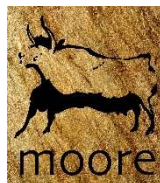


Report for the purposes of
Appropriate Assessment Screening

Grange Close Residential Development

Prepared by: Moore Group – Environmental Services

6 June 2023



On behalf of Louth County Council

Project Proponent	Louth County Council
Project	Grange Close Residential Development
Title	Report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment Screening Grange Close Residential Development


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Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
ABP	An Bord Pleanála
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
EEC	European Economic Community
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
FWPM	Freshwater Pearl Mussel
GIS	Geographical Information System
LAP	Local Area Plan
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
OSI	Ordnance Survey Ireland
pNHA	proposed Natural Heritage Area
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage System
UÉ	Uisce Éireann
WFD	Water Framework Directive

1. Introduction

1.1. General Introduction

This report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening contains information required for the competent authority to undertake screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in respect of the construction and operation of small residential development at Grange Close, Dundalk, Co. Louth (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development) to determine whether it is likely individually or in combination with other plans or projects to have a significant effect on any European sites, in light of best scientific knowledge.

Having regard to the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 – 2021 (the “Planning Acts”) (section 177U), the purpose of a screening exercise under section 177U of the PDA 2000 is to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on a European site.

If it cannot be *excluded* on the basis of objective information that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site then it is necessary to carry out a Stage 2 appropriate assessment under section 177V of the Planning Acts.

When screening the project, there are two possible outcomes:

- the project poses no potential for the possibility of a significant effect and as such requires no Stage 2 assessment; or
- the project has potential to have a significant effect (or this is uncertain and therefore cannot be excluded) and therefore a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of the project is necessary.

This report has been prepared by Moore Group - Environmental Services to enable the competent authority to carry out AA screening in relation to the Proposed Development. The report was compiled by Ger O’Donohoe B.Sc. Applied Aquatic Sciences (ATU Galway, 1993) & M.Sc. Environmental Sciences (TCD, 1999) who has 30 years’ experience in environmental impact assessment and has completed numerous Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports and Natura Impact Statements on terrestrial and aquatic habitats for various development types.

1.2. Legislative Background - The Habitats and Birds Directives

Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive are transposed into Irish Law inter alia by the Part XAB of the Planning Acts (in particular section 177U and 177V) which governs the requirement to carry out appropriate assessment screening and appropriate assessment, where required, per Section 1.1 above.

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) is the main legislative instrument for the protection and conservation of biodiversity in the European Union (EU). Under the Habitats Directive, Member States are obliged to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) which contain habitats or species considered important for protection and conservation in a EU context.

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds), transposed into Irish law by the Bird and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 as amended, and the Wildlife Act 1976, as amended, is concerned with the long-term protection and management of all wild bird species and their habitats in the EU. Among other things, the Birds Directive requires that Special Protection Areas (SPAs) be established to protect migratory species and species which are rare, vulnerable, in danger of extinction, or otherwise require special attention.

SACs designated under the Habitats Directive and SPAs, designated under the Birds Directive, form a pan-European network of protected sites known as Natura 2000. The Habitats Directive sets out a unified system for the protection and management of SACs and SPAs. These sites are also referred to as European sites.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the requirement for an assessment of proposed plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites.

Article 6(3) establishes the requirement to screen all plans and projects and to carry out an appropriate assessment if required (Appropriate Assessment (AA)). Article 6(4) establishes requirements in cases of imperative reasons of overriding public interest:

Article 6(3): *“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to an 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 implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”*

2. Methodology

The Commission’s methodological guidance (EC, 2002, 2018, 2021 see Section 2.1 below) promotes a four-stage process to complete the AA and outlines the issues and tests at each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required.

Stages 1 and 2 deal with the main requirements for assessment under Article 6(3). Stage 3 may be part of Article 6(3) or may be a necessary precursor to Stage 4. Stage 4 is the main derogation step of Article 6(4).

Stage 1 Screening: This stage examines the likely effects of a project either alone or in combination with other projects upon a Natura 2000 site and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant. In order to screen out a project, it must be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment: This stage examines whether it is likely that the project, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, will have a significant effect upon a European site. In order to 'screen out' a project (i.e. in order to conclude that it is not necessary to move to the 'Stage 2' appropriate assessment stage (see immediately below), the possibility that the Proposed Development (individually or in combination with other plans or projects), will have a significant effect on a European site must be excluded on the basis of objective information.

Stage 3 Assessment of Alternative Solutions: This stage examines alternative ways of implementing the project that, where possible, avoid any adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

Stage 4 Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain: Where imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist, an assessment to consider whether compensatory measures will or will not effectively offset the damage to the sites will be necessary.

To ensure that the Proposed Development complies fully with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and all relevant Irish transposing legislation, Moore Group compiled this report to enable the competent authority to carry out AA screening in relation to the Proposed Development to determine whether it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site(s).

2.1. Guidance

This report has been compiled in accordance with guidance contained in the following documents:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities. (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 rev.).
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018).
- Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive (EC, 2021).
- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2021).

- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (OPR, 2021).

2.2. Data Sources

Sources of information that were used to collect data on the Natura 2000 network of sites, and the environment within which they are located, are listed below:

- The following mapping and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data sources, as required:
 - National Parks & Wildlife (NPWS) protected site boundary data;
 - Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI) mapping and aerial photography;
 - OSI/Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rivers and streams, and catchments;
 - Digital Elevation Model over Europe (EU-DEM);
 - Google Earth and Bing aerial photography 1995-2023;
- Online data available on Natura 2000 sites as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from www.npws.ie including:
 - Natura 2000 - Standard Data Form;
 - Conservation Objectives;
 - Site Synopses;
- National Biodiversity Data Centre records;
 - Online database of rare, threatened and protected species;
 - Publicly accessible biodiversity datasets.
- Status of EU Protected Habitats in Ireland. (National Parks & Wildlife Service, 2019); and
- Relevant Development Plans;
 - Louth County Development Plan 2022-2028

3. Description of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Development consists of the construction and operation of a residential development of 3 terraced residences at Grange Close, Dundalk, Co. Louth. The site was cleared during upgrading of the N52 road in 2009 and currently comprises an area of amenity grassland of low local ecological value.

Wastewater will be connected to municipal sewer for appropriate treatment.

Figure 1 shows the Proposed Development location and Figure 2 shows a detailed view of the Proposed Development boundary on recent aerial photography.

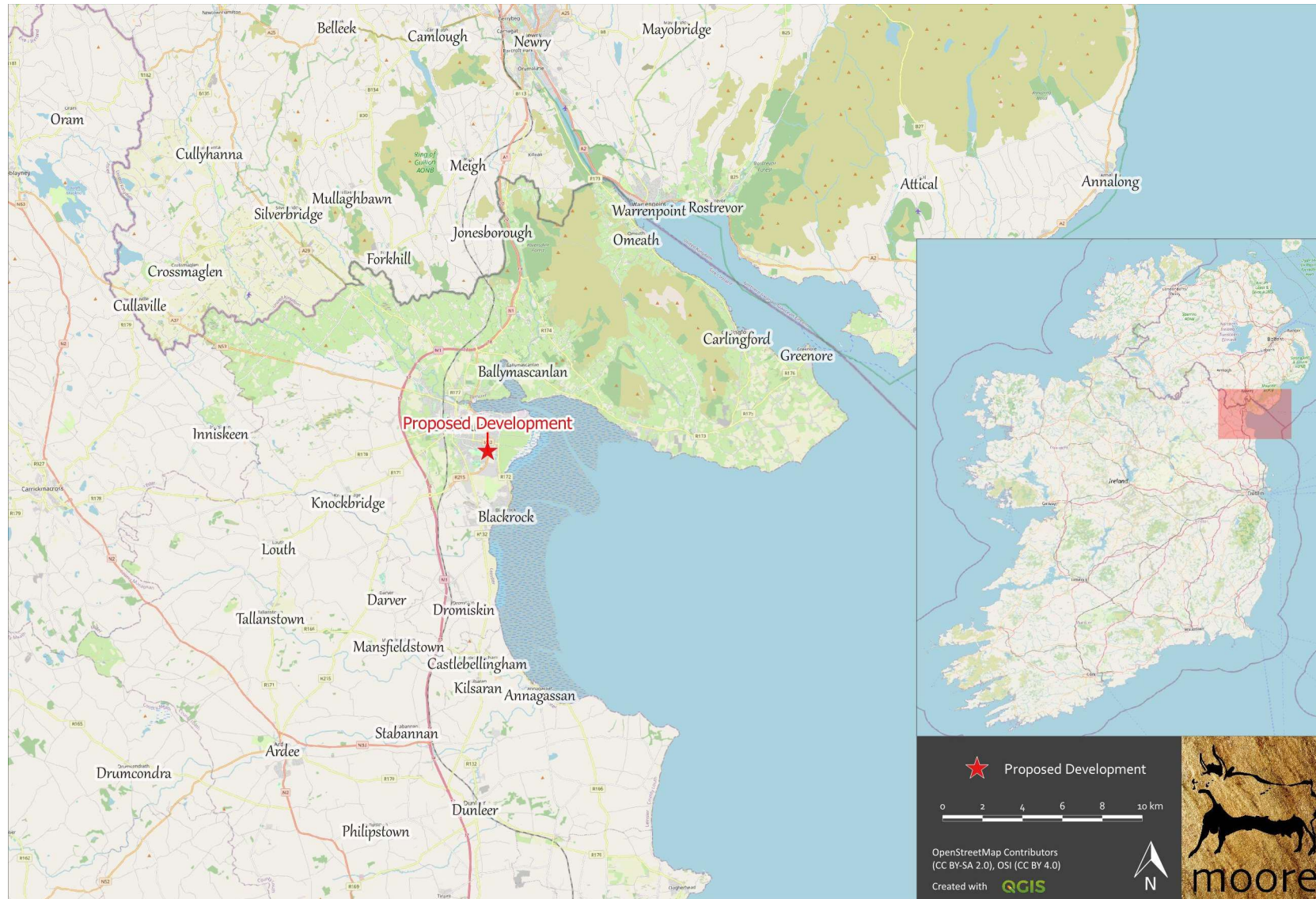


Figure 1. Showing the Proposed Development location at Dundalk, Co. Louth.



Figure 2. Showing the Proposed Development boundary on recent aerial photography.

4. Identification of Natura 2000 Sites

4.1. Description of Natura Sites Potentially Significantly Affected

A Zone of Influence (Zoi) of a proposed development is the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. In accordance with the OPR Practice Note (2021), PN01, the Zoi should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source- Pathway-Receptor framework.

The European Commission's "Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Methodological Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC" published 28 September 2021 states at section 3.1.3, that:

"Identifying the Natura 2000 sites that may be affected should be done by taking into consideration all aspects of the plan or project that could have potential effects on any Natura 2000 sites located within the zone of influence of the plan or project. This should take into account all of the designating features (species, habitat types) that are significantly present on the sites and their conservation objectives. In particular, it should identify:

- *any Natura 2000 sites geographically overlapping with any of the actions or aspects of the plan or project in any of its phases, or adjacent to them;*
- *any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of influence of the plan or project Natura 2000 sites located in the surroundings of the plan or project (or at some distance) that could still be indirectly affected by aspects of the project, including as regards the use of natural resources (e.g. water) and various types of waste, discharge or emissions of substances or energy;*
- *Natura 2000 sites in the surroundings of the plan or project (or at some distance) which host fauna that can move to the project area and then suffer mortality or other impacts (e.g. loss of feeding areas, reduction of home range);*
- *Natura 2000 sites whose connectivity or ecological continuity can be affected by the plan or project".*

The range of Natura 2000 sites to be assessed, i.e. the zone in which impacts from the plan or project may arise, will depend on the nature of the plan or project and the distance at which effects may occur. For Natura 2000 sites located downstream along rivers or wetlands fed by aquifers, it may be that a plan or project can affect water flows, fish migration and so forth, even at a great distance. Emissions of pollutants may also have effects over a long distance. Some projects or plans that do not directly affect Natura 2000 sites may still have a significant impact on them if they cause a barrier effect or prevent ecological linkages. This may happen, for example, when plans affect features of the landscape that connect Natura 2000 sites or that may obstruct the

movements of species or disrupt the continuity of a fluvial or woodland ecosystem. To determine the possible effects of the plan or project on Natura 2000 sites, it is necessary to identify not only the relevant sites but also the habitats and species that are significantly present within them, as well as the site objectives.

The Zone of Influence may be determined by considering the Proposed Development's potential connectivity with European sites, in terms of:

- Nature, scale, timing and duration of all aspects of the proposed works and possible impacts, including the nature and size of excavations, storage of materials, flat/sloping sites;
- Distance and nature of potential pathways (dilution and dispersion; intervening 'buffer' lands, roads etc.); and
- Location of ecological features and their sensitivity to the possible impacts.

The potential for source pathway receptor connectivity is firstly identified through GIS interrogation and detailed information is then provided on sites with connectivity. European sites that are located within a potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development are listed in Table 1 and presented in Figures 4 and 5, below. Spatial boundary data on the Natura 2000 network was extracted from the NPWS website (www.npws.ie) on 6 June 2023. This data was interrogated using GIS analysis to provide mapping, distances, locations and pathways to all sites of conservation concern including pNHAs, NHA and European sites.

Table 1 European Sites located within the potential Zone of Influence¹ of the Proposed Development.

Site Code	Site name	Distance (km) ²
000455	Dundalk Bay SAC	1.03
004026	Dundalk Bay SPA	1.01

The nearest European sites to the Proposed Development are associated with Dundalk Bay and includes the Dundalk Bay SAC (Site Code 000455) and the Dundalk Bay SPA (Site Code 004026), which are located approximately 1km to the southeast. The site is very small and adjacent to the N52 with no potential for Winter bird foraging.

A review of aerial photography, Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) mapping and OSI Geographical Information System (GIS) data for rivers and streams indicates that there are no notable surface water features onsite and no direct hydrological pathways to offsite surface water bodies

The Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of the European sites in the Zone of influence of the Proposed Development are provided in Table 2 below.

¹ All European sites potentially connected irrespective of the nature or scale of the Proposed Development.

² Distances indicated are the closest geographical distance between the Proposed Development and the European site boundary, as made available by the NPWS.

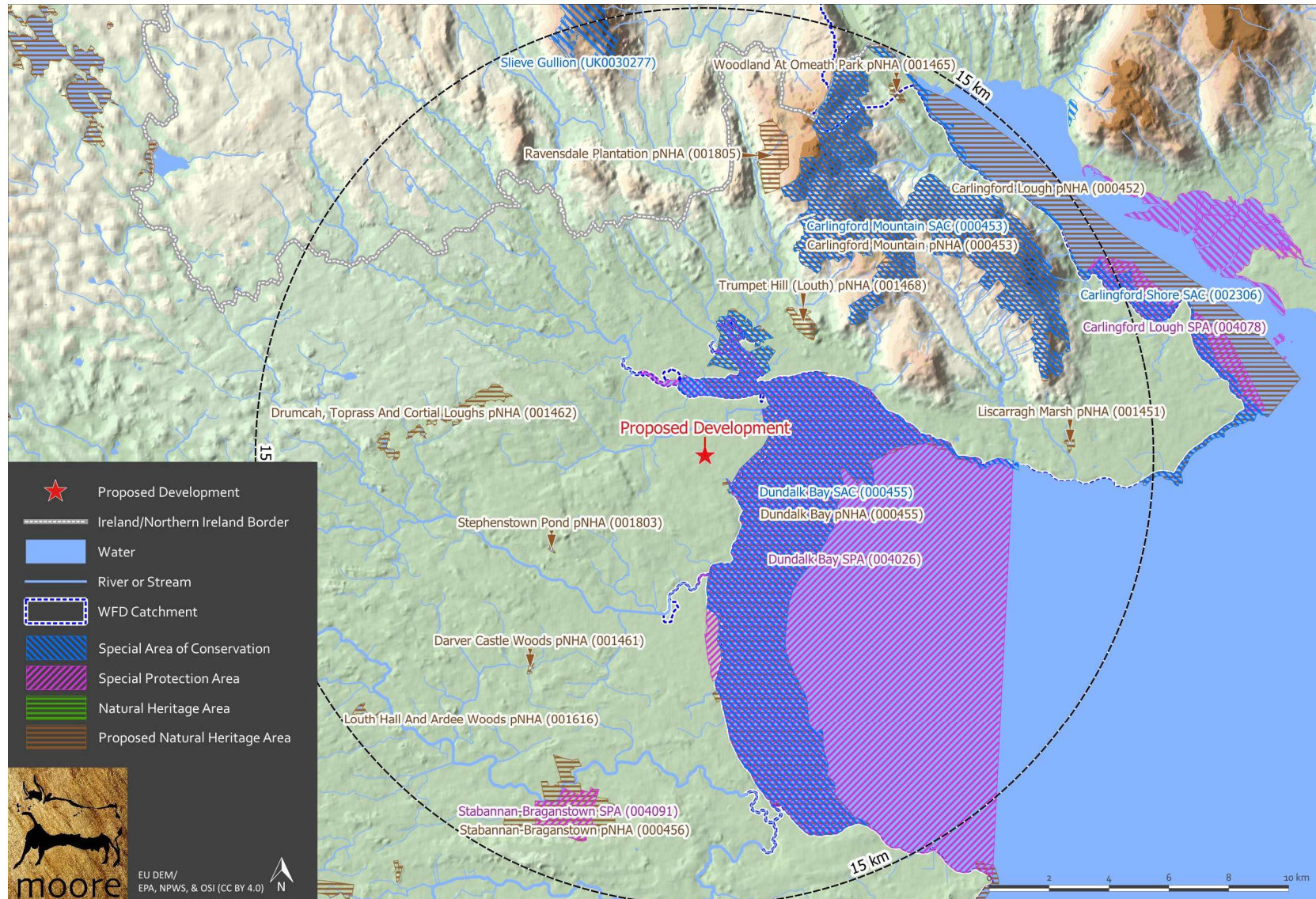


Figure 3. Showing European sites and NHAs/pNHAs within the wider Potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development.



Figure 4. Detailed view of European sites in the nearer Potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development.

Table 2 Identification of relevant European sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model and compilation of information QIs and conservation objectives. *Priority Habitats

European Site name, Site code and Conservation Objectives	Location Relative to the Proposed Development Site	Connectivity – Source-Pathway-Receptor	Considered further in Screening – Y/N
<p>Dundalk Bay SAC (000455)</p> <p>The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest:</p> <p>1130 Estuaries</p> <p>1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</p> <p>1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks</p> <p>1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand</p> <p>1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>)</p> <p>1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)</p> <p>NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Dundalk Bay SAC 000455 and Dundalk Bay SPA 004026. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</p>	c.1km to the east of the Proposed Development	No There are no pathways or connectivity to the habitats and/or species of this site.	No
<p>Dundalk Bay SPA (004026)</p> <p>The overall aim of the Birds Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest:</p> <p>A005 Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> wintering</p> <p>A043 Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i> wintering</p> <p>A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> wintering</p> <p>A048 Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> wintering</p> <p>A052 Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> wintering</p> <p>A053 Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> wintering</p> <p>A054 Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> wintering</p> <p>A065 Common Scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i> wintering</p> <p>A069 Red-breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i> wintering</p> <p>A130 Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> wintering</p>	c.1km to the north of the Proposed Development	No Due to distance and the lack of any relevant ex-situ factors of significance to bird species or wetland habitat.	No

European Site name, Site code and Conservation Objectives	Location Relative to the Proposed Development Site	Connectivity – Source-Pathway-Receptor	Considered further in Screening – Y/N
<p>A137 Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> wintering</p> <p>A140 Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> wintering</p> <p>A141 Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> wintering</p> <p>A142 Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> wintering</p> <p>A143 Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> wintering</p> <p>A149 Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> wintering</p> <p>A156 Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> wintering</p> <p>A157 Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> wintering</p> <p>A160 Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> wintering</p> <p>A162 Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> wintering</p> <p>A179 Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> wintering</p> <p>A182 Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i> wintering</p> <p>A184 Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i> wintering</p> <p>A999 Wetlands & Waterbirds</p> <p>NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Dundalk Bay SAC 000455 and Dundalk Bay SPA 004026. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</p>			

4.2. Ecological Network Supporting Natura 2000 Sites

A concurrent GIS analysis of the proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) and designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) in terms of their role in supporting the species using Natura 2000 sites was undertaken along with GIS investigation of European sites. These supporting roles mainly relate to mobile fauna such as mammals and birds which may use pNHAs and NHAs as ecological corridors or “stepping stones” between Natura 2000 sites.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations 2011 place a high degree of importance on such non-Natura 2000 areas as features that connect the Natura 2000 network. Features such as ponds, woodlands and important hedgerows were taken into account in the decision process and during the preparation of this AA Screening report.

The NHAs and pNHAs identified in Figure 4 are located outside the Zone of Influence, with the exception of Dundalk Bay pNHA, which is considered under its higher conservation status as a European site.

5. Identification of Potential Impacts & Assessment of Significance

The Proposed Development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the sites considered in the assessment and therefore potential impacts must be identified and considered.

5.1. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

The Proposed Development is located within the suburban environment of Dundalk.

There is no connectivity to any European sites within or outside the potential Zone of Influence.

The consideration of all potential direct and indirect impacts that may result in significant effects on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the Proposed Development are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects.

Identification of all potential direct and indirect impacts that may result in significant effects on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the project.	
Impacts:	Significance of Impacts:
Construction phase e.g. Vegetation clearance Demolition Surface water runoff from soil excavation/infill/landscaping (including borrow pits) Dust, noise, vibration Lighting disturbance Impact on groundwater/dewatering Storage of excavated/construction materials Access to site	None The Proposed Development site is located within the area of existing buildings and on amenity grassland. There are no direct pathways to Dundalk Bay and no predicted effects on water quality in Dundalk Bay.

Pests	
<p>Operational phase e.g.</p> <p>Direct emission to air and water</p> <p>Surface water runoff containing contaminant or sediment</p> <p>Lighting disturbance</p> <p>Noise/vibration</p> <p>Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage or abstraction</p> <p>Presence of people, vehicles and activities</p> <p>Physical presence of structures (e.g. collision risks)</p>	<p>All foul and surface water runoff, once the Proposed Development is operational, will be contained on site and discharged to urban drainage systems.</p> <p>There is no real likelihood of any significant effects on European Sites in the wider catchment area.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is located at a distance of removal such that there will be no disturbance to qualifying interest species in any European sites.</p>
Describe any likely changes to the European site:	
<p>Examples of the type of changes to give consideration to include:</p> <p>Reduction or fragmentation of habitat area</p> <p>Disturbance to QI species</p> <p>Habitat or species fragmentation</p> <p>Reduction or fragmentation in species density</p> <p>Changes in key indicators of conservation status value (water quality etc.)</p> <p>Changes to areas of sensitivity or threats to QI</p> <p>Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site</p> <p>Climate change</p>	<p>None.</p> <p>The Proposed Development site is not located adjacent or within a European site, therefore there is no risk of habitat loss or fragmentation or any effects on QI habitats or species directly or ex-situ.</p>

5.2. Assessment of Potential In-Combination Effects

In-combination effects are changes in the environment that result from numerous human-induced alterations. In-combination effects can be thought of as occurring through two main pathways: first, through persistent additions or losses of the same materials or resource, and second, through the compounding effects as a result of the coming together of two or more effects.

As part of the Screening for an Appropriate Assessment, in addition to the Proposed Development, other relevant plans and projects in the area must also be considered at this stage. This step aims to identify at this early stage any possible significant in-combination effects of the Proposed Development with other such plans and projects on European sites.

A review of the National Planning Application Database was undertaken. The database was then queried for developments granted planning permission within 500m of the Proposed Development within the last three years, these are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Planning applications granted permission in the vicinity of the Proposed Development.

Planning Ref.	Description of development	Comments
19973	Retention permission for the change of use of a dwelling to office, kitchen/staff room accommodation. Extension and alterations to existing factory floor area. 5 no. external outbuildings (lobby, stores/fridges/freezers/tool store). 4 no. external caged storage areas for plant and machinery. Roof covering to external plant area. A bike shelter. A 3.9m high x 17.3m long replacement timber clad concrete southern boundary wall and all associated site development works	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
2080	Permission for the erection of a two storey light industrial and office building of 2250m ² floor area and new associated site development works in conjunction with previously granted planning permission Ref 19492 on lands east and adjacent to Dundalk Retail Park, Inner Relief Road, Dundalk. **Significant Further Information received 14/09/2020**	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
20941	Retention Permission for development that consists of; a small seven square meter, single storey extension to Eastern side gable wall of my dwelling. the extension has a flat roof and a window facing estate toward boundary wall. The old rear door of the existing dwelling has been replaced with a glazed unit and access is now provided via the subject extension which contains small double door facing north toward, and into the private rear garden area	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
21104	Permission for development that will consist of the internal reconfiguration of Unit 4 including provision of a mezzanine floor extending to 400sqm, resulting in total floor space of 1554 sq. m. in the unit, for use as retail warehouse unit in accordance with definition of a retail warehouse as set out at Annex 1 of the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012, to include up to 20% of retail floor space for sale of ancillary products.	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
211043	Permission for development that will consist of A) change of use of unit 3b from a shop use to a gym/fitness studio, B) The erection of ancillary elevation signage and C) All other associated ancillary site works	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
211355	permission to remove an existing 18 metre high floodlight and to erect a 24 metre high monopole telecommunications support structure together with antennae, dishes, mounted floodlights and associated telecommunications equipment with security fencing	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
21550	Proposed development consisting of A) The amalgamation of shop units 4B & 5 to create a new shop unit extending to 420sqm, B) The erection of ancillary elevation signage and C) all other associated ancillary site works	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.

Planning Ref.	Description of development	Comments
22423	Permission sought for the construction of a two storey extension to the rear of an existing dwelling. The development will also include elevational changes to the side and rear of existing dwelling	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
22547	Permission for a dwelling house and associated works	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
22549	Permission for a dwelling house and associated works	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
22611	Permission for extension and alterations to an existing dwelling, alterations to elevations and associated site development works	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
23128	Permission for the erection of external roller security shutters to the newly constructed extension to the existing building and site development works	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.

There are no predicted in-combination effects given that it is predicted that the Proposed Development will have no effect on any European site.

The Louth County Development Plan in complying with the requirements of the Habitats Directive requires that all Projects and Plans that could affect the Natura 2000 sites in the same potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development site would be initially screened for Appropriate Assessment and if requiring Stage 2 AA, that appropriate employable mitigation measures would be put in place to avoid, reduce or ameliorate negative impacts. In this way any, in-combination impacts with Plans or Projects for the proposed development area and surrounding townlands in which the proposed development site is located, would be avoided.

The listed developments have been granted permission in most cases with conditions relating to sustainable development by the consenting authority in compliance with the relevant Local Authority Development Plan and in compliance with the Local Authority requirement with regard to the Habitats Directive. The development cannot have received planning permission without having met the consenting authority requirement in this regard.

Any new applications for the Proposed Development area will be assessed on a case by case basis *initially* by Louth County Council which will determine the requirement for AA Screening as per the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

6. Conclusion

There is no connectivity to Dundalk Bay or to any European sites within or outside the potential Zone of Influence.

There are no predicted effects on any European sites given:

- The distance between the Proposed Development and any European Sites;
- The lack of direct connectivity between the Proposed Development and any hydrological pathways; there are no watercourses within the Proposed Development boundary and there is no connectivity between the Proposed Development site and any watercourses that lead to Dundalk Bay;
- There are no predicted emissions to air, water or the environment during the construction or operational phases that would result in significant effects.

It has been objectively concluded by Moore Group Environmental Services that:

1. The Proposed Development is not directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of the European sites considered in this assessment.
2. The Proposed Development is not likely to either directly or indirectly significantly affect the Qualifying interests or Conservation Objectives of the European sites considered in this assessment.
3. The Proposed Development, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is not likely to have significant effects on a European site.
4. It is possible to conclude that significant effects can be excluded at the screening stage.

It can be *excluded*, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

An appropriate assessment is not, therefore, required.

A final determination will be made by the competent authority in this regard.

7. References

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