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**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT**  
**SCREENING**  
**REPORT**

No. 13-15,  
TOWNSEND AVENUE,  
BILBOA,  
CO. CARLOW

**2023**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd was commissioned by Carlow County Council Housing Department to prepare an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report. The client is seeking permission for the construction of three new terrace houses comprising of two, two-bedroom and one, three-bedroom units at No: 13 - 15 Townsend Avenue, Bilboa, Co. Carlow. The proposed development is approximately 4.3km from River Barrow and River Nore Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The principal aim of this study is to assess whether significant effects to European sites (the Natura 2000 network) are likely to occur as a result of this project in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2001, as amended. This report has been prepared with regards to the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 (S.I. No. 94 of 1997), and the later amendment regulations (S.I. No. 233 of 1998; S.I. No. 237 of 2005, S.I. No. 477 of 2011).

A study was undertaken by Dr Ross Donnelly-Swift (BSc (Hons) Biology, MSc Environmental Science and PhD Biosystems Engineering) of Ross Swift Ecology Ltd. on behalf of Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd. This comprised a review of the proposed development, a site visit on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 to examine the ecological context of the proposed development, a desk study of the information on European sites within the potential zone of influence of the site and an analysis of the information in the context of the guidance to determine if a Natura Impact Statement is required.

## **2.0 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT**

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna by council directive 97/62/EC, 2006/105/EC, and Regulation EC1882/2003 of September 2003, as transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477/11), provides the framework for legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The Natura 2000 network provides an ecological infrastructure for the protection of sites that are of particular importance for rare, endangered, or vulnerable habitats and species within the EU. The Natura 2000 network in Ireland is made up of European Sites which include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

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

*“Any plan or project not directly connected with, or necessary to the management of the site, but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site, and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will*

*not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

Screening is the first stage in the Appropriate Assessment process and is carried out to determine whether a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is required. Screening addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3);

1. Whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the European (Natura 2000) site; and
2. Whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European (Natura 2000) site, in view of its conservation objectives.

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

The findings and conclusions of the screening process should be documented, with the necessary supporting evidence and objective criteria. This is of particular importance in the cases where the Appropriate Assessment process ends at the screening stage because the conclusion is that no significant effects are likely.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment involves:

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

### **3.1 METHODOLOGY GUIDELINES**

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

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidelines for Planning Authorities.* DoEHLG, 2010
- Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management OPR Practice Note PN01 March 2021
- Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10 Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities

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- *Managing Natura 2000 sites – The Provisions of Article 6 of The Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission, 2000.
- Circular L8/08 Water Services Investment and Rural Water Programmes – Protection of Natural Heritage and National Monuments 2 September 2008
- *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites. Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission, 2002.
- Commission Notice “Managing Natura 2000 sites The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 21.11.2018
- CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

### **3.2 DESKTOP RESEARCH**

Desktop research was carried out to gather information on the ecology of the site and surrounding areas. The locations of the Natura 2000 sites within the potential zone of influence of the development site at No: 13 - 15 Townsend Avenue, Bilboa, Co. Carlow were identified from National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) online map viewer. Other Natura sites within the potential zone of influence were also reviewed and considered for the potential for the project to have a negative effect.

Water quality data from the EPA was reviewed for the assessment of biological and environmental data collected on waterbodies in Ireland as per the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Monitoring Programme of River Ecology Monitoring Results (2021).

Information on the characteristics of the Natura 2000 sites within the potential zone of influence was reviewed from the conservation objectives documents, site synopses and Standard Natura 2000 data forms available on the NPWS website.

### **3.3 SITE SURVEY**

A site characterisation assessment was undertaken on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 to examine the ecological context of the development site, by systematically walking the site and boundaries and determining the habitats present. The habitat survey was undertaken in accordance with the standard methodology outlined in Fossitt’s “*A Guide to Habitats in Ireland*”, a hierarchical classification scheme based upon the characteristics of vegetation present. The Fossitt system also indicates when there are potential links with Annex I habitats of the E.U. Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). Cognisance was also taken of the Heritage Council guidelines, “*Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping*”, (Smith et al., 2011).

Bird species and signs of fauna activity and dwellings were also noted. Particular attention was given to the possible presence of habitats and/or species, which are legally protected under Irish and European legislation and to assessing any potential ecological connectivity with Natura 2000 sites or supplementary or steppingstone habitats of relevance to Natura 200 sites.

## **4.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND EXISTING SITE**

### **4.1 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

The proposed development will consist of the construction of three new single storey terrace houses comprising of two, two-bedroom and one six-bedroom units, to include site landscaping, car parking and associated ancillary works at Townsend Avenue, Bilboa, Co. Carlow [ITM Coordinates: 665126, 672798], as shown in the location map Figure 4.1. The closest Natura 2000 site is the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (Site Code: 002162) which is located approximately 4.3km (4.8km hydrologically) south west of the proposed development as shown in Figure 4.2 below.

The proposed floor plan for No. 13 and No. 14 units will each consist of kitchen and living area, a bathroom, a hot press and two bedrooms. The proposed floor plan for No. 15 unit will consist of a living area, kitchen, storage, hot press, bathrooms, and six bedrooms. The proposed heating system will be Air to Water heat pump. Water will be supplied to the proposed dwelling via the public mains. Wastewater from the dwellings will connect to the WWTS at Townsend Avenue that has sufficient capacity. The WWTS is located to the south west of the proposed development. Surface water runoff will be directed to soak pits within each unit's garden. Inspection Chambers to be located 1.0m from front boundary as per IW Standard STD-WW-03 & STD-WW-13. The existing sewer line between foul manholes 1 and 2 will be protected during construction works. See Appendix C for site plans and layout.

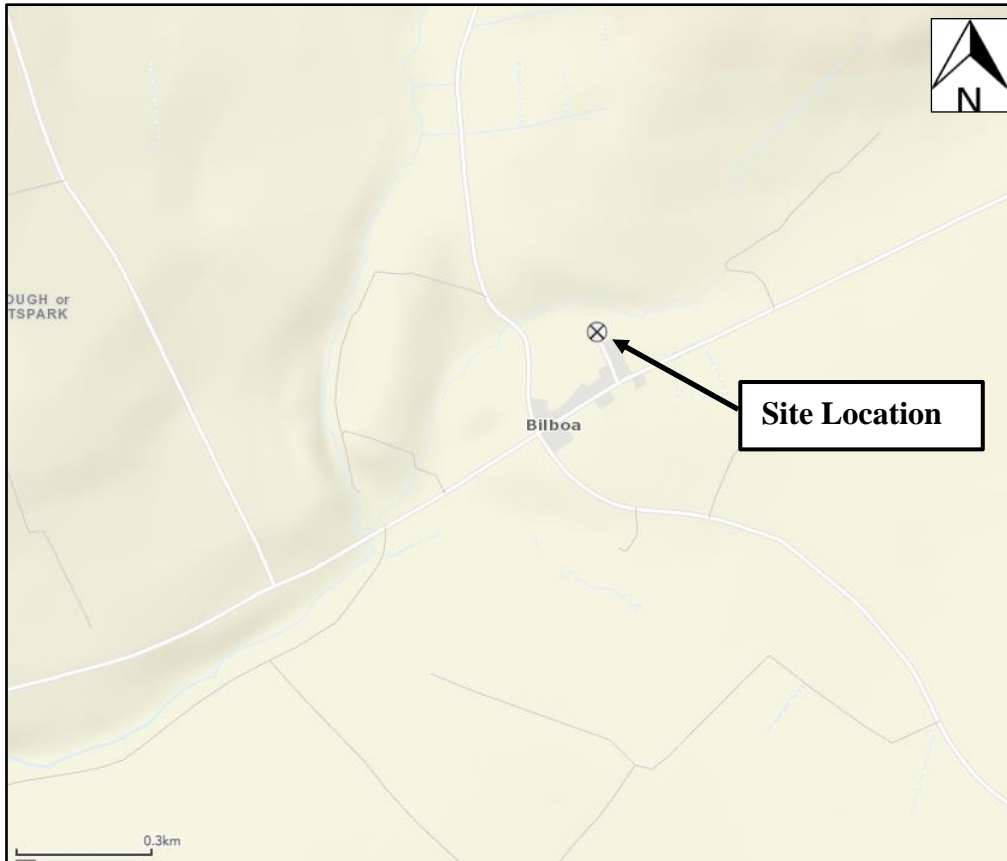
Each unit will have new site boundary wall approximately 1.5-1.8m high and a property wall separating each unit. Landscaping at the proposed development will include amenity grassland and only native and non-invasive ornamental species in its design as per Carlow County Development Plan guidelines. Existing trees will be removed along the site boundary. The majority of these trees are not mature. Construction works would be confined to the proposed development footprint and would not necessitate any works within a watercourse or drainage ditch. During excavation works, soils would be temporarily stored onsite. Any excess soils would be used for landscaping or exported offsite via a licenced contractor. There is no hazardous material within the site boundary.

The estimated construction timeframe, including landscaping activities, for the proposed development is approximately eight months. Construction works would be confined to the proposed development footprint and would not necessitate any works within a watercourse or drainage ditch. During excavation works, soils would be temporarily stored onsite. Any excess soils would be used for landscaping or exported offsite via a licenced contractor. There is no hazardous material within the site boundary.

The following project elements of the proposed development have been examined for relevance to possible effects on the Natura 2000 sites;

- Earthworks & Excavation
- Sediment & Hydrocarbon Runoff
- Stormwater & Waste Water
- Disturbance to Protected Species
- Impact on Protected Habitats
- Dust and Noise
- Invasive Species

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**Figure 4.1:** Location of Proposed Site at Townsend Avenue, Bilboa, Co. Carlow



**Figure 4.2:** Location of Proposed Development and Natura 2000 Sites

## 4.2 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

The proposed development site is comprised of an agricultural grassland. The proposed site is accessed via Townsend Avenue located off the L7129. The surrounding area is predominantly rural in nature with residential units within the immediate vicinity of the proposed site and one off dispersed residential dwelling located along L7129 and L7131. The closest watercourse to the proposed development site is an unnamed watercourse approximately 75m north which flows in an east to west direction past the site.

According to the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) Mapping tool by the OPW, the proposed development site is not located within an area of fluvial or pluvial flood, indicative of 10% AEP (10-yr) event, 1% AEP (100-yr) event or 0.1% AEP (1000-yr) event. However, it should be noted that this map is based on broad-scale simple analysis and may not be accurate for a specific location. There is no history of flooding at the proposed site.

The site is made up of dry calcareous and neutral (GS2) habitat. Flora include Meadow-grasses (*Poa* spp.), Bent grasses (*Agrostis* spp.), Rushes (*Juncus* spp.), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Buttercup (*Ranunculus* spp.), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Clover (*Trifolium* spp.), Dock (*Rumex* spp.), Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*) and Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*). The site entrance road is classified as buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3) habitat with limited flora. There is a small area of amenity grassland (GA2) habitat at the site entrance with Fescue (*Festuca* spp.) and Daisy (*Bellis perennis*). Treeline (WL2) habitat is found along the field boundary with the proposed site. Tree species are Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). The unnamed stream is classified as eroding/upland rivers (FW1) habitat. The flora found here include Sweet grass (*Glyceria* sp.) and Water starwort (*Callitriche* spp.). This FW1 habitat is outside the site boundary. No Third Schedule invasive or protected flora were noted during the site assessment. See Table 4.1 for summary for habitats located at and adjacent the proposed development. See Appendix D for photo log of the site.

**Table 4.1:** Summary of Mian Habitats at and Adjacent the Proposed Development Site

<b>HABITAT CLASSIFICATION HIERARCHY</b>		
<b>LEVEL 1</b>	<b>LEVEL 2</b>	<b>LEVEL 3</b>
<b>B</b> – Cultivated and built land	<b>BL</b> – Built land	<b>BL3</b> – Buildings and artificial surfaces
<b>F</b> – Freshwater	<b>FW</b> – Watercourses	<b>FW1</b> – Eroding/upland rivers
<b>G</b> – Grassland and marsh	<b>GA</b> – Improved grassland	<b>GA2</b> – Amenity grassland
	<b>GS</b> – Semi-natural grassland	<b>GS1</b> – Dry calcareous and neutral
<b>W</b> – Woodland and scrub	<b>WL</b> – Linear woodland / scrub	<b>WL2</b> – Treelines



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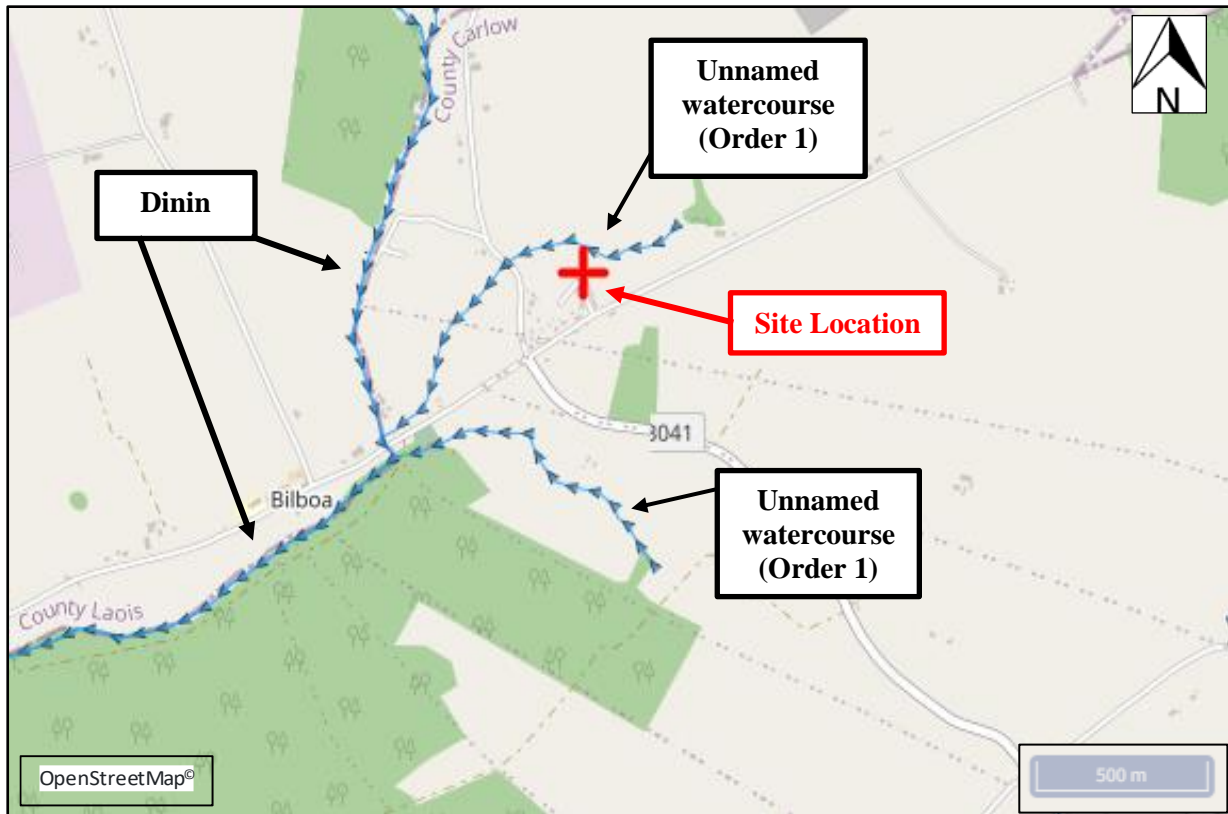
Bird species noted during the site walkover included Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*), Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*), Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), Hooded Crow (*Corvus cornix*), Magpie (*Pica pica*), Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*) and Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*). No species is red listed under the BoCCI classification. Swallow and Starling are amber listed. None of the bird species recorded are listed under Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. The site would not offer suitable nesting or foraging habitat for Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*). Small fish were observed in the unnamed stream. There was no evidence of other fauna noted during the survey. However, fauna, typical of that found throughout the rest of Ireland, which would be expected to be found in the area include Bat species, Badger (*Meles meles*), Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*), Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), Pine Marten (*Martes martes*), Stoat (*Mustela erminea hibernica*), American Mink (*Mustela vison*), Deer, Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*), Hedgehog (*Erinus europaeus*), Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*), Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) and Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*).

In addition to the site walkover, flora and fauna records were reviewed on the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) website for the proposed development site and vicinity. No protected plant species under the Flora (Protection) (S.I. No. 235 of 2022) were recorded within the 10km square (Hectad – S67) in which the proposed development site is located. Endangered or threatened flora within this hectad are Blue Fleabane (*Erigeron acer*) and Swamp Meadowgrass (*Poa palustris*). Threatened Species of Least Concern flora is Kneiff's Feather-moss (*Leptodictyum riparium*). Six invasive plant species listed in the Third Schedule of the European Communities Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) were recorded within the 10km square (Hectad – S67): Water Fern (*Azolla filiculoides*), Canadian Waterweed (*Elodea canadensis*), Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Nuttall's Waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*).

Protected fauna species of note recorded within the NBDC 10km square (Hectad – S67) include the protected species, Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*), Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*), Freshwater White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus*), Badger (*Meles meles*), Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*), Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Pine Marten (*Martes martes*), Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu lato*), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). High impact invasive species are American Mink (*Mustela vison*), Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*). Bird species of note include Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*), Coot (*Fulica atra*), Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*), Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*), Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Swift (*Apus apus*), Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Teal (*Anas crecca*), Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*), Wigeon (*Anas penelope*), Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*), Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*), Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*), House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*), Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*), Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*), Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*), Sky Lark (*Alauda arvensis*), Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) and Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*).

### 4.3 WATER QUALITY

The proposed development is located within the Dinin [South]\_010 sub-catchment which is part of the Nore Catchment (Catchment ID: 15). The nearest watercourse to the proposed development site is an unnamed watercourse (Order 1) which is approximately 75m to the north. This watercourse flows in a south westerly direction for approximately 750m (hydrologically) downstream and enters the Dinin Stream (EPA Code: 15D08 – Order 2). This Stream flows south for approximately 62m (hydrologically) downstream and is joined by an unnamed watercourse (Order 1). Continuing southwest the Dinin Stream (Order 2) flows for approximately 3.4km (hydrologically) downstream and is joined by an unnamed watercourse (Order 2). From this confluence point the Dinin River (EPA Code: 15D08 – Order 3) continues 1.1km (hydrologically) downstream and joins the Knocknabranagh (EPA Code: 15K25-Order 3) and continues north west as the Dinin River (EPA Code: 15D08 – Order 4). It should be noted that the Dinin is classified the River Barrow and River Nore SAC approximately 610m (hydrologically) downstream of the proposed site.



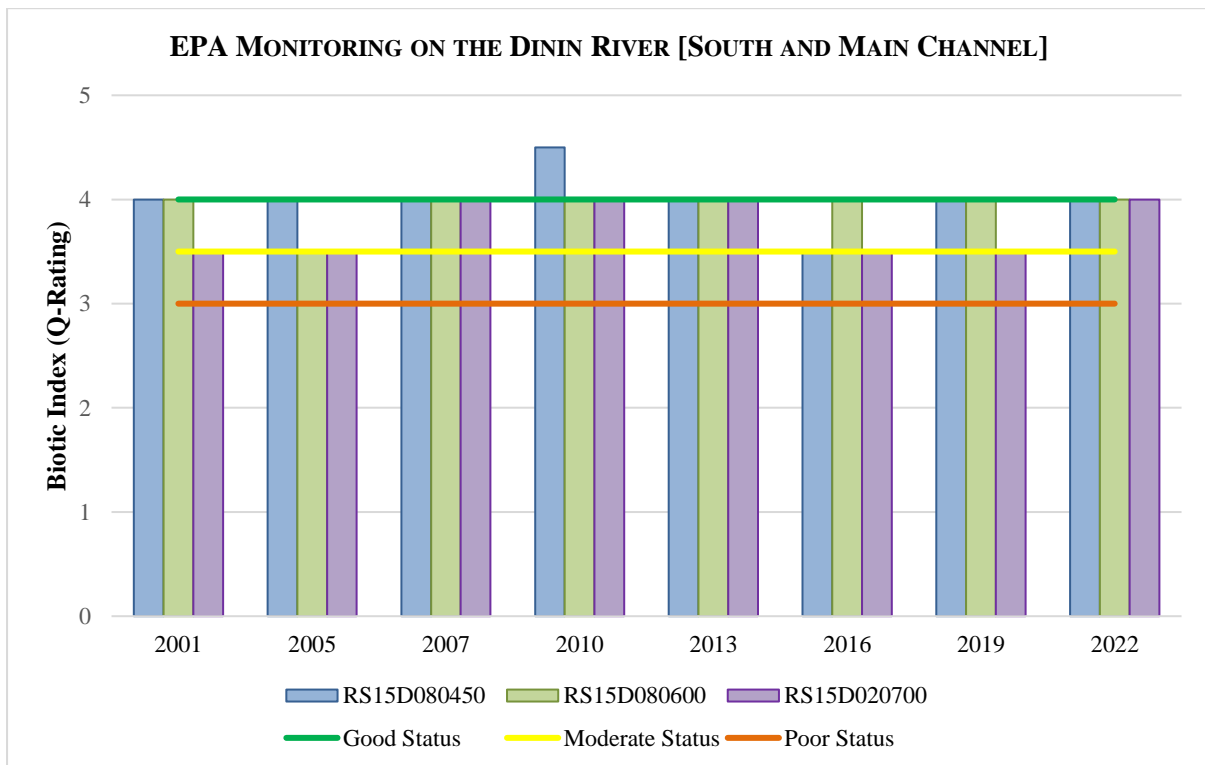
**Figure 4.3:** Mapped watercourses surrounding the proposed development site

The Conservation Objectives document for the SAC shows that water quality objectives have been set for White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) and Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*), with a Q3-4 (moderate status) and Q4 (good status) values set as objectives in freshwater. Water quality objectives have also been set for Twaite Shad, with a target of oxygen levels no lower than 5mg/l. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) undertake surface water monitoring along the Dinin River [South and Main Channel]. The results for the nearest monitoring stations (as per Table 4.2) with available monitoring results for the period 2001-2022 are summarised in Figure 4.4 below for indicative purposes.

**Table 4.2:** Active Monitoring Stations of the Dinin River [South and Main Channel]

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STATION NO.	STATION LOCATION	EASTING	NORTHING	APPROX. LOCATION RELATIVE TO PROPOSED SITE
RS15D080450	Black Br	261802.93	170092.56	4.7km Downstream Dinin [South]
RS15D080600	Dysart Br	253090.78	169833.52	14.5km Downstream Dinin [South]
RS15D020700	Lisnafunshion	252180	168082	17km Downstream Dinin [Main Channel]



**Figure 4.4:** Monitoring of the Dinin River [South and Main Channel] from 2001-2022

As can be seen in Figure 4.4 above, the Dinin River [South] is mainly achieving a water quality status of Q4 (Good) at the monitoring location. The Dinin River [Main Channel] is now achieving a water quality status of Q4 (Good) at the monitoring location (Table 4.2). EPA comments on the most recent monitoring results for the Dinin River [South] as follows; *“Both stations surveyed in the Dinin (South) maintained their Good ecological condition in 2022. At the lowermost station (0600) there were signs of nutrient enrichment with a lot of filamentous green algae present and the sample was only just achieving the Good ecological condition assigned.”* EPA comments for Dinin Main [Main Channel] is *“In 2022 the upper station (0700) improved to Good ecological condition. Nevertheless station 0800 remained Moderate with nutrient enrichment still an issue and an unbalanced biological community.”*

## 5.0 EUROPEAN SITES (NATURA 2000 SITES) WITHIN ZONE OF INFLUENCE

In assessing the zone of influence of this project upon European sites, the following factors must be considered:

- Potential impacts arising from the project,
- The location and nature of European sites,
- Pathways between the development and European sites.

The project impact sources, environmental pathways and protected site characteristics were screened to identify European sites potentially within the zone of influence of the project.

One Special Protection Area (SPA) sites occur within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development. One Special Area of Conservation (SAC) sites occur within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development site and are shown in the following table

**Table 5.1:** Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Area potentially within the potential zone of influence

SITE NAME	DESIGNATION	SITE CODE	DISTANCE TO PROPOSED SITE
River Barrow and River Nore	SAC	002162	4.3km SW
River Nore	SPA	004233	21km W

Maps detailing European sites within 2km and 15km of the proposed site are included as Appendix C below. For this assessment, the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (Site Code: 002162) is considered to be within the zone of influence of the proposed development is due to the hydrological connection with the proposed development site via the unnamed stream and Dinin River.

The River Nore SPA (Site Code: 004233) is hydrologically connected to the proposed development via the Dinin River, however, it is of considerable hydrological distance (greater than 30km) downstream. The development site does not contain suitable nesting and foraging habitat for Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and therefore has been screened out.

### 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC (SITE CODE: 002162)

This SAC is composed of the freshwater stretches of the Barrow and Nore catchments, as far upstream as the Slieve Bloom Mountains, and the tidal elements and estuary as far downstream as Creadun Head in Waterford. The larger tributaries include the Lerr, Fushoge, Mountain, Aughavaud, Owenass, Boherbaun and Stradbally Rivers of the Barrow and the Delour, Dinin, Erkina, Owveg, Munster, Arrigle and King's Rivers on the Nore. The site is a SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive:

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ANNEX I HABITATS	
CODE	DESCRIPTION
1130	Estuaries
1140	Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats
1170	Reefs
1310	<i>Salicornia</i> Mud
1330	Atlantic Salt Meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i> )
1410	Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> )
3260	Floating River Vegetation

\* denotes a priority habitat

ANNEX II SPECIES		
CODE	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
1016	Desmoulin's Whorl Snail	<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>
1029	Freshwater Pearl Mussel	<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>
1092	White-clawed Crayfish	<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>
1095	Sea Lamprey	<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>
1096	Brook Lamprey	<i>Lampetra planeri</i>
1099	River Lamprey	<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>
1103	Twaite Shad	<i>Alosa fallax</i>
1106	Atlantic Salmon	<i>Salmo salar</i>
1355	Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>
1421	Killarney Fern	<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>
1990	Nore Freshwater Pearl Mussel	<i>Margaritifera durrovensis</i>

An excerpt from the site synopsis for River Barrow and River Nore SAC is included below; "This site consists of the freshwater stretches of the Barrow and Nore River catchments as far upstream as the Slieve Bloom Mountains, and it also includes the tidal elements and estuary as far downstream as Creadun Head in Waterford. The site passes through eight counties – Offaly, Kildare, Laois, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Wexford, and Waterford. Major towns along the edge of the site include Mountmellick, Portarlinton, Monasterevin, Stradbally, Athy, Carlow, Leighlinbridge, Graiguenamanagh, New Ross, Inistioge, Thomastown, Callan, Bennettsbridge, Kilkenny and Durrrow. The larger of the many tributaries include the Lerr, Fushoge, Mountain, Aughavaud, Owenass, Boherbaun and Stradbally Rivers of the Barrow, and the Delour, Dinin, Erkina, Owveg, Munster, Arrigle and King's Rivers on the Nore".

Both rivers rise in the Old Red Sandstone of the Slieve Bloom Mountains before passing through a band of Carboniferous shales and sandstones. The upper reach of the Barrow runs through limestone, with the middle reaches and many of the eastern tributaries running through Leinster Granite. The southern end runs over intrusive rocks poor in silica.

Good examples of alluvial forest are seen at Rathsnagadan, Murphy's of the River and along other shorter stretches of both the tidal and freshwater elements of the site. Typical species include Almond Willow (*Salix triandra*), White Willow (*S. alba*), Rusty Willow (*S. cinerea* subsp. *oleifolia*), Crack Willow (*S. fragilis*) and Osier (*S. viminalis*), along with Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Hemlock Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*), Thin-spiked Wood-sedge (*Carex*

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*strigosa*), Pendulous Sedge (*C. pendula*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and the Red Data Book species Nettle-leaved Bellflower (*Campanula trachelium*).

Good examples of old oak woodlands include those at Cloghristic Wood, Drummond Wood and Borris Demesne. Borris Demesne contains a very good example of a semi-natural broadleaved woodland in very good condition, with a high degree of natural regeneration of oak and ash. Drummond Wood consists of three blocks of deciduous woods situated on steep slopes. The deciduous trees are mostly oak species. The woods have a well-established understorey of Holly, and the herb layer is varied.

Eutrophic tall herb vegetation occurs within various areas of alluvial forest and where the river floodplain is intact. Characteristic species include Meadowsweet, Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*) and Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*). The invasive Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is abundant in places. Floating river vegetation is well represented in the Barrow and many of its tributaries. Species include water-starworts (*Callitriche* spp.), Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*), Water-milfoils (*Myriophyllum* spp.), pondweeds (*Potamogeton* spp.) and crowfoots (*Ranunculus* spp.).

Dry heath occurs in pockets along the steep valley sides of the rivers. Dry heath vegetation consists of Bracken and Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) with patches of acidic grassland vegetation. Additional typical species include Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) and Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*). Dry heath generally grades into wet woodland or wet swamp vegetation lower down the slopes on the riverbank. In the foothills associated with the Aughnabrisky, Aughavaud and Mountain Rivers there are wet heath areas dominated by Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) with Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*).

Salt meadows occur at the site's southern section. In the larger salt meadow areas, the Atlantic and Mediterranean sub types are generally intermixed. At the salt meadow's upper edge, the legally protected Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia fasciculata*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) and Divided Sedge (*Carex divisa*) are found. Other flora present includes Sea Rush (*Juncus maritimus*), Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*), Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), Sea Couch (*Elymus pycnanthus*), Spear-leaved Orache (*Atriplex prostrata*), Lesser Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia marina*) and Sea Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*). Glassworts (*Salicornia* spp.) and other annuals colonising mud / sand are found in the saltmarsh creeks and at seaward edges.

The estuary and the other Annex I habitats within it form a large component of the site. Extensive areas of intertidal flats are present. Good quality intertidal sand and mudflats have developed on a linear shelf on the western side of Waterford Harbour. They have a typical macro-invertebrate fauna, characterised by polychaetes and bivalves. Common species include *Arenicola marina*, *Nephtys hombergii*, *Scoloplos armiger*, *Lanice conchilega* and *Cerastoderma edule*. An extensive area of honey-comb reefs, formed by the polychaete worm *Sabellaria alveolata*, occur adjacent to Duncannon, Co. Wexford. A range of species are reported from these reefs including: *Enteromorpha* sp., *Ulva* sp., *Fucus* spp., *Polysiphonia* sp., *Chondrus crispus*, *Palmaria palmate*, *Nemertea* sp., *Actinia equine*, *Patella vulgate*, *Littorina* spp. and *Mytilus edulis*.

The dunes at Duncannon are dominated by Marram (*Ammophila arenaria*) with the Red Data Book species Wild Clary/Sage (*Salvia verbenaca*) also present. The rocks around Duncannon ford have a rich flora of seaweeds typical of a moderately exposed shore and the cliffs support

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a number of coastal species on ledges, including Thrift, Rock Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) and Buck's-horn Plantain (*Plantago coronopus*).

Other habitats which occur throughout the site include wet grassland, marsh, reedswamp, improved grassland, arable land, quarries, coniferous plantations, deciduous woodland, scrub, and ponds.

Seventeen Red Data Book plant species have been recorded within the site; Killarney Fern, Divided Sedge, Clustered Clover (*Trifolium glomeratum*), Basil Thyme (*Acinos arvensis*), Red Hemp-nettle (*Galeopsis angustifolia*), Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass, Meadow Barley, Opposite-leaved Pondweed (*Groenlandia densa*), Meadow Saffron/Autumn Crocus (*Colchicum autumnale*), Wild Clary/Sage, Nettle-leaved Bellflower, Saw-wort (*Serratula tinctoria*), Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*), Blue Fleabane (*Erigeron acer*), Fly Orchid (*Ophrys insectifera*), Ivy Broomrape (*Orobanche hederæ*) and Greater Broomrape (*Orobanche rapum-genistæ*). Of these, the first nine are protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 2015. Plants which do not have a wide distribution in Ireland are also found in the site including Thin-spiked Wood-sedge, Field Garlic (*Allium oleraceum*) and Summer Snowflake.

The site is very important for the presence of a number of E.U. Habitats Directive Annex II animal species including Freshwater Pearl Mussel (both *M. margaritifera* and *M. durrovensis*), White-clawed Crayfish, Salmon, Twaite Shad, the three lamprey species, Desmoulin's whorl snail and Otter. This is the only site in the world for the hard water form of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel, *M. durrovensis*, and one of only a handful of spawning grounds in the country for Twaite Shad. The upper stretches of the Barrow and Nore are very important for spawning.

The site supports many other important animal species. Those which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book include Daubenton's Bat, Badger, Irish Hare, and Frog. In addition to Freshwater Pearl Mussel, the site also supports two other mussel species, *Anodonta anatina* and *A. cygnea*.

The site is of ornithological importance for a number of E.U. Birds Directive Annex I species, including Greenland White-fronted Goose, Whooper Swan, Bewick's Swan, Bar-tailed Godwit, Peregrine, and Kingfisher. Nationally important numbers of Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit are found during the winter. Wintering flocks of migratory birds are seen in Shanahoe Marsh, the Curragh, Goul Marsh and along the Barrow Estuary in Waterford Harbour. There is also an extensive autumnal roosting site in the reedbeds of the Barrow Estuary used by Swallows before they leave the country.

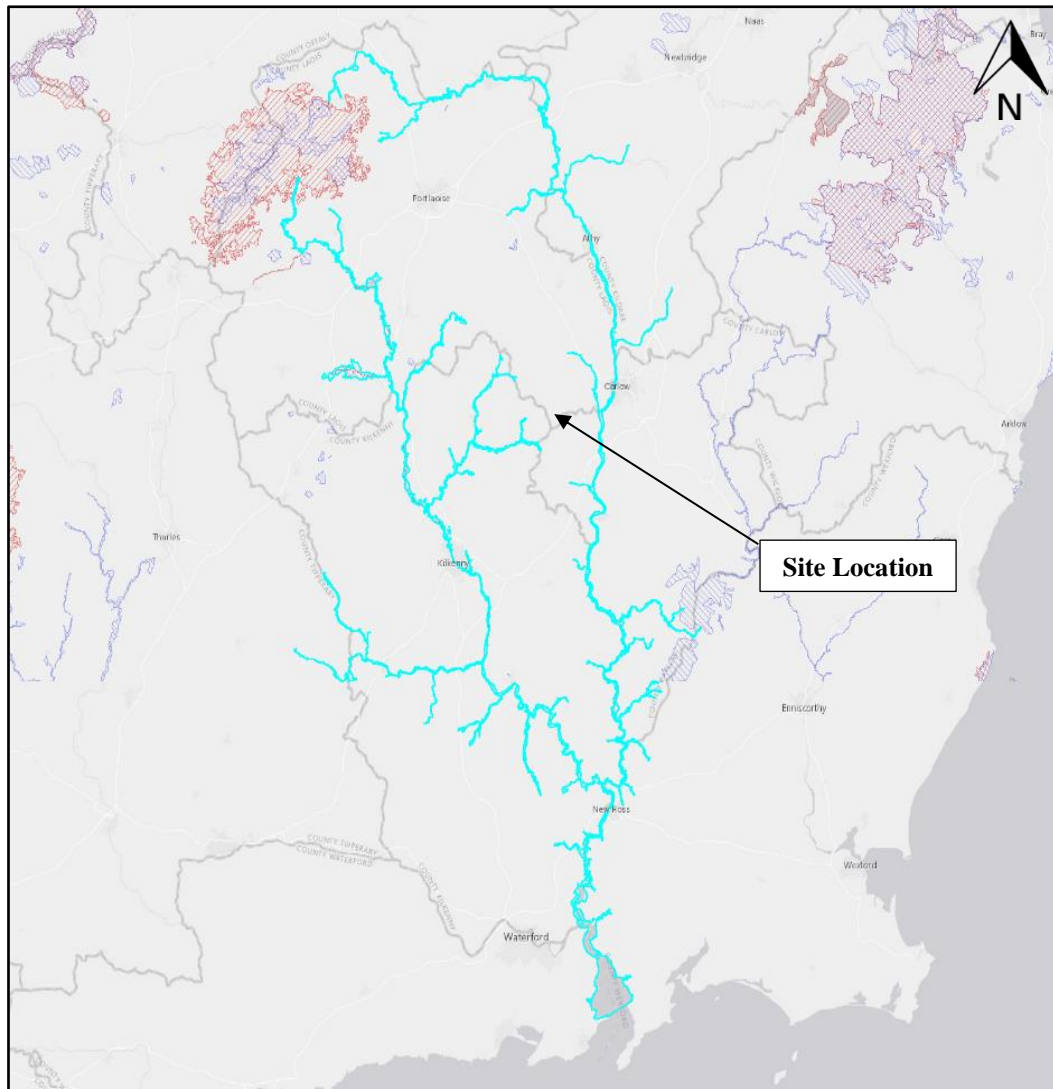
Land use at the site consists mainly of agricultural activities. The spreading of slurry and fertiliser poses a threat to the water quality and to the populations of Annex II species within the site. Many of the woodlands along the rivers belong to old estates and support many non-native species. Little active woodland management occurs. Fishing is a main tourist attraction along stretches of the main rivers and their tributaries, with both commercial and leisure fishing taking place. Other recreational activities such as boating, golfing, and walking is also popular. Several industrial developments, which discharge into the river, border the site. The main threats to the site and current damaging activities include high inputs of nutrients into the river system from agricultural run-off and several sewage plants, over-grazing within woodland areas and invasion by non-native species. The water quality of the site remains vulnerable. Good quality water is necessary to maintain the populations of the Annex II animal species listed above. Good quality is dependent on controlling fertilisation of the grasslands. It also requires that sewage be properly treated before discharge. Drainage activities in the catchment



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can lead to flash floods which can damage the many Annex II species present. Capital and maintenance dredging within the lower reaches of the system pose a threat to migrating fish species such as lamprey and shad. Land reclamation also poses a threat to the salt meadows and the populations of legally protected species therein.

Overall, the site is of considerable conservation significance for the occurrence of good examples of habitats and of populations of plant and animal species that are listed on Annexes I and II of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Furthermore, it is of high conservation value for the populations of bird species that use it.



**Figure 5.1: River Barrow and River Nore SAC**

The conservation objectives for the SAC site are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the qualifying interests. Site specific conservation objectives (SSCOs) for the qualifying interests of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC are provided in the table below, where available from the NPWS document “Conservation Objectives: River Barrow and River Nore SAC 002162” (NPWS, 2011).



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TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
<b>[1130] Estuaries</b>			
Habitat area	Hectares	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes	Habitat area was estimated using OSI data and the defined Transitional Water Body area under the Water Framework Directive as 3856ha
Community distribution	Hectares	The following sediment communities should be maintained in a natural condition: Muddy estuarine community complex; Sand to muddy fine sand community complex; Fine sand with <i>Fabulina fabula</i> community.	
Community extent	Hectares	Maintain the natural extent of the <i>Sabellaria alveolata</i> reef, subject to natural process	
<b>[1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats</b>			
Habitat area	Hectares	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes.	Habitat area was estimated using OSI data as 926ha
Community distribution	Hectares	The following sediment communities should be maintained in a natural condition: Muddy estuarine community complex; Sand to muddy fine sand community complex	
<b>[1170] Reefs</b>			
None Specified	-	-	
<b>[1310] Salicornia Mud</b>			
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	The Ringville sub-site was mapped and no additional areas of potential Salicornia mudflats were identified from an examination of aerial photographs, giving a total estimated area of 0.03ha. Note further unsurveyed areas maybe present within the site
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes	
Physical structure: sediment supply	Presence/absence of physical barriers	Maintain or where necessary restore natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	
Physical structure: flooding regime	Hectares flooded; frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime	
Physical structure: creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain/restore creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession	

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<b>TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES</b>			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Vegetation structure: zonation	Occurrence	Maintain range of saltmarsh habitat zonations including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	
Vegetation structure: vegetation height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	
Vegetation structure: vegetation cover	Percentage cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated.	
Vegetation composition: typical species and sub-communities	Percentage cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain range of sub- communities with typical species listed in Saltmarsh Monitoring Project	
Vegetation structure: negative indicator species: <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Hectares	No significant expansion of <i>Spartina</i> . No new sites for this species and an annual spread of less than 1% where it is already known to occur	
<b>[1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows</b>			
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession	Four sub-sites were mapped and additional areas of potential saltmarsh were identified from an examination of aerial photographs, giving a total estimated area of Atlantic salt meadow of 35.07ha. Note further unsurveyed areas maybe present within the site
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes	
Physical structure: sediment supply	Presence/absence of physical barriers	Maintain/restore natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	
Physical structure: flooding regime	Hectares flooded; frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime	
Physical structure: creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain/restore creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession	
Vegetation structure: zonation	Occurrence	Maintain range of saltmarsh habitat zonations including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession.	
Vegetation structure: vegetation height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	

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<b>TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES</b>			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Vegetation structure: vegetation cover	Percentage cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated	
Vegetation composition: typical species and sub-communities	Percentage cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain range of sub- communities with typical species listed in Saltmarsh Monitoring Project	
Vegetation structure: negative indicator species: <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Hectares	No significant expansion of <i>Spartina</i> . No new sites for this species and an annual spread of less than 1% where it is already known to occur	
<b>[1410] Mediterranean Salt Meadows</b>			
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession. For sub-sites mapped: Dunbrody Abbey - 0.08ha, Rochestown - 0.04ha, Ringville - 6.70ha	Three sub-sites were mapped and no additional areas of potential saltmarsh were identified from an examination of aerial photographs, giving a total estimated area of Mediterranean salt meadow of 6.82ha. Note further unsurveyed areas maybe present within the site
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes	
Physical structure: sediment supply	Presence/absence of physical barriers	Maintain or where necessary restore natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	
Physical structure: flooding regime	Hectares flooded; frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime	
Physical structure: creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain/restore creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession	
Vegetation structure: zonation	Occurrence	Maintain range of saltmarsh habitat zonations including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	
Vegetation structure: vegetation height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	
Vegetation structure: vegetation cover	% cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated.	
Vegetation composition: typical species and sub-communities	% cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain range of sub- communities with typical species listed in Saltmarsh Monitoring Project	

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<b>TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES</b>			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Vegetation structure: negative indicator species: <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Hectares	No significant expansion of <i>Spartina</i> . No new sites for this species and an annual spread of less than 1% where it is already known to occur	
<b>[3260] Floating River Vegetation</b>			
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes	<p>The full distribution of this habitat and its sub-types in this site are currently unknown. The basis of the selection of the SAC for the habitat is the presence of an excellent example of the vegetation assemblage associated with tidal reaches of large rivers between Enniscorthy and Polladerg townland.</p> <p>Due to regular disturbance (through variations in flow), river macrophytes rarely reach a climax condition but frequently occur as transient communities. A natural (relatively unmodified) flow regime is required for both plant communities and channel geomorphology to be in favourable condition, exhibiting typical dynamics for the river type</p>
Habitat area	Kilometres	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes	
Hydrological regime: river flow	Metres per second	Maintain appropriate hydrological regimes	
Hydrological regime: groundwater discharge	Metres per second	The groundwater flow to the habitat should be permanent and sufficient to maintain tufa formation	
Substratum composition: particle size range	Millimetres	The substratum should be dominated by large particles and free from fine sediments	
Water chemistry: minerals	Milligrammes per litre	The groundwater and surface water should have sufficient concentrations of minerals to allow deposition and persistence of tufa deposits	
Water quality: suspended sediment	Milligrammes per litre	The concentration of suspended solids in the water column should be sufficiently low to prevent excessive deposition of fine sediments	
Water quality: nutrients	Milligrammes per litre	The concentration of nutrients in the water column should be sufficiently low to prevent changes in species composition or habitat condition	
Vegetation composition: typical species	Occurrence	Typical species of the relevant habitat sub-type should be present and in good condition	
Floodplain connectivity	Area	The area of active floodplain at and upstream of the habitat should be maintained	
<b>[4030] Dry Heath</b>			
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline from current habitat distribution, subject to natural processes	<p>Spatial extent currently unmapped but indicated as occurring on the steep, free-draining, river valley sides especially the Barrow and tributaries in the foothills of</p>
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes. Habitat area is not known but estimated	

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TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
		as less than 400ha of the area of the SAC, occurring in dispersed locations	the Blackstairs Mountains.
Physical structure: free-draining, acid, low nutrient soil; rock outcrops	Occurrence	No significant change in soil nutrient status, subject to natural processes. No increase or decrease in area of natural rock outcrop	<p>Dry heath in this SAC occurs on free-draining nutrient poor soils and is often characterised by gorse and open acid grassland areas. And locally bilberry and woodrush.</p> <p>Bracken appears to be quite dense in places and before any management action is considered its rate of spread needs to be established as well as its threat, if any, to other dry heath species and its potential value to important fauna (e.g., Twite).</p> <p>Broomrape is dependent on gorse at this site as it is parasitic on gorse roots. It is recorded as occurring on steep slopes above New Ross. A small area of excellent dry coastal heath at Ballyhack is interspersed with patches rock and of dry lowland grassland and has a high species diversity. Notably there is an excellent range of Clover (<i>Trifolium</i>) species including the legally protected clustered clover, a species known only from one other site in Ireland. Also <i>T. ornithopodiodes</i>, <i>T. striatum</i> and <i>Torilus nodosa</i>.</p>
Vegetation structure: sub- shrub indicator species	Percentage cover	Cover of characteristic sub- shrub indicator species at least 25%: gorse ( <i>Ulex europaeus</i> ) and where rocky outcrops occur bilberry ( <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i> ) and woodrush ( <i>Luzula sylvatica</i> ). Some rock outcrops support English stonecrop ( <i>Sedum anglicum</i> ), sheep's bit ( <i>Jasione montana</i> ) and wild madder ( <i>Rubia peregrina</i> ) as well as important moss and lichen assemblages	
Vegetation structure: senescent gorse	Percentage cover	Cover of senescent gorse less than 50%	
Vegetation structure: browsing	Percentage cover	Long shoots of bilberry with signs of browsing collectively less than 33%	
Vegetation structure: native trees and shrubs	Percentage cover	Cover of scattered native trees and shrub less than 20%	
Vegetation composition: positive indicator species	Number	Number of positive indicator species at least 2 e.g., gorse and associated dry heath/ acid grassland flora	
Vegetation structure: positive indicator species	Percentage cover	Cover of positive indicator species at least 60%. This should include plant species characteristic of dry heath in this SAC including gorse, bilberry and associated acid grassland flora	
Vegetation composition: bryophyte and non-crustose lichen species	Number	Number of bryophyte or non- crustose lichen species present at least 2	
Vegetation composition: bracken ( <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> )	Percentage cover	Cover of bracken less than 10%	
Vegetation structure: weedy negative indicator species	Percentage cover	Cover of agricultural weed species (negative indicator species) less than 1%	

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<b>TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES</b>			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Vegetation composition: non-native species	Percentage cover	Cover of non-native species less than 1%.	
Vegetation composition: rare/scarce heath species	Location, area, and number	No decline in distribution or population sizes of rare, threatened, or scarce species, including Greater Broomrape ( <i>Orobanche rapum-genistae</i> ) and the legally protected clustered clover ( <i>Trifolium glomeratum</i> )	
Vegetation structure: disturbed bare ground	Percentage cover	Cover of disturbed bare ground less than 10% (but if peat soil less than 5%)	
Vegetation structure: burning	Occurrence	No signs of burning within sensitive areas	
<b>[6430] Hydrophilous Tall Herb Communities</b>			
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes	Distribution of this habitat in this site is currently unknown. Considered to occur in association with some riverside woodlands, unmanaged river islands and in narrow bands along the floodplain of slow-flowing stretches of river.  This habitat requires winter inundation, which results in deposition of naturally nutrient-rich sediment.  Bare ground, due to natural inundation processes may often be present. Attribute and target based on the Irish Semi-natural Grassland Survey (O'Neill et al., 2010)
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes	
Hydrological regime: Flooding depth/height of water table	Metres	Maintain appropriate hydrological regimes	
Vegetation structure: sward height	Centimetres	30-70% of sward is between 40 and 150cm in height	
Vegetation composition: broadleaf herb: grass ratio	Percentage	Broadleaf herb component of vegetation between 40 and 90%	
Vegetation composition: typical species	Number	At least 5 positive indicator species present	
Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Occurrence	Negative indicator species, particularly non-native invasive species, absent or under control- NB Indian balsam ( <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i> ), monkeyflower ( <i>Mimulus guttatus</i> ), Japanese knotweed ( <i>Fallopia japonica</i> ) and giant hogweed ( <i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i> )	

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TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
<b>[7220] Petrifying Springs</b>			
Habitat area	Square metres	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes	<p>Full distribution of this habitat in this site is currently unknown. It has been described in woodlands at Dysart, between Thomastown and Inistioge.</p> <p>Current hydrological regimes are unknown. Petrifying springs rely on permanent irrigation, usually from upwelling groundwater sources or seepage sources.</p> <p>Water chemistry is currently unknown. Water supply to petrifying springs is characteristically oligotrophic and calcareous</p> <p>The bryophytes <i>Cratoneuron commutatum</i> and <i>Eucladium verticillatum</i> are diagnostic of this habitat.</p>
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline	
Hydrological regime: height of water table; water flow	Metres; metres per second	Maintain appropriate hydrological regimes	
Water quality	Water chemistry measures	Maintain oligotrophic and calcareous conditions	
Vegetation composition: typical species	Occurrence	Maintain typical species	
<b>[91A0] Old Oak Woodlands</b>			
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, at least 85.08ha for sub-sites surveyed	<p>The sizes of at least some of the existing woodlands need to be increased in order to reduce habitat fragmentation and benefit those species requiring 'deep' woodland conditions.</p> <p>Oak regenerates poorly. In suitable sites ash can regenerate in large numbers although few seedlings reach pole size.</p> <p>Mature and veteran trees are important habitats for bryophytes, lichens, saproxylic</p>
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline.	
Woodland size	Hectares	Area stable or increasing. Where topographically possible, "large" woods at least 25ha in size and "small" woods at least 3ha in size	
Woodland structure: cover and height	Percentage and metres	Diverse structure with a relatively closed canopy containing mature trees; subcanopy layer with semi- mature trees and shrubs; and well-developed herb layer	
Woodland structure: community diversity and extent	Hectares	Maintain diversity and extent of community types	



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<b>TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES</b>			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Woodland structure: natural regeneration	Seedling: sapling:pole ratio	Seedlings, saplings, and pole age-classes occur in adequate proportions to ensure survival of woodland canopy	<p>organisms and some bird species. Their retention is important to ensure continuity of habitats/niches and propagule sources.</p> <p>Dead wood is a valuable resource and an integral part of a healthy, functioning woodland ecosystem.</p> <p>The following are the most common invasive species in this woodland type: Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>), Rhododendron (<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>), Cherry laurel (<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>)</p>
Woodland structure: dead wood	m <sup>3</sup> per hectare; number per hectare	At least 30m <sup>3</sup> /ha of fallen timber greater than 10cm diameter; 30 snags/ha; both categories should include stems greater than 40cm diameter	
Woodland structure: veteran trees	Number per hectare	No decline	
Woodland structure: indicators of local distinctiveness	Occurrence	No decline	
Vegetation composition: native tree cover	Percentage	No decline. Native tree cover not less than 95%	
Vegetation composition: typical species	Occurrence	A variety of typical native species present, depending on woodland type, including oak ( <i>Quercus petraea</i> ) and birch ( <i>Betula pubescens</i> )	
Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Occurrence	Negative indicator species, particularly non-native invasive species, absent or under control	
<b>[91E0] Alluvial Forests</b>			
Habitat area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, at least 181.54ha for sites surveyed	<p>The sizes of at least some of the existing woodlands need to be increased in order to reduce habitat fragmentation and benefit those species requiring ‘deep’ woodland conditions.</p> <p>Alder and oak regenerate poorly. Ash often regenerates in large numbers although few seedlings reach pole size.</p> <p>Dead wood is a valuable resource and an integral part of a healthy, functioning</p>
Habitat distribution	Occurrence	No decline.	
Woodland size	Hectares	Area stable or increasing. Where topographically possible, "large" woods at least 25ha in size and "small" woods at least 3ha in size	
Woodland structure: cover and height	Percentage and metres	Diverse structure with a relatively closed canopy containing mature trees; subcanopy layer with semi- mature trees and shrubs; and well-developed herb layer	
Woodland structure: community diversity and extent	Hectares	Maintain diversity and extent of community types	



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<b>TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES</b>			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Woodland structure: natural regeneration	Seedling: sapling:pole ratio	Seedlings, saplings, and pole age-classes occur in adequate proportions to ensure survival of woodland canopy	<p>woodland ecosystem.</p> <p>Mature and veteran trees are important habitats for bryophytes, lichens, saproxylic organisms and some bird species. Their retention is important to ensure continuity of habitats/niches and propagule sources.</p> <p>The following are the most common invasive species in this woodland type: Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>), Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>), Rhododendron (<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>), Cherry laurel (<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>), Dogwood (<i>Cornus sericea</i>), Himalayan honeysuckle (<i>Leycesteria formosa</i>) and Himalayan balsam (<i>Impatiens grandiflora</i>).</p>
Hydrological regime: Flooding depth/height of water table	Metres	Appropriate hydrological regime necessary for maintenance of alluvial vegetation	
Woodland structure: dead wood	m <sup>3</sup> per hectare; number per hectare	At least 30m <sup>3</sup> /ha of fallen timber greater than 10cm diameter; 30 snags/ha; both categories should include stems greater than 40cm diameter (greater than 20cm diameter in the case of alder)	
Woodland structure: veteran trees	Number per hectare	No decline	
Woodland structure: indicators of local distinctiveness	Occurrence	No decline	
Vegetation composition: native tree cover	Percentage	No decline. Native tree cover not less than 95%	
Vegetation composition: typical species	Occurrence	A variety of typical native species present, depending on woodland type, including ash ( <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ) alder ( <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> ), willows ( <i>Salix</i> spp) and locally, oak ( <i>Quercus robur</i> )	
Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Occurrence	Negative indicator species, particularly non-native invasive species, absent or under control	
<b>[1016] Desmoulin's Whorl Snail</b>			
Distribution: occupied sites	Number	No decline. Two known sites: Borris Bridge, Co. Carlow S711503; Boston Bridge, Kilnaseer S338774, Co. Laois.	
Population size: adults	Number per positive sample	At least 5 adults' snails in at least 50% of samples	
Population density	Percentage positive samples	Adult snails present in at least 60% of samples per site	
Area of occupancy	Hectares	Minimum of 1ha of suitable habitat per site	

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<b>TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES</b>			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Habitat quality: vegetation	Percentage of samples with suitable vegetation	90% of samples in habitat classes I and II	
Habitat quality: soil moisture levels	Percentage of samples with appropriate soil moisture levels	90% of samples in moisture class 3-4	
<b>[1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel</b>			
The status of the FPM as a qualifying Annex II species for the River Barrow and River Nore SAC is currently under review			
<b>[1092] White-clawed Crayfish</b>			
Distribution	Occurrence	No reduction from baseline	<p>The crayfish is present almost throughout this SAC. The records extend as far downstream as Thomastown on the Nore and Graiguenamanagh on the Barrow.</p> <p>Alien crayfish species are identified as major direct threat to this species and as disease vector.</p> <p>Crayfish need high habitat heterogeneity. Larger crayfish must have stones to hide under, or an earthen bank in which to burrow. Hatchlings shelter in vegetation, gravel and among fine tree-roots. Smaller crayfish are typically found among weeds and debris in shallow water. Larger juveniles in particular may also be found among cobbles and detritus such as leaf litter. These conditions must be available on the whole length of occupied habitat</p>
Population structure: recruitment	% occurrence of juveniles and females with eggs	Juveniles and/or females with eggs in at least 50% of positive samples	
Negative indicator species	Occurrence	No alien crayfish species	
Disease	Occurrence	No instances of disease	
Water quality	EPA Q value	At least Q3-4 at all sites sampled by EPA	
Habitat quality: heterogeneity	Occurrence of positive habitat features	No decline in heterogeneity or habitat quality	
<b>[1095] Sea Lamprey</b>			
Distribution: extent of anadromy	% of river accessible	Greater than 75% of main stem length of rivers accessible from estuary	Artificial barriers can block or cause difficulties to lampreys' upstream

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<b>TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES</b>			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Population structure of juveniles	Number of age/size groups	At least three age/size groups present	<p>migration, thereby limiting species to lower stretches and restricting access to spawning areas.</p> <p>Juveniles burrow in areas of fine sediment in still water.</p> <p>Lampreys spawn in clean gravels.</p>
Juvenile density in fine sediment	Juveniles/m <sup>2</sup>	Juvenile density at least 1/m <sup>2</sup>	
Extent and distribution of spawning habitat	m <sup>2</sup> and occurrence	No decline in extent and distribution of spawning beds	
Availability of juvenile habitat	Number of positive sites in 3rd order channels (and greater), downstream of spawning areas	More than 50% of sample sites positive	
<b>[1096] Brook Lamprey</b>			
Distribution	% of river accessible	Access to all water courses down to first order streams	<p>Artificial barriers can block lampreys' upstream migration, thereby limiting species to lower stretches and restricting access to spawning areas.</p> <p>It is impossible to distinguish between brook and river lamprey juveniles in the field.</p> <p>Juveniles burrow in areas of fine sediment in still water. Lampreys spawn in clean gravels.</p>
Population structure of juveniles	Number of age/size groups	At least three age/size groups of brook/river lamprey present	
Juvenile density in fine sediment	Juveniles/m <sup>2</sup>	Mean catchment juvenile density of brook/river lamprey at least 2/m <sup>2</sup>	
Extent and distribution of spawning habitat	m <sup>2</sup> and occurrence	No decline in extent and distribution of spawning beds	
Availability of juvenile habitat	Number of positive sites in 2nd order channels (and greater), downstream of spawning areas	More than 50% of sample sites positive	
<b>[1099] River Lamprey</b>			
Distribution: extent of anadromy	% of river accessible	Greater than 75% of main stem and major tributaries down to second order accessible from estuary	<p>Artificial barriers can block lampreys' upstream migration, thereby limiting species to lower stretches and restricting access to spawning areas.</p>
Population structure of juveniles	Number of age/size groups	At least three age/size groups of river/brook lamprey present	

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<b>TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES</b>			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Juvenile density in fine sediment	Juveniles/m <sup>2</sup>	Mean catchment juvenile density of brook/river lamprey at least 2/m <sup>2</sup>	It is impossible to distinguish between brook and river lamprey juveniles in the field.  Juveniles burrow in areas of fine sediment in still water. Lampreys spawn in clean gravels.
Extent and distribution of spawning habitat	m <sup>2</sup> and occurrence	No decline in extent and distribution of spawning beds	
Availability of juvenile habitat	Number of positive sites in 2nd order channels (and greater), downstream of spawning areas	More than 50% of sample sites positive	
<b>[1103] Twaite Shad</b>			
Distribution: extent of anadromy	% of river accessible	Greater than 75% of main stem length of rivers accessible from estuary	In some catchments, artificial barriers block twaite shads' upstream migration, thereby limiting species to lower stretches and restricting access to spawning areas.  Regular breeding has been confirmed in the River Barrow in recent years, but not in the Nore.
Population structure- age classes	Number of age classes	More than one age class present	
Extent and distribution of spawning habitat	m <sup>2</sup> and occurrence	No decline in extent and distribution of spawning habitats	
Water quality- oxygen levels	Milligrammes per litre	No lower than 5mg/l	
Spawning habitat quality: Filamentous algae; macrophytes; sediment	Occurrence	Maintain stable gravel substrate with very little fine material, free of filamentous algal (macroalgae) growth and macrophyte (rooted higher plants) growth	
<b>[1106] Atlantic Salmon</b>			
Distribution: extent of anadromy	% of river accessible	100% of river channels down to second order accessible from estuary	Artificial barriers block salmon's upstream migration, thereby limiting species to lower stretches and restricting access to spawning areas.  Smolt abundance can be negatively affected by a number of impacts such as estuarine pollution, predation, and sea lice ( <i>Lepeophtheirus salmonis</i> ).
Adult spawning fish	Number	Conservation Limit (CL) for each system consistently exceeded	
Salmon fry abundance	Number of fry/5 minutes electrofishing	Maintain or exceed 0+ fry mean catchment-wide abundance threshold value. Currently set at 17 salmon fry/5 min sampling	

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<b>TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES</b>			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
			<p>Salmon spawn in clean gravels.</p> <p>Q values based on triennial water quality surveys carried out by the EPA.</p>
Out-migrating smolt abundance	Number	No significant decline	
Number and distribution of redds	Number and occurrence	No decline in number and distribution of spawning redds due to anthropogenic causes	
Water quality	EPA Q value	At least Q4 at all sites sampled by EPA	
<b>[1355] Otter</b>			
Distribution	% positive survey sites	No significant decline	<p>Otters need lying up areas throughout their territory where they are secure from disturbance.</p> <p>Broad diet that varies locally and seasonally, but dominated by fish, in particular salmonids, eels, and sticklebacks in freshwater and wrasse and rockling in coastal waters</p> <p>Otters will utilise freshwater habitats from estuary to headwaters within 80m of the shoreline.</p>
Extent of terrestrial habitat	Hectares	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 122.8ha above high water mark (HWM); 1136.0ha along river banks / around ponds	
Extent of marine habitat	Hectares	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 857.7ha	
Extent of freshwater (river) habitat	Kilometres	No significant decline. Length mapped and calculated as 616.6km	
Extent of freshwater (lake) habitat	Hectares	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 2.6ha	
Couching sites and holts	Number	No significant decline	
Fish biomass available	Kilograms	No significant decline	
<b>[1421] Killarney Fern</b>			
Distribution	Location	No decline. Three locations known, with three colonies of gametophyte and one sporophyte colony	<p>'Juvenile' sporophytes, which appear as small entire fronds, are known from this site. However, it is unknown whether they are due to apogamous growth or sexual reproduction.</p>
Population size	Number	Maintain at least three colonies of gametophyte, and at least one sporophyte colony of over 35 fronds	

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<b>TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES</b>			
ATTRIBUTE	MEASURE	TARGET	SELECTED NOTES
Population structure: juvenile fronds	Occurrence	At least one of the locations to have a population structure comprising sporophyte, unfurling fronds, 'juvenile' sporophyte and gametophyte generations	
Habitat extent	m <sup>2</sup>	No loss of suitable habitat, such as shaded rock crevices, caves, or gullies in or near to, known colonies. No loss of woodland canopy at or near to known locations	
Hydrological conditions: visible water	Occurrence	Maintain hydrological conditions at the locations so that all colonies are in dripping or damp seeping habitats, and water is visible at all locations	
Hydrological conditions: humidity	Number of dessicated fronds	No increase. Presence of dessicated sporophyte fronds or gametophyte mats indicates conditions are unsuitable	
Light levels: shading	Percentage	No changes due to anthropogenic impacts	
Invasive species	Occurrence	Absent or under control	
<b>[1990] Nore Freshwater Pearl Mussel</b>			
Distribution	Kilometres	Maintain at 15.5km.	The population stretches from Poorman's Bridge (S407859) to Lismaine Bridge (S442660), with most of the population found between Poorman's Bridge and the Avonmore Creamery above Ballyragget (S 440 722).  The extant wild population of Nore freshwater pearl mussel is estimated as 300 adult individuals.  Mussels of no more than 65mm are considered 'young mussels' and may be found buried in the substratum and/or beneath adult mussels. Mussels of no more than 30mm are 'juvenile mussels'
Population size: adult mussels	Number	Restore to 5,000 adult mussels	
Population structure: recruitment	Percentage per size class	Restore to at least 20% of population no more than 65mm in length; and at least 5% of population no more than 30mm in length	
Population structure: adult mortality	Percentage	No more than 5% decline from previous number of live adults counted; dead shells less than 1% of the adult population and scattered in distribution	
Habitat extent	Kilometres	Restore suitable habitat in length of river corresponding to distribution target (15.5km) and any additional stretches necessary for salmonid spawning	

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<b>TABLE 5.1 RIVER BARROW AND RIVER NORE SAC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES</b>			
<b>ATTRIBUTE</b>	<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>TARGET</b>	<b>SELECTED NOTES</b>
Water quality: Macroinvertebrates and phytobenthos (diatoms)	Ecological quality ratio (EQR)	Restore water quality- macroinvertebrates: EQR greater than 0.90; phytobenthos: EQR greater than 0.93	<p>and are always buried in the substratum. This species is known not to have reproduced successfully in the River Nore since 1970.</p> <p>Juvenile mussels require full oxygenation while buried in gravel.</p> <p>Salmonid fish are host to the larval form of freshwater pearl mussels and thus, they are essential to the completion of the life cycle.</p> <p>As native brown trout appear to be favoured by the Nore freshwater pearl mussel, it is particularly important that these are not outcompeted by stocked fish.</p>
Substratum quality: Filamentous algae (macroalgae), macrophytes (rooted higher plants)	Percentage	Restore substratum quality- filamentous algae: absent or trace (<5%)	
Substratum quality: sediment	Occurrence	Restore substratum quality- stable cobble and gravel substrate with very little fine material; no artificially elevated levels of fine sediment.	
Substratum quality: oxygen availability	Redox potential	Restore to no more than 20% decline from water column to 5cm depth in substrate	
Hydrological regime: flow variability	Metres per second	Restore appropriate hydrological regimes	
Host fish	Number	Maintain sufficient juvenile salmonids to host glochidial larvae	

**River Barrow and River Nore SAC Conservation Status**

According to the Habitat's Directive, favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable as defined below.

According to the Habitat's Directive, favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

The conservation statuses for the qualifying interests of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC site are outlined below.

CODE	QUALIFYING INTEREST	NATIONAL CONSERVATION STATUS*
1130	Estuaries	Inadequate
1140	Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats	Inadequate
1170	Reefs	Inadequate
1310	<i>Salicornia</i> Mud	Favourable
1330	Atlantic Salt Meadows	Inadequate
1410	Mediterranean Salt Meadows	Inadequate
3260	Floating River Vegetation	Inadequate
4030	Dry Heath	Bad
6430	Hydrophilous Tall Herb Communities	Bad
7220	Petrifying Springs	Inadequate
91A0	Old Oak Woodlands	Bad
91E0	Alluvial Forests	Bad
1016	Desmoulin's Whorl Snail	Inadequate
1029	Freshwater Pearl Mussel	Bad
1092	White-clawed Crayfish	Bad
1095	Sea Lamprey	Bad
1096	Brook Lamprey	Favourable
1099	River Lamprey	Unknown
1103	Twaite Shad	Bad
1106	Atlantic Salmon	Inadequate
1355	Otter	Favourable
1421	Killarney Fern	Favourable
1990	Nore Freshwater Pearl Mussel	Bad

\*Sourced from the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (NPWS, 2019b and 2019c).



## 6.0 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY IMPACTS

### 6.1 DISTURBANCE TO PROTECTED HABITATS AND SPECIES

The proposed development does not directly impinge on any part of a European site, and as such would not be expected to have any in-situ effects upon a protected site through loss or destruction of habitat, fragmentation of habitat, disturbance of habitat or direct reduction in species density. The River Barrow and River Nore SAC boundary is located approximately 4.3km (4.8km hydrologically) south west from the proposed site. Given the proposed site's proximity to this site, potential ex-situ impacts must also be considered. See Appendix A & B for summary of the Qualifying Interests and summary of potential impact from the proposed sites.

It is not considered that the proposed development site would contain the habitats or species for which the River Barrow and River Nore SAC has been designated. No areas of woodland exist on the development site; therefore, the site does not contain any habitat which would have potential links to Old Oak Woodlands [91A0] or Alluvial Forests [91E0]. The closest Old Oak Woodlands is approximately 32km (54km hydrologically) downstream near Thomastown and the closest Alluvial Forests is approximately 21km (34km hydrologically) downstream near Kilkenny City.

No areas of heath or marsh / swamp habitats occur on the development site, therefore the site does not contain any habitat which would have potential links to Dry Heath [4030] or Hydrophilous Tall Herb Communities [6430]. Dry Heath is currently unmapped however it is known to be along the River Barrow and tributaries in the Blackstairs Mountains. This habitat is not within or adjacent the site boundary and the proposed development would not impact on this habitat. Hydrophilous Tall Herb Communities distribution is currently unknown. Considered to occur in association with some riverside woodlands, unmanaged river islands and in narrow bands along the floodplain of slow-flowing stretches of river. This habitat is not found with or adjacent the proposed site and the proposed development would not impact on this habitat.

The proposed development site is located a considerable distance from the tidal stretches of the River Nore (approximately 64km hydrologically), thus qualifying interests associated with saltwater and tidal conditions would not be present. The Dinin River would likely contain aquatic freshwater species of conservation value. The proposed development will not require any construction works within a watercourse or riparian zone. During the operational phase there would be no significant impact as stormwater will be directed to the existing surface water drainage network located within Townsend Avenue.

During the site assessment, no Killarney Fern [1421] was present with the closest records approximately 74km to the south (downstream of Inistioge). In the absence of swamp, fen, and marsh habitat at the site, and in the absence of historic records, it is not considered that the proposed development site would be suitable to support populations of Desmoulin's Whorl Snail. The only records for this species on the River Nore catchment are located upstream on the River Erkina, approximately 32km upstream of the River Nore from the proposed site. The White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) [1092] is found throughout the River Nore and extends downstream as far as Thomastown. There are record of this species along the Dinin River, the closest record of the White-clawed crayfish is approximately 11.5km west at the Bridge in Castlecomer. The closest record of Petrifying springs with tufa formation

(*Cratoneurion*) [7220] found near the proposed development is approximately 56km hydrologically near Thomastown.

While no evidence of otter (including holts, slides, spraints, and tracks) was recorded during the ecological site assessment, given that the development site is located within the vicinity of the Dinin River, it is likely that otters are present within the general area. Recent NBDC records indicate that there is otter present within the Dinin River located approximately 812m (hydrologically) from the proposed site. The development site is comprised of grassland habitat which would be of limited value to otter, should this species be present within the vicinity. Therefore, the development would not have a significant potential impact upon otter due to habitat loss or fragmentation, given the limited land-take required, and of modified habitats, and given the availability of more suitable otter habitat in the general area.

It is not envisaged that protected species would be adversely impacted upon by the development due to noise generated by the proposed development as the surrounding area is located within a rural setting. Fauna in the area would be accustomed to human generated noise from residential commonly audible within rural areas. While there would be increased noise emissions during the construction phase of the development, these would not be considered to pose a significant risk owing to the transient nature of works and the small scale of proposed works. Construction works will be mainly carried out during daylight hours away from the Dinin River therefore would not cause significant disturbance to crepuscular/nocturnal species foraging at the river. Fauna in the area would also be accustomed to noise from vehicular traffic during the operational phase of the development. Earthworks would be confined to the site with the main activities being the foundations, drainage network and site levelling. Topsoil at the proposed site will be reused for landscaping.

The potential disturbance on protected habitats and species due to dust during the construction phase would not be considered significant, given the transient nature of construction works and the scale of the proposed development. It is not considered that the operational phase of the development would have the potential to adversely impact upon designated sites due to air emissions given the nature of the development.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not result in any significant risk to the protected habitats and species of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC due to habitat fragmentation or loss, disturbance, or reduction in species density.

## **6.2 INVASIVE SPECIES**

Under Regulation 49(2) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), save in accordance with a licence granted under paragraph (7), any person who plants, disperses, allows, or causes to disperse, spreads or otherwise causes to grow in any place specified in relation to any plant which is included in Part 1 of the Third Schedule shall be guilty of an offence. Materials containing invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed are considered “controlled waste”, and, as such, there are legal restrictions on their handling and disposal. Under Regulation 49(7) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, it is a legal requirement to obtain a license to move “vector materials” listed in the Third Schedule, Part 3.

**Table 6.1:** National Biodiversity Data Centre records of high impact invasive species within 10km square (Hectad-S67) of the proposed development.

INVASIVE FLORA SPECIES	
Nuttall's Waterweed ( <i>Elodea nuttallii</i> )	Canadian Waterweed ( <i>Elodea canadensis</i> )
Giant Hogweed ( <i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i> )	Indian Balsam ( <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i> )
Japanese Knotweed ( <i>Fallopia japonica</i> )	

The spread of invasive plant and animal species can negatively impact on the conservation objectives of certain Annex I habitats and species designated within SACs. There are no high impact invasive species within or adjacent the site boundary. The risk of invasive species being introduced onto the site during the operational phase of the project is considered to be low, with no import of materials with the potential to contain invasive flora species. Any topsoil will be thoroughly checked and screened before being imported into the site. The landscape plan will use native and non-invasive naturalised flora in its design. Therefore, it is considered that there would be no significant risk to protected habitats and species as a result of invasive species from the site.

### 6.3 POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON WATER QUALITY

The proposed development is located within the Nore Catchment; thus, the proposed development would be hydrologically linked to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC. However, the proposed development would not be considered to impact upon the listed habitats and species of the SAC site due to deleterious effects on water quality, owing to the location of the development and the nature works on the development site.

As discussed in Section 4.2, the development site is located approximately 75m (hydrologically) from the unnamed watercourse hydrologically connected to the Dinin River (main channel approximately 14km hydrologically). Waste water from the proposed development will connect to the existing WWTS at Townsend Avenue. This WWTS was upgraded within the last ten years. Connection to this sewer line will be designed as per the Irish Water Code of Practice for Wastewater Infrastructure (2020) (Document Reference: IW-CDS5030-03) and Wastewater Infrastructure Standard Details, Connections and Developers Services (2020) (Document Reference: IW-CDS-5030-01). Stormwater will be directed to soak pits. It is not anticipated that there will be a deleterious effect on water quality within the unnamed watercourse or Dinin River as a result of the proposed development.

During the construction phase of projects, a deterioration in water quality can arise through the release of suspended solids during soil disturbance works, the release of uncured concrete and the release of hydrocarbons (fuels and oils). Construction works would be confined to the proposed development footprint, with no works taking place within or immediately adjacent to riparian or aquatic habitat. The construction of the development would be mainly within an agricultural field. There would be limited deep excavation works required for the type of proposed development.

In the event suspended solids become entrained in surface water run-off, there is considered to be no significant risk of impact on water quality as suspended solids would likely be retained on site as run-off percolates to the ground. Any potential sediment runoff during site levelling will likely percolate to ground or at the base of the field within the grass verge.

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The risk of water quality deterioration as a result of uncured concrete would be further reduced, given that precast concrete / blockwork would be used where possible and surplus concrete would be returned to the batching plant. The change from grassland to the developed area will not significantly alter the infiltration capacity of the soil with runoff being directed to the existing drainage network. In addition, there will be areas of amenity grassland as per the site layout. Therefore, run-off from the proposed development will not have a significant impact on the nearby watercourses.

It is therefore considered that, due to the nature and location of the development, the relatively small scale and extent of construction works, no excavation works within the immediate vicinity of the unnamed watercourse or the Dinin River, the proposed development would not pose a significant risk upon the River Barrow and River Nore SAC site due to a deleterious effect on water quality during either the construction or operational phases.

#### **6.4 IN COMBINATION EFFECTS**

The following plans and projects were reviewed and considered for in-combination effects with the proposed development:

- Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028;
- Proposed and permitted developments in the area available on Carlow County Council planning system.

The proposed development site is located 8km south west of Carlow Town via L7129, L3037 and R448. Residential dwellings are dispersed along the L7129 with small scale housing estates within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development. The site is accessed by Townsend Avenue located along the L7129. The M9 is located approximately 6.9km south east of the site via the local road network. The following plans and projects were reviewed and considered for in-combination effects with the proposed development.

**Table 6.4:** Recent planning applications close to the proposed site

Application No.	Development Type	Outcome	Approximate Distance
21440	Permission for the demolition of an existing single storey extension to the rear elevation of existing dwelling, permission for the construction of a storey and a half type extension to the rear of existing dwelling, permission for the construction of a domestic shed/garage, and all associated site works	Granted - Conditional	75m W
21299	The construction of a single storey extension to the rear of existing dwelling, alterations to existing entrance and construction of a domestic shed and all associated site development works	Granted - Conditional	110m S
20180	For the installation of approximately 4.6 kilometres (km) of underground cables within the Carlow County Council (CCC) boundary and approximately 2.0 km within the Laois County Council (LCC) boundary with a voltage of up to 38 kilovolts and associated works, including a new substation within LCC, for the connection of the consented Bilboa	Granted - Conditional	101m S

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Application No.	Development Type	Outcome	Approximate Distance
	Wind Farm (Planning Register References: Carlow County Council 11/154; An Bord Pleanála PL 01.240245) to the national electricity grid; upgrading of an existing forestry track within CCC; construction of two new onsite access tracks within CCC; re-orientation and increasing in size of a crane hardstanding within CCC; and road strengthening and widening along an updated turbine delivery route, within LCC, pursuant to the consented Bilboa Wind Farm (Planning Register References; Carlow County Council 11/154; An Bord Pleanála PL 01.240245). The application is accompanied by a Planning Report, Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Natura Impact Statement.		
14121	PL Ref: 08/472 - the construction of 6 No. bungalow style dwellings, effluent treatment system & sand polishing filter, new entrance & all ancillary works	Granted - Conditional	193m SE
1631	The construction of a two-storey side extension and a single storey rear extension to the existing dwelling house and associated site works	Granted - Conditional	462m E
1951	For the demolition of an existing single storey dwelling, construction of a replacement single storey dwelling, bored well, new packaged wastewater treatment system & raised percolation area, new entrance, and all associated site works	Granted - Conditional	1.4km NE
13123	To construct a domestic garage to side of existing dwelling as constructed and all associated site works on lands	Granted - Conditional	4km SW

The proposed heating system is Air to Water heat pump. Air emissions would be typical of a residential being primarily from heating and therefore low impact in-and-of-itself. In-combination residential impacts would be controlled by national energy policies, grant schemes and motor fuel emission targets.

Continued implementation of the Water Framework Directive would result in achieving, or maintaining, improvements to water quality in the Nore Catchment. Developments such as this proposed development could act in combination with existing environmental pressures on the Nore Catchment, including agriculture, anthropogenic, domestic, and urban wastewater, urban run-off, industry, and forestry. However, as noted in Section 6.3, it is not considered that the development would pose a significant risk upon any Natura 2000 site due to a deleterious effect on water quality, during either the construction or operational phase. It is not considered that the proposed development would have a significant in-combination effect with existing or proposed developments in the area. As these three terrace housing units are small residential properties the proposed development would not significantly alter the existing characteristics or intensity of wastewater from Townsend Avenue WWTs. A confirmation of feasibility was received from Irish Water on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 to confirm connection to Water Works and Wastewater Works. As discussed in Sections 6.1 – 6.3 above, it is considered that there would be no significant in-combination risk to any European site owing to the development. As there are no anticipated significant risks from the development and proposed works given the scale and nature of recent nearby developments, the type of proposed development

(residential dwellings), the distances of other developments in the area, it is considered that there would be no cumulative water, noise or air impacts which would pose a significant risk to designated sites or species.

## **7.0 SCREENING STATEMENT AND CONCLUSIONS**

This report identified the presence of European sites (Natura 2000) within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development and noted that the proposed development site is approximately 4.3km from the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (Site Code 002162). The potential for impacts to European sites as a result of the proposed development such as potential water quality impacts, introduction of invasive species, habitat destruction and impacts from noise and dust were considered and the level of risk posed assessed.

During Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment, it was considered that there would be no potential for a significant impact upon the qualifying interests / special conservation interests of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC during both the construction and operational phase of the proposed development.

This report presents a Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening for the Proposed Development, outlining the information required for the competent authority to screen for appropriate assessment and to determine whether or not the Proposed Development, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, in view of best scientific knowledge, is likely to have a significant effect on any European or Natura 2000 site. It is considered that there would be no significant risk of negative impact, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, to the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. Therefore, a Natura Impact Statement is not required.

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

It can be objectively concluded that no significant effects arising from the proposed development are likely to occur in relation to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC or indeed any other Natura 2000 site in the wider hinterland.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**ALL QUALIFYING INTERESTS**

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**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING**  
**NO. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**

<b>QUALIFYING INTEREST</b>	<b>LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>LISTED FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION IN APPENDIX B</b>
[1130] Estuaries	The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of these qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019b). The nearest examples of these qualifying interests are located approximately 77km downstream of the proposed development (NPWS, 2011). Given the considerable distance, it is not anticipated that the development would have the potential to negatively impact upon these qualifying interests.	No	No
[1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats	The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of these qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019b). The nearest examples of these qualifying interests are located approximately 103km downstream of the proposed development (NPWS, 2011). Given the considerable distance, it is not anticipated that the development would have the potential to negatively impact upon these qualifying interests.	No	No
[1170] Reefs	The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of these qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019b). The nearest examples of these qualifying interests are located approximately 125km downstream of the proposed development (NPWS, 2011). Given the considerable distance, it is not anticipated that the development would have the potential to negatively impact upon these qualifying interests.	No	No
[1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows ( <i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i> )	The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of these qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019b). The nearest examples of these qualifying interests are located greater than 118km downstream of the proposed development (NPWS, 2011). Given the considerable distance, it is not anticipated that the development would have the potential to negatively impact upon these qualifying interests.	No	No
[1410] Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> )	The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of these qualifying interests (NPWS, 2019b). The nearest examples of these qualifying interests are located greater than 118km	No	No

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING**  
**NO. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**

<b>QUALIFYING INTEREST</b>	<b>LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>LISTED FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION IN APPENDIX B</b>
	downstream of the proposed development (NPWS, 2011). Given the considerable distance, it is not anticipated that the development would have the potential to negatively impact upon these qualifying interests.		
[3260] Floating River Vegetation	The development site is located within the current distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019b). While this habitat is noted in the SAC site synopsis as being well represented in the River Nore and its tributaries the full range of this habitat is not known. The Conservation Objectives for this qualifying interest include water quality attributes.	Yes	Yes
[4030] Dry Heath	The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019b). The SAC Conservation Objectives report notes that the spatial extent of this habitat is currently unmapped, but is indicated as occurring on steep, free-draining river valley sides. Dry heath is a terrestrial habitat, therefore a potential deterioration in water quality during construction works would not be anticipated to have a significant adverse impact upon this qualifying interest should it be present adjacent the Rivers Dinin and Nore.	No	No
[6430] Hydrophilous Tall Herb Communities	The proposed development is located within the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019b). The SAC Conservation Objectives report notes that the distribution of this habitat within the SAC site is currently unknown, but is considered to occur at some riverside woodlands, river islands and in narrow bands along the floodplain of slow flowing river stretches. Water quality is not listed as a conservation objective for this qualifying interest. It is therefore not anticipated that the proposed development would have the potential to adversely impact upon this qualifying interest.	No	No
[7220] Petrifying Springs*	The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution but within the current range and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019b). The nearest example of this qualifying interest is located at the River Nore	No	No

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING**  
**NO. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**

<b>QUALIFYING INTEREST</b>	<b>LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>LISTED FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION IN APPENDIX B</b>
	approximately 56km downstream (NPWS, 2011). Given the hydrological distance it is not anticipated that the proposed development would have direct or indirect negative impacts upon this qualifying interest.		
[91A0] Old Oak Woodlands	The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019b). According to the SAC Conservation Objectives report, old oak woodlands are located approximately 32km south near Thomastown (approximately 54km hydrologically). However, the report notes that further unsurveyed areas may be present within the SAC. Old oak woodlands are a terrestrial habitat, therefore a potential deterioration in water quality during construction works would not be anticipated to have a significant adverse impact upon this qualifying interest.	No	No
[91E0] Alluvial Forests*	The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution but within current range and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019b). According to the SAC Conservation Objectives report, alluvial forests are located approximately Alluvial Forests is approximately 21km (hydrologically 34km) south west of the proposed site. However, the report notes that further unsurveyed areas may be present within the SAC. A potential deterioration in water quality would not be anticipated to have a significant adverse impact upon this qualifying interest.	No	No
[1016] Desmoulin's Whorl Snail ( <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> )	The proposed development is located within the current known distribution and current range and the favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019c). According to the SAC Conservation Objectives report, the nearest record of Desmoulin's whorl snail is located are located upstream on the River Erkina, approximately 32km upstream via the River Nore from the proposed site. In 2018 a previously unknown population was found in S55. Water quality is not listed as a conservation objective for this qualifying interest, it is not anticipated that the proposed development would have the potential to adversely impact upon the Desmoulin's whorl snail.	No	No

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING**  
**NO. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**

<b>QUALIFYING INTEREST</b>	<b>LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>LISTED FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION IN APPENDIX B</b>
<p>[1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>)</p> <p>[1990] Nore Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera durrovensis</i>)</p>	<p>The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of the freshwater pearl mussel (NPWS, 2019c). The SAC Conservation Objectives report notes that the status of <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> as a qualifying interest for the site is currently under review. The Conservation Objectives for this qualifying interest notes Salmonid fish are host to the larval form of freshwater pearl mussels. A deterioration in water quality could impact on Salmonid fish thereby impact on Freshwater Pearl Mussel.</p> <p><i>M. durrovensis</i> is confined to a 15km (approximate) stretch of the River Nore this is located upstream of the Dinin/Nore confluence. The River Nore is greater than 30km downstream. The Conservation Objectives for this qualifying interest notes Salmonid fish are host to the larval form of freshwater pearl mussels. A deterioration in water quality could impact on Salmonid fish thereby impact on <i>M. durrovensis</i>.</p>	Yes	Yes
<p>[1092] White-clawed Crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>)</p>	<p>The development site is located within the current distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019c). The SAC Conservation Objectives report notes that crayfish are present almost throughout the SAC. Potentially located within the River Dinin downstream of the proposed development. Conservation Objectives indicating White-clawed Crayfish within the River Dinin. EPA have records within the River Biologists' Database for White-clawed Crayfish at Castlecomer. The Conservation Objectives for this qualifying interest include water quality attributes.</p>	Yes	Yes
<p>[1095] Sea Lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>)</p>	<p>The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of the Sea Lamprey (NPWS, 2019b). The SAC Conservation Objectives report notes that upstream migration may be inhibited by artificial barriers, and that artificial barriers are currently preventing juvenile lampreys from accessing the full extent of suitable habitat. Potentially located within the River Dinin downstream of proposed site. Lamprey sp. was noted further upstream of Castlecomer and throughout the Nore catchment (Gordon et al, 2021). The Conservation Objectives for this qualifying interest include water quality attributes.</p>	Yes	Yes

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING**  
**NO. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**

<b>QUALIFYING INTEREST</b>	<b>LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>LISTED FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION IN APPENDIX B</b>
[1096] Brook Lamprey ( <i>Lampetra planeri</i> )	The proposed development is located within the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of brook lamprey. River and brook lamprey are indistinguishable as larvae. Potentially located within the River Dinin downstream of proposed site. Lamprey sp. was noted further upstream of Castlecomer and throughout the Nore catchment (Gordon et al, 2021). The Conservation Objectives for this qualifying interest include water quality attributes.	Yes	Yes
[1099] River Lamprey ( <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> )	The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of river lamprey (NPWS, 2019c). River and brook lamprey are indistinguishable as larvae. Potentially located within the River Dinin downstream of proposed site. Lamprey sp. was noted further upstream of Castlecomer and throughout the Nore catchment (Gordon et al, 2021). The Conservation Objectives for this qualifying interest include water quality attributes.	Yes	Yes
[1103] Twaite Shad ( <i>Alosa fallax</i> )	The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of the Twaite Shad (NPWS, 2019c). The nearest records for Twaite Shad are located at the River Nore and River Barrow confluence. Artificial barriers block twaite shads' upstream migration, thereby limiting species to lower stretches and restricting access to spawning areas.	No	No
[1106] Atlantic Salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> )	The proposed development is located within the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019c). Potentially located downstream at Black Bridge and throughout the Dinin sub-catchment (Gordon et al, 2021). The River Nore is listed as Salmonid River (S.I. 293: European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations, 1988). The Conservation Objectives for this qualifying interest include water quality attributes.	Yes	Yes
[1355] Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> )	The proposed development is located within the current distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of otter (NPWS, 2019c). Potentially located within the River Dinin downstream of the proposed development. NBDC has record for otter at River	Yes	Yes



**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING**  
**NO. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**

<b>QUALIFYING INTEREST</b>	<b>LOCATION IN THE NATURA 2000 SITE RELATIVE TO APPLICATION SITE</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>LISTED FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION IN APPENDIX B</b>
	Dinin in Bilboa. A significant impact on water quality could indirectly impact upon this qualifying interest by causing a reduction in prey populations and availability.		
[1421] Killarney Fern ( <i>Trichomanes speciosum</i> )	The proposed development is located outside the current known distribution, current range, and favourable reference range of this qualifying interest (NPWS, 2019c). According to the SAC Conservation Objectives report, the nearest record of Killarney fern to the proposed site is located approximately 74km to the south (downstream of Inistioge). Water quality is not listed as a conservation objective for this qualifying interest. It is therefore not anticipated that the proposed development would have the potential to adversely impact upon this qualifying interest.	No	No

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**APPENDIX B**  
**QUALIFYING INTERESTS WITHIN THE PROJECT ZONE OF INTEREST**

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**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING**  
**NO. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**

<b>CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES (NPWS 2011)</b>	<b>THREATS AND PRESSURES (NPWS 2019)</b>	<b>KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT</b>
[3260] Floating River Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural activities generating point source pollution to surface or ground waters.</li> <li>• Modification of hydrological flow.</li> <li>• Physical alteration of water bodies.</li> <li>• Discharge of urban wastewater (excluding storm overflows and/or urban run-offs) generating pollution to surface or ground water.</li> <li>• Forestry activities generating pollution to surface or ground waters.</li> <li>• Pollution to surface or ground water due to urban runoffs.</li> <li>• Peat extraction.</li> <li>• Plants contaminated or abandoned industrial sites generating pollution to surface or ground water.</li> <li>• Abstraction from groundwater, surface water or mixed water.</li> </ul>	<p>A potential deterioration in Water Quality* could potentially impact on this habitat.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Key Conservation Measures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reversal/rehabilitation of hydro-morphological changes, including in-stream structures and catchment drainage impacts/restoration of hydrological regime.</li> <li>• Reducing pollution (with dissolved and/or particulate nutrients, humic substances, organic matter, and fine sediment/turbidity) from agricultural, forestry, turf-cutting, and domestic and urban waste-water sources.</li> </ul>	<p>No potential for a significant impact on water quality as there is no potential for significant groundwater contamination or significant runoff (sediments or hydrocarbons) from the proposed site that would enter any watercourse or drainage system that is hydrologically connected to the SAC.</p>
<p>[1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>)</p> <p>[1990] Nore Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera durrovensis</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drainage for use as agricultural land.</li> <li>• Modification of hydrological conditions, or physical alteration of water bodies and drainage for forestry (including dams).</li> <li>• Other modification of hydrological conditions for residential or recreational development.</li> <li>• Agricultural activities generating diffuse pollution to surface or ground waters.</li> <li>• Forestry activities generating pollution to surface or ground waters.</li> <li>• Discharge of urban wastewater (excluding storm overflows and/or urban run-offs)</li> </ul>	<p>Freshwater Pearl Mussels are sensitive to sedimentation and nutrient enrichment. Furthermore, as the larval stages rely on salmonid fish hosts, any potential impact on salmonids can have an impact upon the Freshwater Pearl Mussel.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Key Conservation Measures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage drainage and irrigation operations and infrastructures in agriculture.</li> </ul>	<p>No potential for a significant impact on water quality as there is no potential for significant groundwater contamination or significant runoff (sediments or hydrocarbons) from the proposed site</p>

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING**  
**NO. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**

<b>CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES (NPWS 2011)</b>	<b>THREATS AND PRESSURES (NPWS 2019)</b>	<b>KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generating pollution to surface or ground water.</li> <li>• Peat extraction.</li> <li>• Modification of flooding regimes, flood protection for residential or recreational development.</li> <li>• Hydropower (dams, weirs, run-off-the-river), including infrastructure.</li> <li>• Abstraction of ground and surface waters (including marine) for public water supply and recreational use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce diffuse pollution to surface or ground waters from agricultural activities.</li> <li>• Adapt mowing, grazing and other equivalent agricultural activities.</li> <li>• Manage the use of natural fertilisers and chemicals in agricultural (plant and animal) production.</li> <li>• Adapt/manage reforestation and forest regeneration.</li> <li>• Stop forest management and exploitation practices.</li> <li>• Adapt/change forest management and exploitation practices.</li> <li>• Manage drainage and irrigation operations and infrastructures.</li> </ul>	<p>that would enter any watercourse or drainage system that is hydrologically connected to the SAC.</p>
<p>[1092] White-clawed Crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant and animal diseases, pathogens, and pests.</li> <li>• Invasive alien species of Union concern</li> </ul>	<p>A potential deterioration in Water Quality* could potentially impact on this species.</p> <p><u>Key Conservation Measures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early detection and rapid eradication of invasive alien species of Union concern.</li> <li>• Controlling and eradicating plant and animal diseases, pathogens, and pests.</li> </ul>	<p>No potential for a significant impact on water quality as there is no potential for significant groundwater contamination or significant runoff (sediments or hydrocarbons) from the proposed site that would enter any watercourse or</p>

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING**  
**NO. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**

<b>CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES (NPWS 2011)</b>	<b>THREATS AND PRESSURES (NPWS 2019)</b>	<b>KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT</b>
			drainage system that is hydrologically connected to the SAC.
[1095] Sea Lamprey ( <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hydropower (dams, weirs, run-off-the-river), including infrastructure.</li> <li>• Increases or changes in precipitation due to climate change.</li> <li>• Application of natural fertilisers on agricultural land.</li> <li>• Application of synthetic (mineral) fertilisers on agricultural land.</li> <li>• Drainage for use as agricultural land.</li> <li>• Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) causing reduction of species/prey populations.</li> <li>• Threats and pressures from outside the Member State.</li> <li>• Temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature &amp; extremes) due to climate change.</li> <li>• Droughts and decreases in precipitation due to climate change.</li> </ul>	<p>Sea lamprey may be adversely impacted upon by sedimentation and water pollution.</p> <p><u>Key Conservation Measures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce impact of hydropower operations and infrastructure.</li> <li>• Manage changes in hydrological and coastal systems and regimes for construction and development.</li> <li>• Any measure to reduce diffuse pollution to surface or ground waters from agricultural activities would benefit water quality in rivers. This would have a knock-on beneficial effect on sea lamprey during the freshwater spawning phase, when spawning grounds can experience substantial filamentous algal growth.</li> </ul>	No potential for a significant impact on water quality as there is no potential for significant groundwater contamination or significant runoff (sediments or hydrocarbons) from the proposed site that would enter any watercourse or drainage system that is hydrologically connected to the SAC.
[1096] Brook Lamprey ( <i>Lampetra planeri</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application of synthetic (mineral) fertilisers on agricultural land.</li> <li>• Drainage for use as agricultural land.</li> <li>• Clear-cutting, removal of all trees.</li> <li>• Hydropower (dams, weirs, run-off-the-river), including infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<p>Brook lamprey may be adversely impacted upon by sedimentation and water pollution.</p> <p><u>Key Conservation Measures</u></p>	No potential for a significant impact on water quality as there is no potential for significant

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING**  
**NO. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**

<b>CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES (NPWS 2011)</b>	<b>THREATS AND PRESSURES (NPWS 2019)</b>	<b>KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollution to surface or ground water due to urban runoffs.</li> <li>• Discharge of urban wastewater (excluding storm overflows and/or urban run-offs) generating pollution to surface or ground water.</li> <li>• Temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature &amp; extremes) due to climate change.</li> <li>• Droughts and decreases in precipitation due to climate change.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diffuse and point source pollution may be having localised impacts on populations of <i>L. planeri</i>. There has been a 3% reduction in river water quality in the national territory since 2015 (EPA, 2018) and the main sources of nutrient inputs are agriculture (slurry and chemical fertilisers) and sewage (waste water treatment plants).</li> </ul>	<p>groundwater contamination or significant runoff (sediments or hydrocarbons) from the proposed site that would enter any watercourse or drainage system that is hydrologically connected to the SAC.</p>
<p>[1099] River Lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hydropower (dams, weirs, run-off-the-river), including infrastructure.</li> <li>• Increases or changes in precipitation due to climate change.</li> <li>• Application of natural fertilisers on agricultural land.</li> <li>• Application of synthetic (mineral) fertilisers on agricultural land.</li> <li>• Drainage for use as agricultural land.</li> <li>• Shipping lanes, ferry lanes and anchorage infrastructure (e.g., canalisation, dredging).</li> <li>• Temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature &amp; extremes) due to climate change.</li> <li>• Droughts and decreases in precipitation due to climate change.</li> </ul>	<p>River lamprey may be adversely impacted upon by sedimentation and water pollution.</p> <p><u>Key Conservation Measures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce impact of hydropower operations and infrastructure.</li> <li>• Manage changes in hydrological and coastal systems and regimes for construction and development.</li> </ul>	<p>No potential for a significant impact on water quality as there is no potential for significant groundwater contamination or significant runoff (sediments or hydrocarbons) from the proposed site that would enter any watercourse or drainage system that is hydrologically connected to the SAC.</p>

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING**  
**NO. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**

<b>CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES (NPWS 2011)</b>	<b>THREATS AND PRESSURES (NPWS 2019)</b>	<b>KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT</b>
<p>[1106] Atlantic Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) causing reduction of species/prey populations.</li> <li>• Freshwater fish and shellfish harvesting (recreational).</li> <li>• Bycatch and incidental killing (due to fishing and hunting activities).</li> <li>• Other invasive alien species (other than species of Union concern).</li> <li>• Temperature changes (e.g., rise of temperature &amp; extremes) due to climate change.</li> <li>• Droughts and decreases in precipitation due to climate change.</li> </ul>	<p>Salmon, particularly juveniles and spawning beds, are sensitive to sedimentation and water pollution. A potential deterioration in Water Quality* could impact on this species.</p> <p><u>Key Conservation Measures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the use of natural fertilisers and chemicals in agricultural (plant and animal) production.</li> <li>• Reduce/eliminate point pollution to surface or ground waters from agricultural activities.</li> <li>• Reduce diffuse pollution to surface or ground waters from agricultural activities.</li> <li>• Adapt/change forest management and exploitation practices.</li> <li>• Reduce diffuse pollution to surface or ground waters from forestry activities.</li> <li>• Management of professional /commercial fishing (including shellfish and seaweed harvesting).</li> <li>• Management of hunting, recreational fishing and recreational or commercial harvesting or collection of plants.</li> <li>• Control/eradication of illegal killing, fishing, and harvesting.</li> </ul>	<p>No potential for a significant impact on water quality as there is no potential for significant groundwater contamination or significant runoff (sediments or hydrocarbons) from the proposed site that would enter any watercourse or drainage system that is hydrologically connected to the SAC.</p>



**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING**  
**NO. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**

<b>CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES (NPWS 2011)</b>	<b>THREATS AND PRESSURES (NPWS 2019)</b>	<b>KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS</b>	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage water abstraction for public supply and for industrial and commercial use.</li> <li>• Support conservation measures in countries outside the EU.</li> </ul>	
[1355] Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> )	None listed	<p>A significant impact on water quality could indirectly impact upon this qualifying interest by causing a reduction in prey populations and availability.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Key Conservation Measures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The network of mammal underpasses on new roads are examples of positive measures that have been taken to reduce otter roadkill.</li> <li>• Diffuse and point-source pollution of freshwaters and coastal waters is likely to impact otters indirectly through changes to prey abundance.</li> </ul>	<p>No potential for a significant impact on water quality as there is no potential for significant groundwater contamination or significant runoff (sediments or hydrocarbons) from the proposed site that would enter any watercourse or drainage system that is hydrologically connected to the SAC.</p>

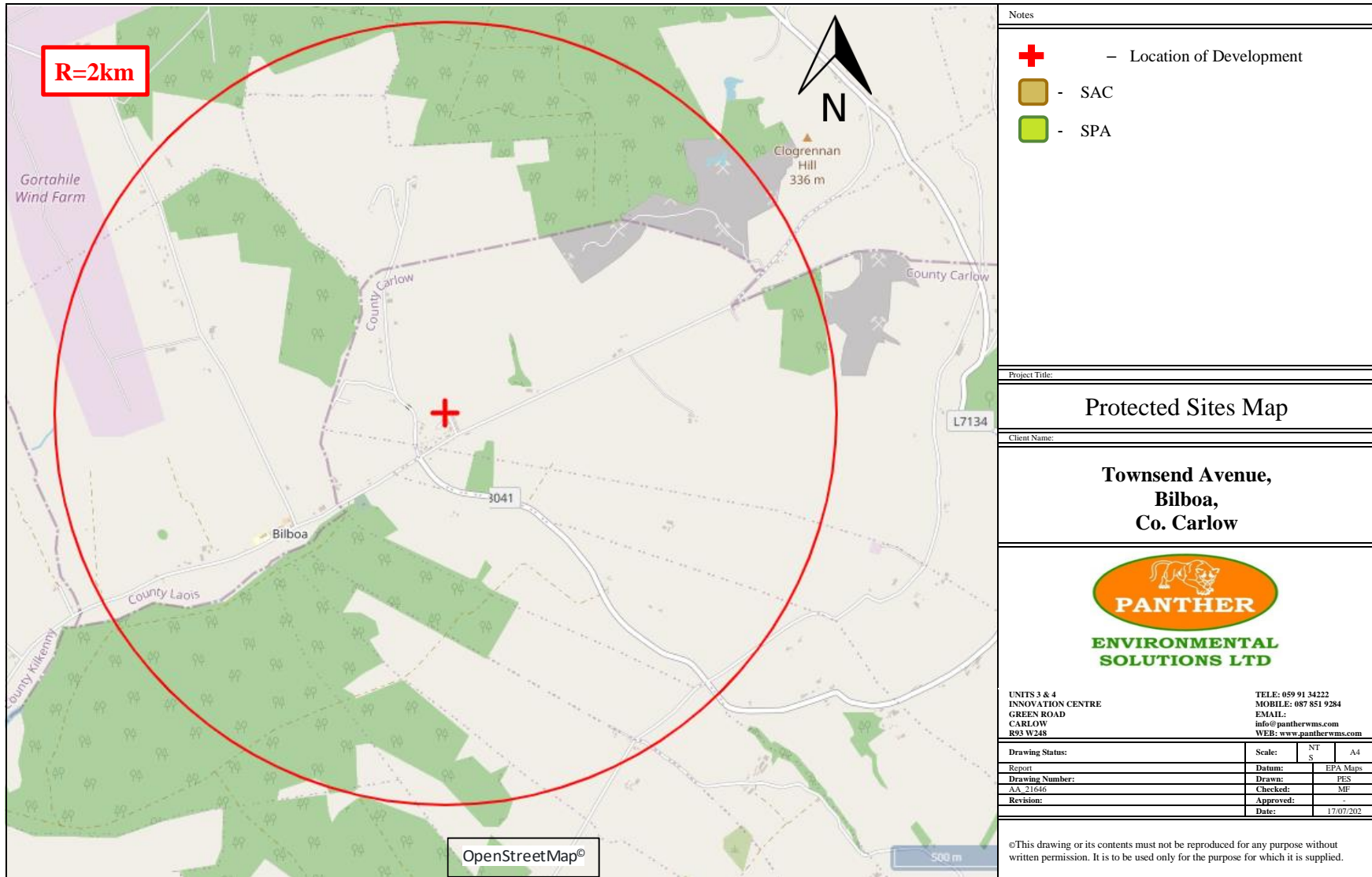
\* See Table 5.1 for Water Quality Targets set in Conservation Objectives

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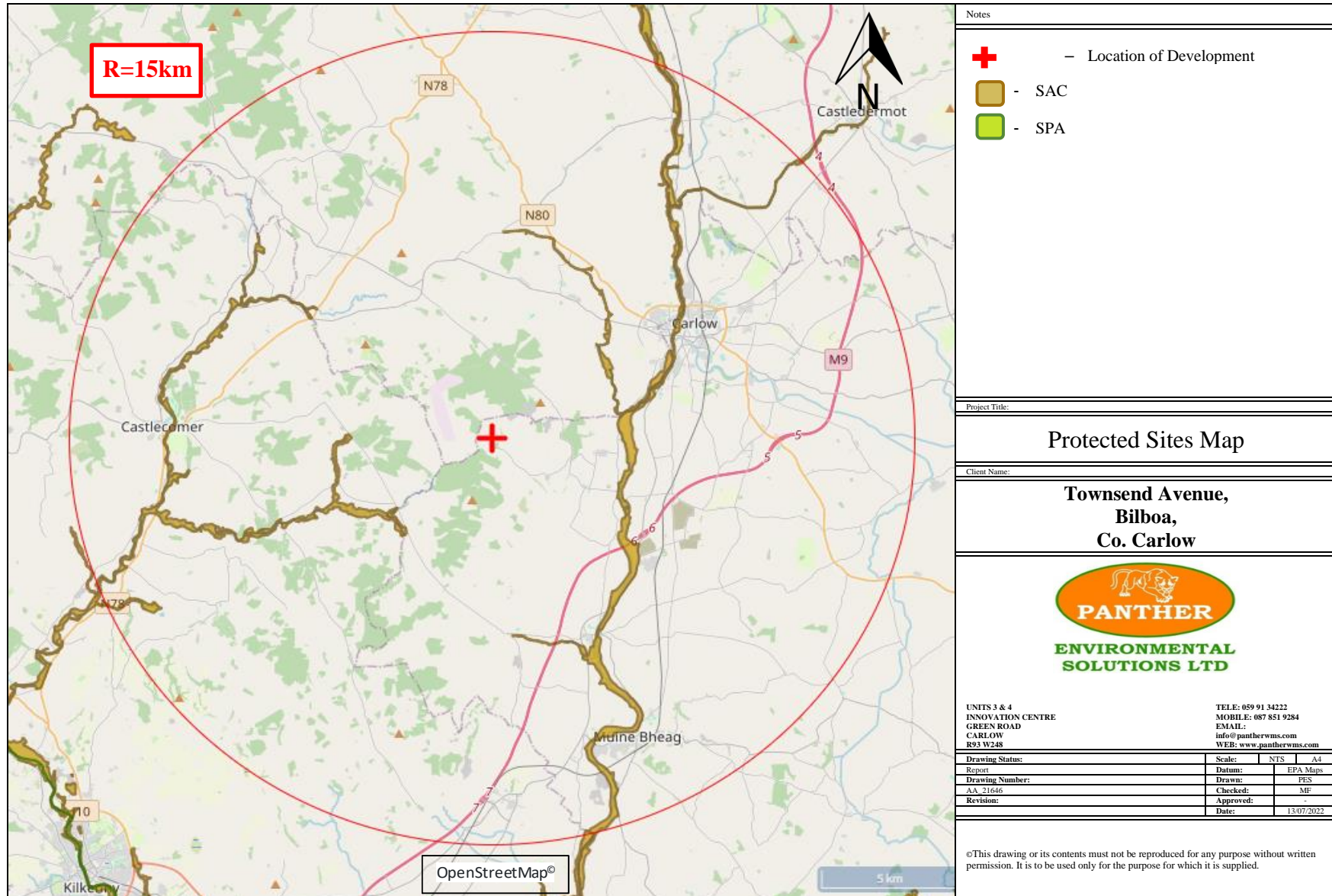
**APPENDIX C**  
**PROTECTED SITES AND SITE PLANS**

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**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING  
No. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**



APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING  
 No. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW



Notes

- + - Location of Development
- SAC
- SPA

Project Title:

**Protected Sites Map**

Client Name:

**Townsend Avenue,  
 Bilboa,  
 Co. Carlow**



UNITS 3 & 4  
 INNOVATION CENTRE  
 GREEN ROAD  
 CARLOW  
 R93 W248

TELE: 059 91 34222  
 MOBILE: 087 851 9284  
 EMAIL:  
 info@pantherwms.com  
 WEB: www.pantherwms.com

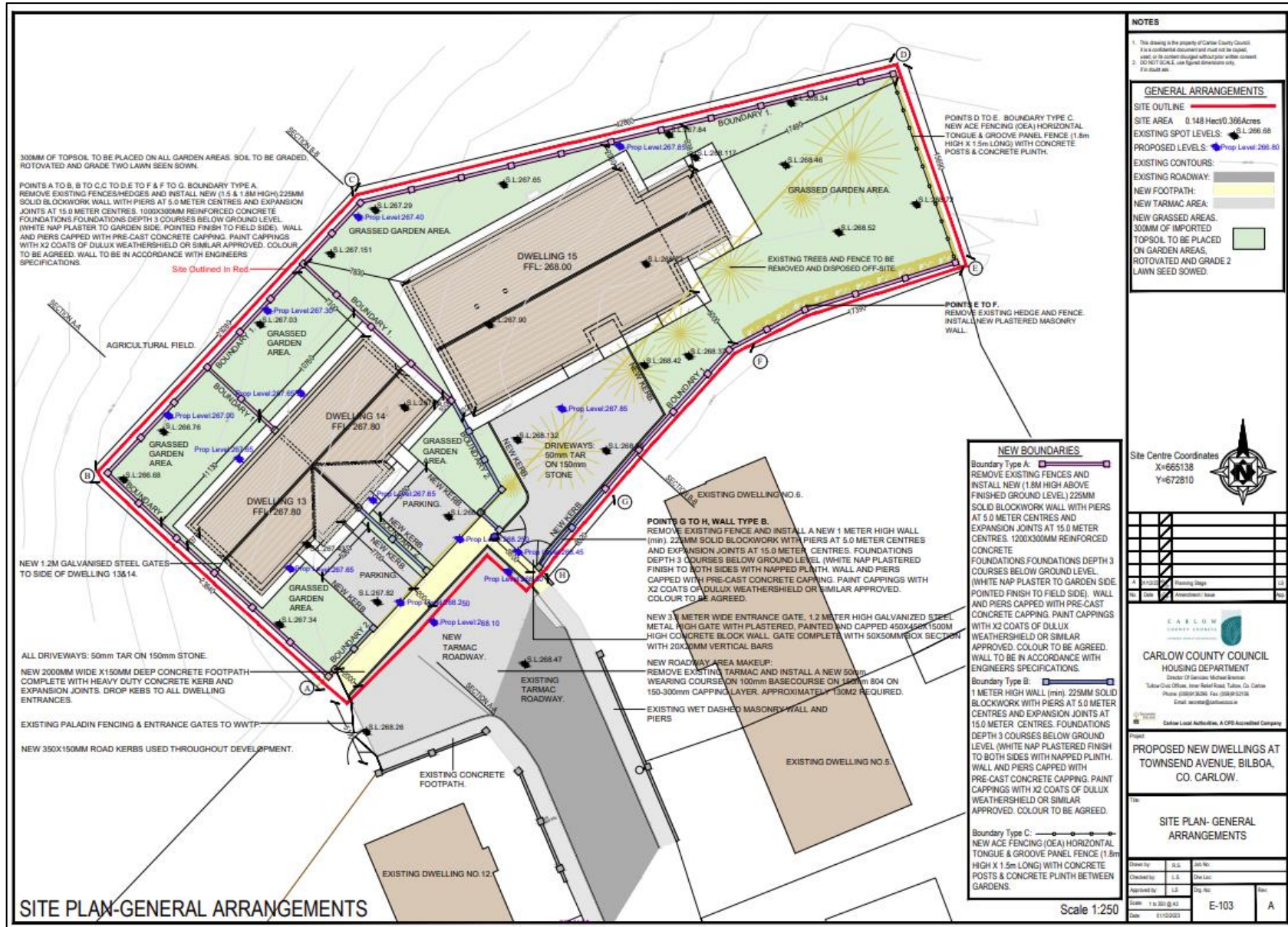
Drawing Status:	Scale:	NTS	A4
Report:	Datum:	EPA Maps	
Drawing Number:	Drawn:	PES	
AA: 21646	Checked:	MF	
Revision:	Approved:		
	Date:	13/07/2022	

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# APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING

## No. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW



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**GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS**

SITE AREA: 0.148 Hect(0.366 Acres)  
 SITE OUTLINE: [Red line]  
 EXISTING SPOT LEVELS: [Symbol] S.L. 266.68  
 PROPOSED LEVELS: [Symbol] Prop. Level: 266.80  
 EXISTING CONTOURS: [Symbol]  
 EXISTING ROADWAY: [Symbol]  
 NEW FOOTPATH: [Symbol]  
 NEW TARMAC AREA: [Symbol]  
 NEW GRASSED AREAS: [Symbol]  
 300MM OF IMPORTED TOPSOIL TO BE PLACED ON GARDEN AREAS, ROTOVATED AND GRADE 2 LAWN SEED SOWN.

Site Centre Coordinates:  
 X=665138  
 Y=672810

1:1000	Planning Stage	CS
1:250	Preliminary Issue	MS

**CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**  
 HOUSING DEPARTMENT  
 Director: Clodagh McKeown  
 Tel: 051 234 711 Fax: 051 234 712  
 Email: carlow@carlowcoco.ie

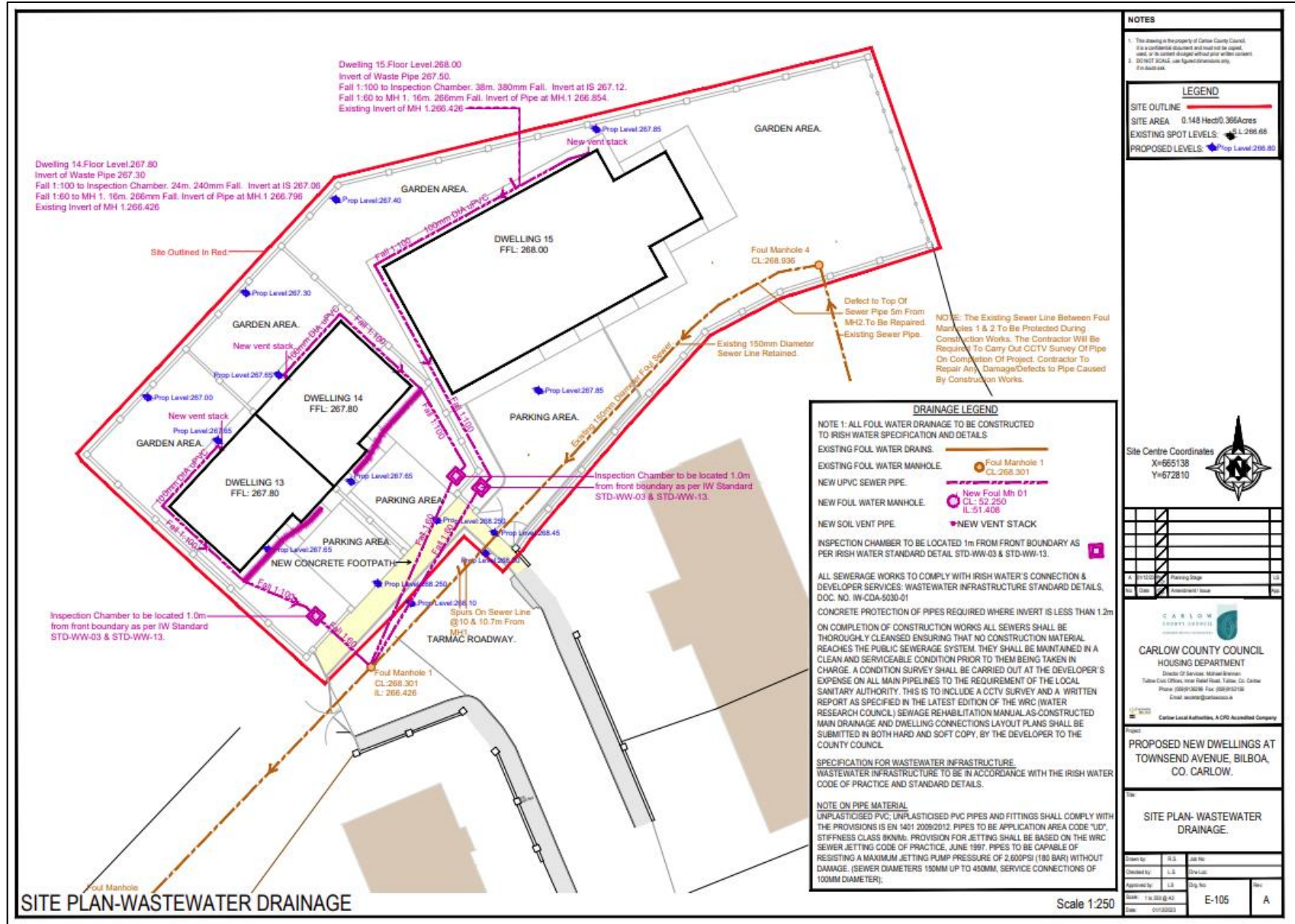
**PROPOSED NEW DWELLINGS AT TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW.**

**SITE PLAN - GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Drawn by	J.S.	Job No.	
Checked by	L.S.	Disc. Loc.	
Approved by	L.S.	City No.	
Date	18/05/2017	Job No.	E-103
Scale	1:250/200		A

# APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING

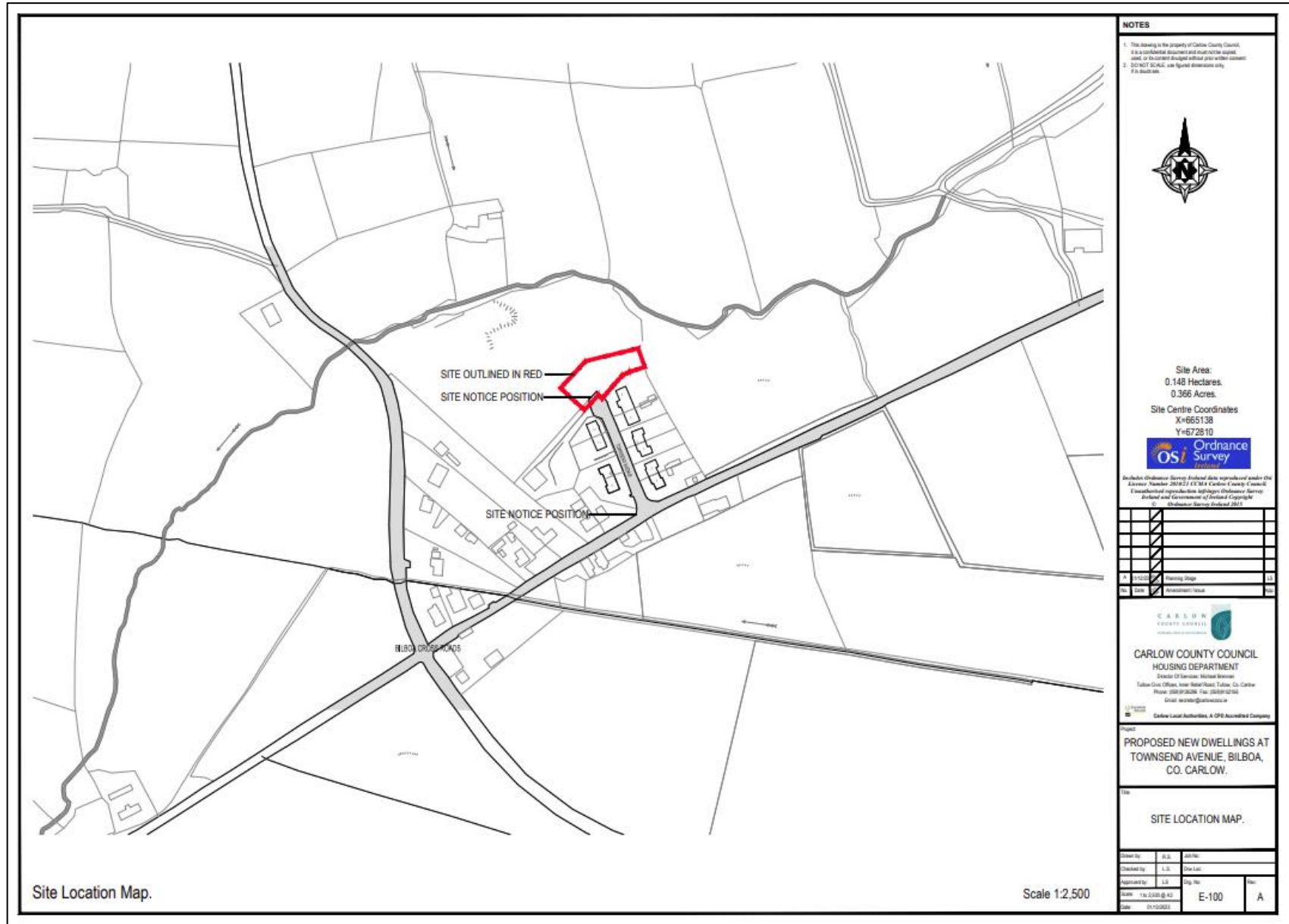
## No. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW





# APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING

## No. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW



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  2. DO NOT SCALE, use figured dimensions only.
  3. For Details.



Site Area:  
0.148 Hectares.  
0.366 Acres.

Site Centre Coordinates  
X=665138  
Y=672810



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**CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

**HOUSING DEPARTMENT**

Service of Services Section Member

Tuburagh Office, Inver-Ross/Ross, Tuburagh, Co. Carlow

Phone: 0506 878288 Fax: 0506 878288

Email: [services@carlowcc.ie](mailto:services@carlowcc.ie)

Carlow Local Authorities, A CIPR Accredited Company

**PROPOSED NEW DWELLINGS AT TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW.**

**SITE LOCATION MAP.**

Drawn by:	J.S.	Scale:	1:2,500
Checked by:	J.S.	Drawn:	
Approved by:	J.S.	Proj. No.:	
Date:	16.03.2013	Sheet:	E-100
Rev:	01/03/2013	Scale:	A



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**APPENDIX D**  
**PHOTO LOG**

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**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING**  
**NO. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW**



Plate 1: View towards site facing south



Plate 2: View of site facing north west



Plate 3: Unnamed watercourse – FW1 habitat



Plate 4: Eroding/upland rivers (FW1) habitat

Notes:

**APPENDIX D**  
**PHOTO LOG**



**ENVIRONMENTAL  
 SOLUTIONS LTD**

UNITS 3 & 4  
 INNOVATION  
 CENTRE  
 GREEN ROAD  
 CARLOW

TELEPHONE: 059 91 34222  
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 WEB: [www.pantherwms.com](http://www.pantherwms.com)

file location:	scale:	N/A	A4
drawing status: REPORT	datum:	N/A	
	drawn:	PES	
drawing no.	rev	checked:	MF
AA_21646	A	approved:	-
		date:	14/07/2022

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APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING  
 No. 13-15, TOWNSEND AVENUE, BILBOA, CO. CARLOW



Plate 5: Treeline (WL2) habitat



Plate 6: Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3) at site entrance



Plate 7: Dry calcareous and neutral grassland (GS1) habitat



Plate 8: View towards site facing south (outside site boundary)

Notes:

APPENDIX D  
 PHOTO LOG



UNITS 3 & 4  
 INNOVATION  
 CENTRE  
 GREEN ROAD  
 CARLOW

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 WEB: [www.panthenwms.com](http://www.panthenwms.com)

file location:	scale:	N/A	A4
drawing status:	REPORT	datum:	N/A
		drawn:	PES
drawing no.	rev	checked:	MF
AA_21646	A	approved:	-
		date:	14/07/2022

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