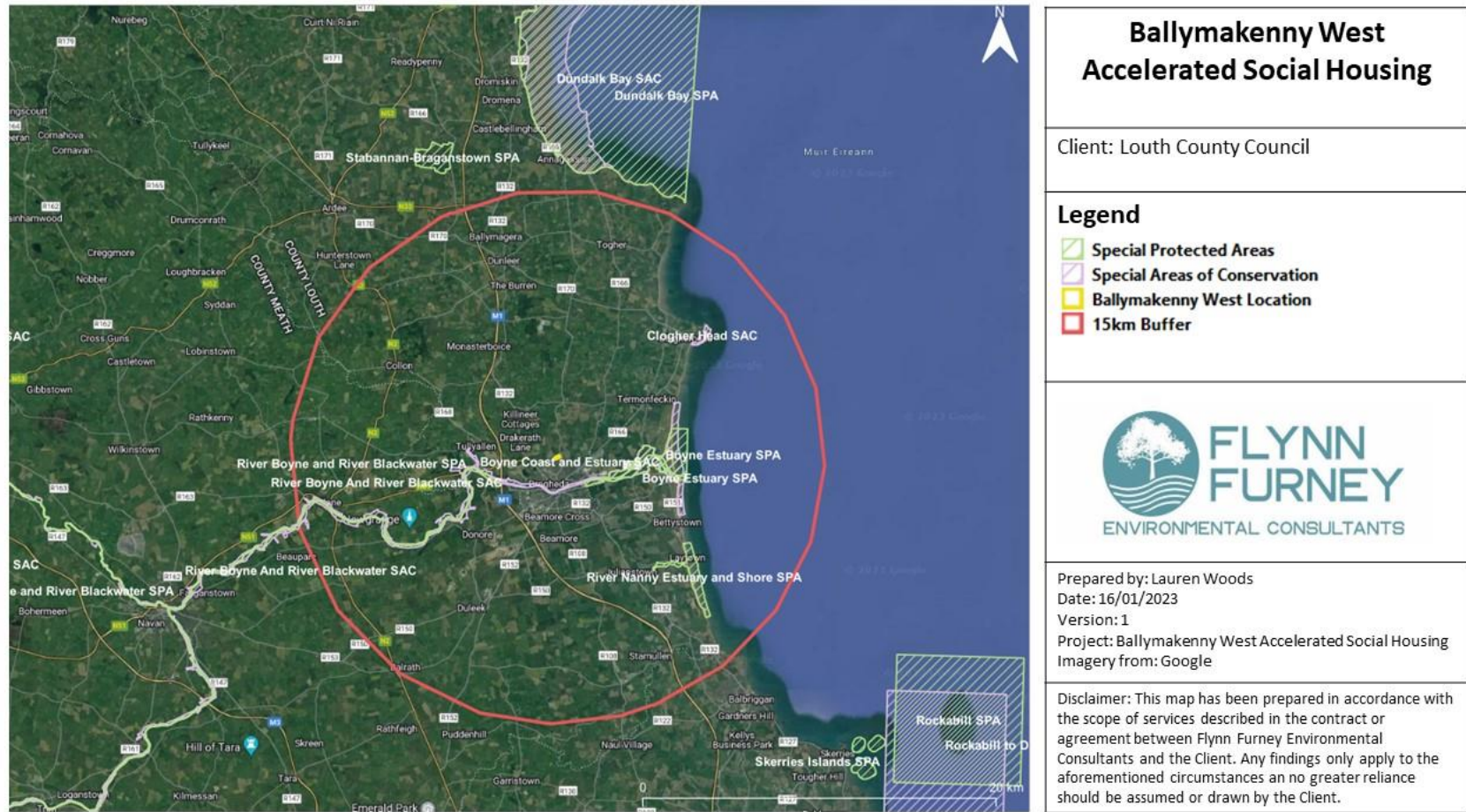


Figure 4.3 The nearest Designated Sites to the proposed development site

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## 5 Assessment Criteria

### 5.1 Is The Project Necessary To The Management Of The Designated Site(s)?

The proposed project is not necessary to or connected with the management of any Designated Sites.

### 5.2 Direct, Indirect Or Secondary Impacts

Applying the concept of the source-pathway-receptor model, there are no identifiable direct impacts on nearby Designated sites. The following sources and pathways were considered and are discussed further below.

- Land take
- Surface water
- Noise or vibration resulting in disturbance.

#### 5.2.1 Land Take

Works are entirely outside any European designated site. No supporting habitat areas to any designated site will be impacted by the proposed works.

#### 5.2.2 Water Quality and Pollution Control

The works area will not interact with any watercourses connected to any designated sites. The closest is the Tullyeskar River which is found 70m from the site north western boundary. This water course eventually discharges into the Boyne. No connectivity exists between the subject site and this water course.

#### 5.2.3 Noise or Vibration Resulting in Disturbance

Works will occur in an agricultural field. No sensitive receptor to noise or disturbance associated with any designated sites were recorded or are known to occur locally.



### 5.3 Cumulative and In Combination Impacts

A number of local planning applications were reviewed. Most are associated with the alteration to or construction of residential or commercial buildings. As no impacts or effects have been identified as a result of the proposed works upon any Designated Site. No cumulative or in combination impacts can therefore exist.

## 6 Screening Conclusions

The findings of this Screening Assessment are presented following the European Commission's Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018) as well as the Department of the Environment's Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010).

### 6.1 Data Collected to Carry Out Assessment

In preparation of this report, the following sources were used to gather information:

- Review of NPWS Site Synopses, Conservation Objectives and Map for the European Sites reviewed
- Review of OS maps and aerial photographs of the site of the proposed project.
- Review of the project description and an assessment of its likely effects on local ecology including European sites and;
- No.1 site visit conducted by Ian Douglas (B.Sc., MSc.) in June 2023.

### 6.2 Overall Conclusions

In our professional opinion and view of the best scientific knowledge and view of the conservation objectives of the European sites reviewed in the screening exercise, the proposed development

individually/in combination with other plans and projects (either directly or indirectly) is not likely to have any significant effects on European designated site. **Therefore, progression to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.**

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## References

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## Appendix A: Photos

Figure no.	Description	Image
1	Maize crop and surrounding housing estate	
2	Area of fallow grassland	

3	Fallow grassland areas and surrounding hedgerows	
4	Vegetated bank at the site entrance	

5	Arable lands of the site in winter	
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