



## **APPENDIX 1**

### **APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT**

## **Article 6 (3) Appropriate Assessment Screening Report**

Further Information  
Response – March 2021

Croagh Wind Farm, County  
Leitrim/Sligo





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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

MKO has been appointed to provide the information necessary to allow the competent authority to conduct an Article 6(3) Screening for Appropriate Assessment of the proposed Croagh Wind Farm on the Leitrim/Sligo border (the proposed development).

The requirements for “Appropriate Assessment” (AA) are set out in Article 6 of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive). According to the Habitats Directive, an AA is required of the implications for the European site concerned of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with any other plans or projects prior to its approval, and to take into account the cumulative effects which result from the combination of that plan or project with other plans or projects (in-combination effects) in view of the European site’s conservation objectives. European Sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive, Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (the Birds Directive) and candidate SACs (cSACs) or proposed SPAs (pSPAs), all of which are afforded the same level of protection as fully adopted sites.

The purpose of the screening stage is to determine, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, alone and in-combination with other plans or projects, could have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. There is no necessity to establish such an effect; it is merely necessary for the competent authority to determine that there may be such an effect. The need to apply the precautionary principle in making any key decisions in relation to the tests of AA has been confirmed by the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on a European site may be excluded.

The current project is not directly connected with, or necessary for, the management of any European Site consequently the project has been subject to the Appropriate Assessment Screening process.

The assessment in this report is based on a desk study and field surveys undertaken between 2017 and 2020. It specifically assesses the potential for the proposed development to result in significant effects on European sites in the absence of any best practice, mitigation or preventative measures.

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared in accordance with the European Commission’s Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018) as well as the Department of the Environment’s Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010).

In addition to the guidelines referenced above, the following relevant documents were also considered in the preparation of this report:

1. Council of the European Commission (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Official Journal of the European Communities. Series L 20, pp. 7-49.
2. EC (2000) Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

3. *EC (2007) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence. Opinion of the commission.*
4. *EC (2013) Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. European Commission.*

## 1.2 Appropriate Assessment

### 1.2.1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Screening is the process of determining whether an Appropriate Assessment is required for a plan or project. Under Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, screening must be carried out by the Competent Authority. As per Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended 'A screening for appropriate assessment shall be carried out by the competent authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site'. The Competent Authority's determination as to whether an Appropriate Assessment is required must be made on the basis of objective information and should be recorded. The Competent Authority may request information to be supplied to enable it to carry out screening.

Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on a European site may be excluded. The threshold at this stage is a very low one and operates as a trigger in order to determine whether an Appropriate Assessment (AA) must be undertaken by the competent authority on the implications of the project for the conservation objectives of a European site. Therefore, where significant effects are likely, uncertain or unknown at screening, an AA will be required. Screening determines whether AA is necessary by examining:

- a. Whether a plan or project can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the European site; and
- b. The possible significant effects of a project or plan, either alone or in-combination with other projects or plans, on a European site in view of its conservation objectives, and considering whether these effects will be significant.

The need for Stage Two AA arises where the first stage (or screening process) has either determined (or it was at least implicitly accepted) that the project, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on a European site. Thus, a Stage Two AA is a focused and detailed examination, analysis and evaluation carried out by the competent authority of the implications of the plan or project, alone and in-combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of a European site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

The term Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is defined in legislation<sup>1</sup>. An NIS, where required, should present the data, information and analysis necessary to reach a definitive determination as to 1) the implications of the plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, for a European site in view of its conservation objectives, and 2) whether there will be adverse effects on the integrity of a European site. The NIS should be underpinned by best scientific knowledge, objective information and by the precautionary principle.

This Article 6(3) Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared in compliance with the provisions of section 177U of the Planning & Development Act 2010 as amended.

### 1.2.2 Statement of Authority

This report has been prepared by David McNicholas and Pat Roberts (B.Sc. Environmental Science, MCIEEM). David McNicholas has over 9 years' professional ecological consultancy experience and is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Pat has over 14 years' experience in ecological management and assessment. The baseline ecological surveys were undertaken by David McNicholas (BSc., MSc., MCIEEM) and James Owens (BSc., MSc.). James has over 4 years' consultancy experience and is a competent expert in undertaking ecological surveys.

### 1.2.3 Data Collected to Carry Out Assessment

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

- Review of NPWS Site Synopses, Conservation Objectives for the European Sites
- Review of 2019, 2013 and 2007 EU Habitats Directive (Article 17<sup>2</sup>) Reports and EU Birds Directive (Article 12<sup>3</sup>) Reports.
- Review of online web-mappers: National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), EPA, Water Framework Directive (WFD),
- Review of specially requested records from the NPWS Rare and Protected Species Database for the hectads which overlap with the study area.
- Review of OS maps and aerial photographs of the site of the proposed project.
- Review of relevant databases including National Biodiversity Ireland Database and available literature of previous surveys conducted in the area.
- Review of other plans and projects within the area.
- MKO field assessments and bird surveys carried out between 2017 and 2020 and as provided in full in the EIAR and NIS.

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<sup>2</sup> NPWS, 2020, *The status and trends of Ireland's bird species – Article 12 Reports*, Online, Available at: <https://www.npws.ie/status-and-trends-ireland%E2%80%99s-bird-species-%E2%80%93-article-12-reporting> Accessed 31.01.2021

<sup>3</sup> NPWS, 2020, *The status and trends of Ireland's bird species – Article 12 Reports*, Online, Available at: <https://www.npws.ie/status-and-trends-ireland%E2%80%99s-bird-species-%E2%80%93-article-12-reporting> Accessed 31.01.2021

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Site Location

The proposed development site is located in an upland area on the north-eastern slopes of Carrane Hill on the boundary of Counties Leitrim and Sligo. The main wind farm infrastructure is located approximately 3.8 kilometres west of Drumkeeran and approximately 7.5 kilometres southeast of Dromahair, see Figure 2.1. The Grid Reference coordinates for the approximate centre of the site are E 584840 N 823450. Figure 2.1 also shows the location of the proposed haul route, grid connection and associated substation.

The Proposed Development layout makes maximum use of the existing access road and tracks within the site. The site of the proposed development is currently accessed, from the R280 to the west, via the local road network. This application includes for the construction of:

- a link road between the R280 in the village of Drumkeeran and the L4282 in the townland of Derryboffin; and,
- a construction phase access road between the L4282 at Derrycullinan and the same local road at Bargowla.

The Study Area, including all lands within the site boundary, covers an area of approximately 800 hectares as shown in Figure 2.1.

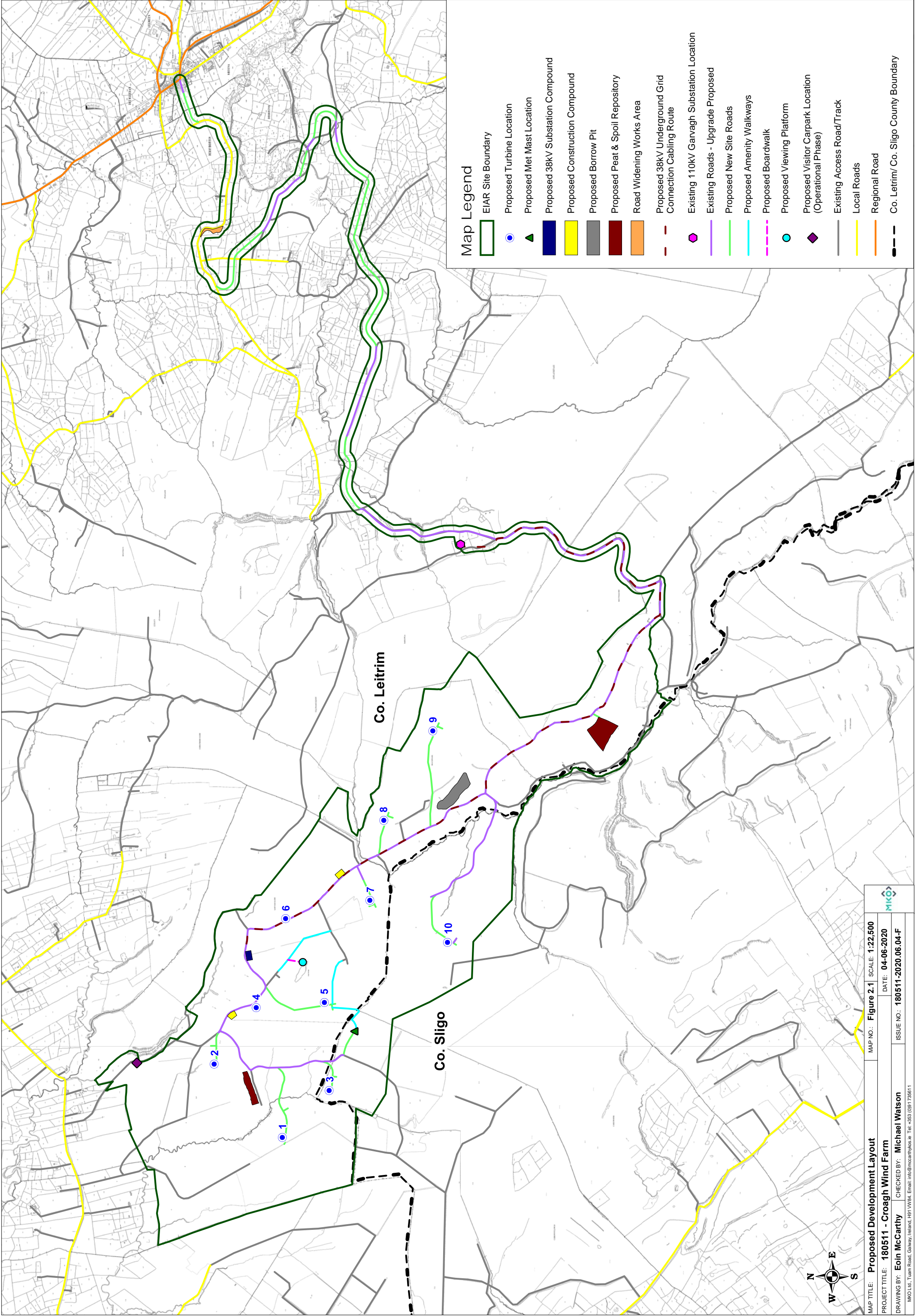
### 2.2 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

#### 2.2.1 Description of the project

The Proposed Development comprises:

- i. Construction of 10 No. wind turbines with a maximum overall blade tip height of up to 170 metres, and associated hardstand areas;*
- ii. 1 no. 38kV permanent electrical substation including a control building with welfare facilities, all associated electrical plant and equipment, security fencing, all associated underground cabling, waste water holding tank and all ancillary works;*
- iii. 1 no. permanent Meteorological Mast with a maximum height of up to 100 metres;*
- iv. All associated underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the turbines to the proposed wind farm substation;*
- v. All works associated with the connection of the proposed wind farm to the national electricity grid, via underground cabling to the existing Garvagh substation;*
- vi. Upgrade of existing tracks and roads, provision of new site access roads and hardstand areas;*
- vii. The partial demolition and alteration of two agricultural buildings in the townlands of Sheena and associated junction access and road works to the existing yard, agricultural buildings and agricultural lands in the townlands of Sheena and Derryboffin to provide a link road primarily for construction traffic off the R280. This link road will be used for the delivery of abnormal loads to the site during the construction period and may be used during the operational period if necessary or to facilitate the decommissioning of the wind farm. Following construction, access to the link road will be closed off and the yard/agricultural building will revert to its use for agricultural purposes except if and when required for delivery of abnormal loads during the operational period of the windfarm or to facilitate the decommissioning of the wind farm;*
- viii. 1 no. borrow pit;*
- ix. 2 no. peat and spoil repository areas*
- x. 2 no. temporary construction compounds;*
- xi. Recreation and amenity works, including marked trails, boardwalk and viewing area provision of a permanent amenity car park, and associated recreation and amenity signage*
- xii. Site Drainage;*





- xiii. Permanent Signage;*
- xiv. Ancillary Forestry Felling to facilitate construction and operation of the proposed development; and*
- xv. All associated site development works*

This application seeks a ten-year planning permission and 30 year operational life from the date of commissioning of the entire wind farm.

The layout of the Proposed Development has been designed to minimise the potential environmental effects of the wind farm, while at the same time maximising the energy yield of the wind resource passing over the site. A constraints study, described in Section 3.5.1 of the accompanying EIAR, has been carried out to ensure that turbines and ancillary infrastructure are located in the most appropriate areas of the site. The Proposed Development layout makes maximum use of the existing access roads and tracks within the site.

The overall layout of the Proposed Development is shown on Figure 2.1. This drawing shows the proposed locations of the wind turbines, electricity substation, borrow pit, construction compounds, internal roads layout, the construction access roads and the main site entrance. Detailed site layout drawings of the Proposed Development are included in Appendix 6 of the accompanying Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

All elements of the proposed project, including grid connection, forestry felling and any works required on public roads to accommodate turbine delivery, have been assessed as part of this screening.

Each turbine will be connected to the on-site electricity substation via an underground 20 or 33kV (kilovolt) electricity cable. Fibre-optic cables will also connect each wind turbine to the wind farm control building at the onsite substation compound. The electricity and fibre-optic cables running from the turbines to the onsite substation compound will be run in trenches that will be approximately 1.3 metres in depth and 0.6m in width, along the sides of roadways. The route of the cable ducts will follow the access track to each turbine location and are visible on the site layout drawings, Figure 2.1. The proposed wind farm will connect to the National Grid via an underground cable contained within ducting between the proposed onsite substation and the existing 110 kV Garvagh substation. The proposed underground cabling will leave the proposed onsite substation and will continue in a southerly direction along an existing forestry road within the proposed wind farm site. The cable route will exit the proposed wind farm site to the south and follow the existing local road north before following a short access road to the Garvagh substation. The entire route will measure approximately 6.1 kilometres in length.

It is proposed to construct clear-span watercourse crossings along the access roads to Turbine No. 1 and Turbine No. 10 using corrugate metal arches. It is proposed that these crossings will be constructed using a corrugated metal arch and appropriate backfill. A further four new water course crossings will be required as part of the proposed development. It is proposed that these crossings will be constructed using bottomless, pre-cast concrete structures.

Nine watercourse crossing locations were identified along the cable route. All of the watercourse crossings identified are culverts and no bridge crossings have been identified. It is proposed to cross all watercourses using open trenching with either an undercrossing or an overcrossing, depending on the depth of the culvert. There will be no requirement for in-stream works. Further details of the construction methodology is provided in Section 4.9.6 of the accompanying EIAR.

To provide access to and within the site of the Proposed Development, and to connect the wind turbines and associated infrastructure, approximately 10.9 kilometres of existing roads and tracks will need to be upgraded and approximately 6.9 kilometres of new access roads will need to be constructed.

A full description of the proposed development is provided in Section 4.3, Chapter 4 of the EIAR. This fully describes all elements of the project, including;



- > Wind turbine infrastructure,
- > Site roads,
- > Borrow pit,
- > Peat and soil management plan,
- > Electricity substation,
- > Site cabling,
- > Grid connection cabling,
- > Anemometry mast,
- > Temporary construction compound,
- > Tree felling and replanting,
- > Site activities,
- > Access and transport,
- > Amenity facilities,
- > Site drainage,
- > Construction phasing and timing,
- > Construction methodologies, and
- > Operation and decommissioning phases.

## 2.2.2 Description of the receiving environment

The bird surveys were undertaken to industry standard best practice i.e. Scottish Natural Heritage (2017) ‘*Recommended bird survey methods to inform impact assessment of onshore wind farms. Scottish Natural Heritage*’. As described in Section 7.6 ‘Field Survey Results’ of the Ornithology Chapter of the accompanying EIAR, none of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interest (SCIs) for any of the EU Designated Sites occurring within the likely zone of influence were recorded during the dedicated bird surveys undertaken at the site.

None of the Qualifying Interest bird species for which the surrounding SPAs within the likely zone of impact has been designated were recorded during these bird surveys of the site over the survey period September 2017 - September 2019.

### 2.2.2.1 Hydrological connectivity identified between the study area and downstream aquatic dependant EU Designated Sites within the likely zone of influence

The baseline hydrology of the site and surrounding area has been fully assessed in Chapter 9 ‘Water’ of the accompanying EIAR. This assessment is provided in full in Appendix 3 to the accompanying Natura Impact Statement (NIS). The relevant Sections of the hydrological assessment, which describe the baseline hydrological environment, are provided below:

*‘With respect to regional hydrology, the Proposed Development is located in 2 no. river basins and 3 no. regional surface water catchments. The southern half of the wind farm site is located in the Shannon River surface water catchment within the Shannon International River Basin District (SHIRBD). The northern half of the wind farm site is located in the Garvogue River surface water catchment. Both the Garvogue River and the Ballysadare River are located within the North Western International River Basin District (NWIRBD)’.*

*‘In terms of local hydrology, the southern half of the windfarm site is located in the Arigna River surface water catchment. The Arigna River flows into Lough Allen approximately 16km downstream of the site. The north half of the windfarm site is located in the Bonet River surface water catchment. The Bonet River flows into Lough Gill approximately 15km downstream of the site. Approximately 6km of the site access road drains directly to Lough Allen via the Owengar River’.*

A regional hydrology map is attached as **Figure 9.1**, Chapter 9 of the EIAR, provided in Appendix 3 of the NIS. Chapter 9 (Section 9.5.3.9) of the EIAR (Appendix 3 of the NIS) concludes that, in the absence of mitigation, there is no potential for the proposed development to result in significant effects on any downstream European Site within the River Shannon catchment. The conclusion, as provided in Chapter 9 of the EIAR is provided below:

*‘Due to the large downstream distance to Lough Forbes Complex SAC 43.1 km (approximately 61.0km surface water distance) and the fact that there are several lakes between the Proposed Development and the SAC (Lough Allen, Lough Corry, Lough Nanoge, Lough Tap, Lough Boderg and Lough Bofin), no effects on Lough Forbes are anticipated (even in the absence of mitigation) due to the large natural attenuation capacity of the watercourses and lakes’.*

Table 3.1 of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been informed by the hydrological evaluation of the site (Chapter 9 ‘Water’ of the accompanying EIAR) and provides an assessment of the EU Designated Sites that have been identified for further assessment in the accompanying NIS, based on hydrological connectivity.



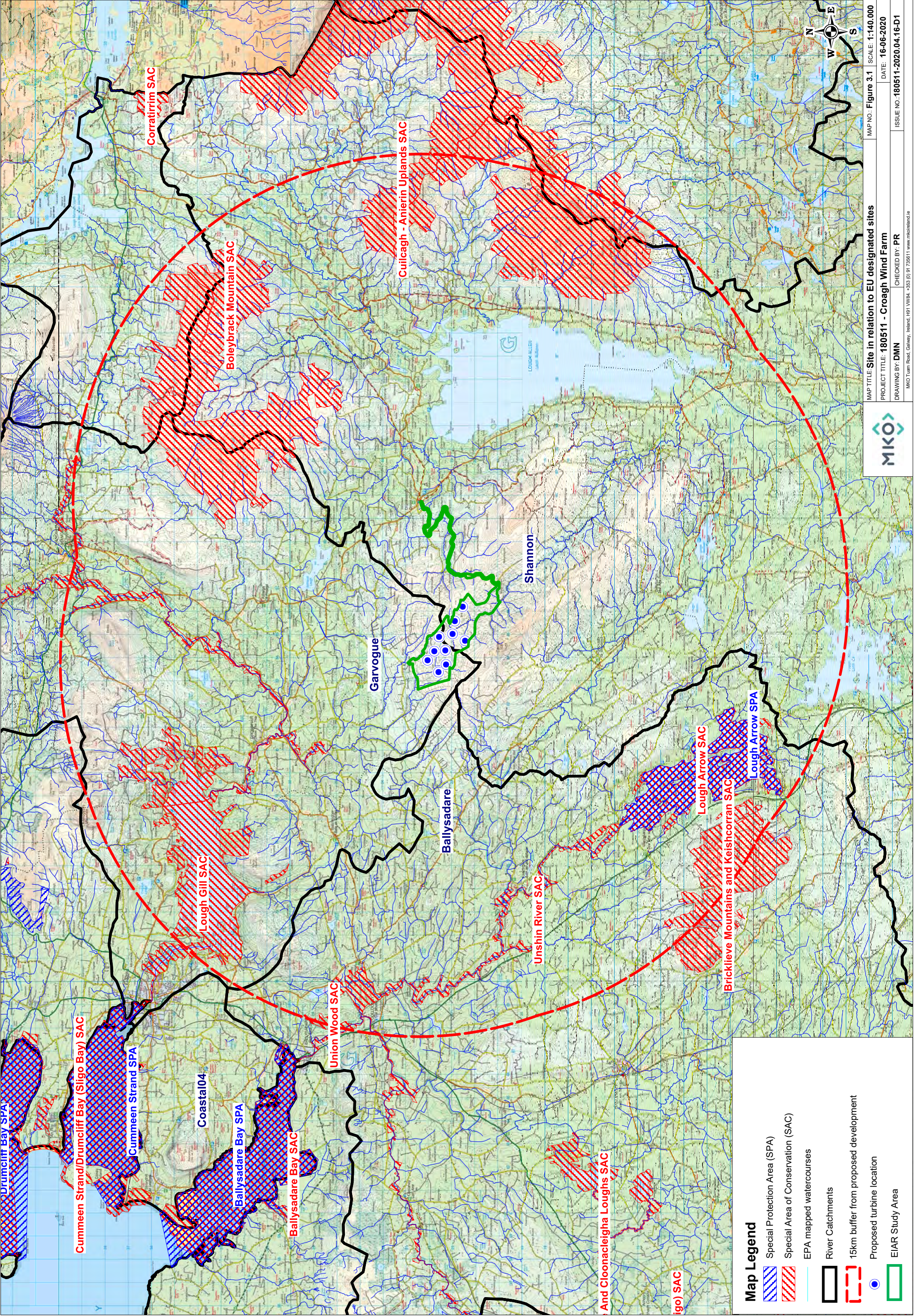
### 3. IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES

#### 3.1 Identification of the European Sites within the Likely Zone of Impact

The assessment in this report is based on a desk study and field surveys undertaken between 2017 and 2020. The following methodology was used to establish which European Sites are within the Likely Zone of Impact of the proposed development:

- Initially the most up to date GIS spatial datasets for European designated sites and water catchments were downloaded from the NPWS website ([www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)) and the EPA website ([www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)) and checked again on the 03/02/2021 prior to submission. The datasets were utilised to identify European Sites which could feasibly be affected by the proposed development.
- All European Sites within a distance of 15km surrounding the development site were identified and are shown on Figure 3.1. In addition, the potential for connectivity with European Sites at distances of greater than 15km from the proposed development was also considered in this initial assessment. The location of the proposed project in relation to Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA and Lough Forbes Complex SAC is also provided in Figure 3.1a.
- Hydrological catchment mapping was used to establish or discount potential hydrological connectivity between the site of the proposed development and any European Sites. The hydrological catchments are also shown in Figure 3.1.
- In relation to Special Protection Areas, in the absence of any specific European or Irish guidance in relation to such sites, the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Guidance, ‘Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPA)’ (2016) was consulted. This document provides guidance in relation to the identification of connectivity between proposed development and Special Protection Areas. The guidance takes into consideration the distances species may travel beyond the boundary of their SPAs and provides information on dispersal and foraging ranges of bird species which are frequently encountered when considering plans and projects.
- Table 3.1, provides details of all relevant European Sites as identified in the preceding steps and assesses which are within the likely Zone of Impact. The assessment considers any likely direct or indirect impacts of the proposed development, both alone and in combination with other plans and projects, on European Sites by virtue of the following criteria: size and scale, land-take, distance from the European Site or key features of the site, resource requirements, emissions, excavation requirements, transportation requirements and duration of construction, operation and decommissioning were considered in this screening assessment
- The site synopses and conservation objectives of these sites, as per the NPWS website ([www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)), were consulted and reviewed at the time of preparing this report 03/02/2021. Figure 3.1 shows the location of the proposed development in relation to all European sites within 15km of the proposed development.
- Where potential pathways for Significant Effect are identified, the site is included within the Likely Zone of Impact and considered in the Screening Assessment





MAP NO.: <b>Figure 3.1</b>		SCALE: 1:140,000
PROJECT TITLE: <b>180511 - Croagh Wind Farm</b>		DATE: <b>16-06-2020</b>
DRAWING BY: <b>DMN</b>	CHECKED BY: <b>PR</b>	
MKO Tullam Road, Galway, Ireland, H91 VM84, +353 (0) 91 735611 <a href="http://www.mkoireland.ie">www.mkoireland.ie</a>		ISSUE NO.: <b>180511-2020.04.16-D1</b>



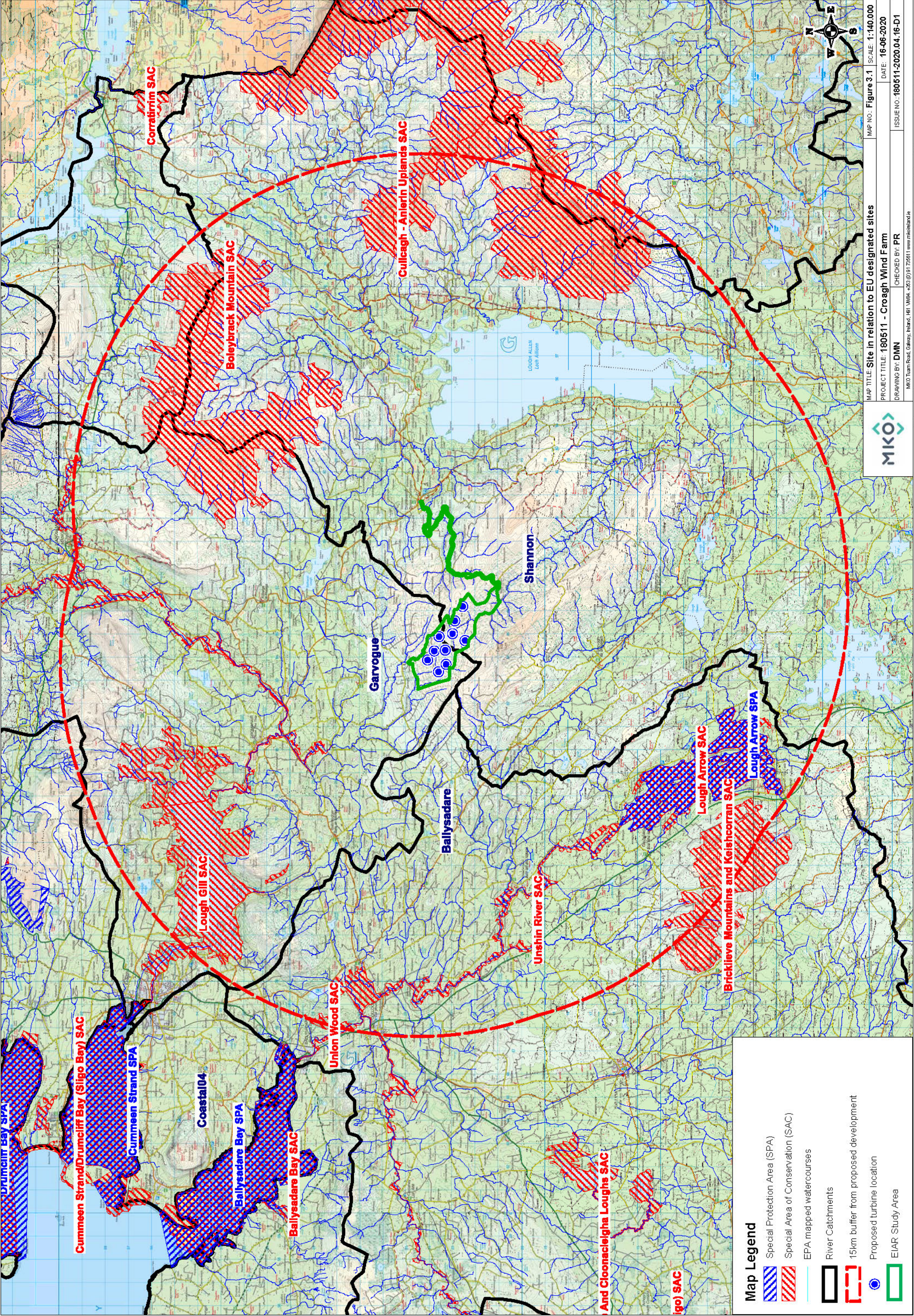




Table 3.1 Designated sites within the Likely Zone of Impact

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 03/02/2021	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
<b>Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)</b>				
<p>Lough Gill SAC [001976]</p> <p><b>Distance:</b> 4.4km (over 7km surface water distance downstream)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> - type vegetation [3150]</li> <li>➤ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>➤ Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</li> <li>➤ <i>Alluvial</i> forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]</li> <li>➤ <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]</li> <li>➤ <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</li> <li>➤ <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096]</li> <li>➤ <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1099]</li> <li>➤ <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]</li> <li>➤ <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</li> </ul>	<p>This site has the generic conservation objective:</p> <p><i>‘To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.’</i></p> <p>(NPWS Generic version 6.0, 2018)</p>	<p>The proposed development is located over 4.4 km from the SAC. There is therefore no potential for direct effects.</p> <p>Hydrological connectivity with the SAC has been identified via the Tullynascreen Stream and the Killanummery River that drain the northern part of the site, located within the Garvogue catchment. The SAC is located over 4.4km from the site and over 7km, hydrological distance, downstream of the proposed works at its closest.</p> <p>Following a review of the conservation objective supporting document, there is no potential for indirect effects via surface water pollution on the following QIs, due to either a) absence of connectivity with the works or b) nature of the habitats or species, i.e. terrestrial or groundwater dependent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>➤ Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</li> </ul> <p>Taking a precautionary approach, a potential pathway for indirect effects on the following aquatic QI's, in the form of</p>	<p>Yes – Potential for significant effect has been identified and there is a need to progress to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 03/02/2021)	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
			<p>deterioration of surface water as a result of pollution during construction, operation and decommissioning activities, exists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]</li> <li>➤ Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> - type vegetation [3150]</li> <li>➤ <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]</li> <li>➤ <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</li> <li>➤ <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096]</li> <li>➤ <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1099]</li> <li>➤ <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]</li> <li>➤ <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</li> </ul> <p><b>The SAC is considered to be within the Likely Zone of Impact and further assessment is required with regard to the above listed QIs of the SAC.</b></p>	
<p>Boleybrack Mountain SAC [002032]</p> <p><b>Distance:</b> 4.95 km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]</li> <li>➤ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</li> <li>➤ European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>➤ <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410]</li> <li>➤ Blanket bogs (* if active bog)</li> </ul>	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, August 2016) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project footprint is located entirely outside the designated site.</p> <p>The SAC is located upgradient of the proposed development. There is no surface water connectivity between the proposed development and the Designated Site.</p> <p>There is no pathway for indirect effects on the terrestrially based habitats for which the site is designated.</p>	<p>No – Potential for significant effect has been excluded and there is no need to progress to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 03/02/2021	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
	[7130]		<p>Due to the lack of connectivity between the proposed development and the European Site, no complete impact source-pathway-receptor chain exists.</p> <p><i>No pathways for significant effect on the European Site was identified. Thus it can be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the European site, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would therefore not have a significant effect on this European Site.</i></p>	
<p>Unshin River SAC [001898]</p> <p><b>Distance:</b> 8.5km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]</li> <li>➤ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>➤ Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>) [6410]</li> <li>➤ Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnus incanae</i>,</li> </ul>	<p>This site has the generic conservation objective:</p> <p><i>‘To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.’</i></p> <p>(NPWS Generic version 6.0, 2018)</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project footprint is located entirely outside the designated site.</p> <p>This SAC is located in a separate surface water catchment to the proposed development with no possible connectivity. Due to the lack of connectivity between the proposed development and the European Site, no complete impact source-pathway-receptor chain exists.</p> <p><i>No pathways for significant effect on the European Site was identified. Thus it can be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the European site, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans</i></p>	<p>No – Potential for significant effect has been excluded and there is no need to progress to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a> on the 03/02/2021	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Salicion albae</i> [91E0]</li> <li>➤ <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]</li> <li>➤ <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</li> </ul>		<i>and projects, would therefore not have a significant effect on this European Site.</i>	
<p>Cuircagh - Anierin Uplands SAC [000584]</p> <p><b>Distance:</b> 10.1 km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110]</li> <li>➤ Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]</li> <li>➤ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</li> <li>➤ European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>➤ Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</li> <li>➤ Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230]</li> <li>➤ Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> <li>➤ Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]</li> <li>➤ Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]</li> <li>➤ Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladanii</i>) [8110]</li> </ul>	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, September 2016) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at <a href="http://www.npws.ie">www.npws.ie</a></p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project footprint is located entirely outside the designated site.</p> <p>The SAC is located within a separate surface water sub-catchment on the eastern side of Lough Allen. There is therefore no hydrological connectivity between the SAC and the proposed development and thus no pathway for impact exists with regard to surface water dependent QI's.</p> <p>There is no pathway for indirect effects on the terrestrially based habitats for which the site is designated.</p> <p><i>No pathways for significant effect on the European Site was identified. Thus it can be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the European site, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would therefore not have a significant effect on this European Site.</i></p>	<p>No – Potential for significant effect has been excluded and there is no need to progress to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 03/02/2021	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]</li> <li>➤ <i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i> (Slender Green Feather-moss) [1393]</li> </ul>			
<p>Lough Arrow SAC [001673]</p> <p><b>Distance:</b> 9.2 km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140]</li> </ul>	<p>This site has the generic conservation objective:</p> <p><i>‘To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected’</i> (NPWS Generic version 6.0, 2018)</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project footprint is located entirely outside the designated site.</p> <p>The designated site is in a separate hydrological catchment to the proposed site. Therefore, no pathway for effect between the proposed development and the designated site exists. <b>No pathways for significant effect on the European Site was identified. Thus it can be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the European site, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would therefore not have a significant effect on this European Site.</b></p>	<p>No – Potential for significant effect has been excluded and there is no need to progress to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process.</p>
<p>Bricklieve Mountains and Keishcorran SAC [001656]</p> <p><b>Distance:</b> 12.7 km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Turloughs [3180]</li> <li>➤ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>➤ Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510]</li> </ul>	<p>This site has the generic conservation objective:</p> <p><i>‘To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which</i></p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project footprint is located entirely outside the designated site.</p> <p>The SAC is located in a separate hydrological catchment to the proposed development. There is no hydrological connectivity between the proposed development and the designated site.</p>	<p>No – Potential for significant effect has been excluded and there is no need to progress to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process.</p>



European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 03/02/2021	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>) [8120]</li> <li>➤ <i>Euphydrys aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]</li> <li>➤ <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]</li> </ul>	<p><i>the SAC has been selected.'</i></p> <p>(NPWS Generic version 6.0, 2018).</p>	<p>No pathway for indirect effect on either the terrestrial or the aquatic QIs exists.</p> <p><b><i>No pathways for significant effect on the European Site was identified. Thus it can be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the European site, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would therefore not have a significant effect on this European Site.</i></b></p>	
<p>Union Wood SAC [000638]</p> <p><b>Distance:</b> 14.6 km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</li> </ul>	<p>This site has the generic conservation objective:</p> <p><i>'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected'</i> (NPWS Generic version 6.0, 2018).</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project footprint is located entirely outside the designated site in a separate hydrological catchment.</p> <p>There is no pathway for indirect effects on the terrestrially based habitat for which the site is designated.</p> <p><b><i>No pathways for significant effect on the European Site was identified. Thus it can be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the European site, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would therefore not have a significant effect on this European Site.</i></b></p>	<p>No – Potential for significant effect has been excluded and there is no need to progress to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 03/02/2021	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
<p>Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC (000627)</p> <p><b>Distance:</b> 17.7 km (approximately 28.6 surface water distance)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Estuaries [1130]</li> <li>➤ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>➤ Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]</li> <li>➤ Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]</li> <li>➤ Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</li> <li>➤ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</li> <li>➤ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (*important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>➤ Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]</li> <li>➤ <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]</li> <li>➤ <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</li> <li>➤ <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1099]</li> <li>➤ <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]</li> </ul>	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, September 2013) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project footprint is located entirely outside the designated site.</p> <p>Hydrological connectivity with the SAC has been identified through the Killanummery River that joins the River Bonet further downstream. The River Bonet enters into Lough Gill before entering the SAC at Drumcliff Bay, via the Garavogue River, located approximately 28.6km hydrological distance downstream of the proposed development.</p> <p>Following a review of the conservation objective supporting document, there is no potential for indirect effects via surface water pollution on the following QIs due to either a) absence of connectivity with the works or b) nature of the habitats or species, i.e. terrestrial or groundwater dependent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]</li> <li>➤ Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]</li> <li>➤ Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</li> <li>➤ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</li> <li>➤ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</li> <li>➤ Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]</li> </ul>	<p>Yes – Potential for significant effect has been identified and there is a need to progress to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 03/02/2021)	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
			<p>➤ <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]</p> <p>Taking a precautionary approach, a potential pathway for indirect effects on the following aquatic QIs, in the form of deterioration of surface water as a result of pollution during construction activities, exists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>➤ Estuaries [1130]</li> <li>➤ <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]</li> <li>➤ <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</li> <li>➤ <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey)</li> </ul> <p><b>The SAC is considered to be within the Likely Zone of Impact and further assessment is required with regard to the above listed QIs of the SAC.</b></p>	
<p>Lough Forbes Complex SAC (001818)</p> <p><b>Distance:</b> 43.1 km (approximately 61.0km surface water distance)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> - type vegetation [3150]</li> <li>➤ Active raised bogs [7110]</li> <li>➤ Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]</li> <li>➤ Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150]</li> <li>➤ Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus</i></li> </ul>	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, May 2016) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project footprint is located entirely outside the designated site.</p> <p>There is no potential pathway for effect on the terrestrial habitats for which the SAC is designated.</p> <p>Surface water connectivity between the proposed development site and the SAC exists via the Arigna River and River Shannon. However, any potential pollutants would have to travel over 60km via the River Shannon and pass through a</p>	<p>No – Potential for significant effect has been excluded and there is no need to progress to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 03/02/2021	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
	<i>glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ( <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> ) [91E0]		<p>number of large waterbodies including Lough Allen, Lough Corry, Lough Nanoge, Lough Tap, Lough Boderg and Lough Bofin. Given the nature of the watercourses on the site, the attenuation effect of the intervening waterbodies as listed and the distance to the European Site, in the absence of any mitigation there is no potential for the proposed works to result in any significant effect thereon. This conclusion is confirmed in the detailed hydrological assessment that is provided in Chapter 9 of the EIAR with the relevant section from that chapter included in Section 3.1.1 below.</p> <p>This site is the closest European Site with downstream connectivity on the River Shannon. European Sites that are further downstream were considered in this assessment but the potential for the proposed development to result in significant effects thereon was discounted for the reasons described above.</p> <p><b><i>No pathways for significant effect on the European Site was identified. Thus it can be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the European site, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would therefore not have a significant effect on this European Site.</i></b></p>	

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 03/02/2021	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
Special Protection Area (SPA)				
<p>Lough Arrow SPA [004050]</p> <p><b>Distance:</b> 9.3km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004]</li> <li>Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061]</li> <li>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul>	<p>This site has the generic conservation objective:</p> <p><i>‘To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests of this SPA.’</i> (NPWS Generic version 6.0, 2018)</p> <p>This site has a second conservation objective:</p> <p><i>‘To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at Lough Arrow SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.’</i></p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project footprint is located entirely outside the designated site.</p> <p>The European Site is located in a separate hydrological catchment than the proposed development and therefore no potential pathways for surface water impacts on SCI's exist.</p> <p>These SCI species are strongly associated with the waterbodies and located over 9km from the SPA. As fully described in the Ornithology chapter (Chapter 7) of the accompanying EIAR for the proposed development, dedicated bird surveys were undertaken to industry standard best practice i.e. Scottish Natural Heritage (2017) ‘Recommended bird survey methods to inform impact assessment of onshore wind farms. Scottish Natural Heritage’. None of the SCI bird species for which the SPA has been designated were recorded during these bird surveys of the site over the survey period September 2017 - September 2019. Therefore, it is not considered that there is any significant movement of the SCI species for Lough Arrow SPA into, out of and between European sites in the vicinity of the proposed development site. Therefore, disturbance/displacement or collision risk related effects on SCI species have been excluded.</p> <p>It is also located outside the zone of sensitivity of any species that is listed as particularly sensitive to wind energy</p>	<p>No – Potential for significant effect has been excluded and there is no need to progress to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 03/02/2021	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
			<p>development in Mc Guinness et.al (2015).</p> <p><i>No pathways for significant effect on the European Site was identified. Thus it can be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the European site, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would therefore not have a significant effect on this European Site.</i></p>	
<p>Cummeen Strand SPA (004035)</p> <p><b>Distance:</b> 18.1km (approximately 29.1km surface water distance)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]</li> <li>➤ Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130]</li> <li>➤ Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]</li> <li>➤ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul>	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, September 2013) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project footprint is located entirely outside the designated site.</p> <p>Hydrological connectivity with the SPA has been identified via the Killanummery River that joins the River Bonet further downstream. The River Bonet enters into Lough Gill before entering the SPA at Drumcliff Bay, via the Garavogue River, located over 29 km hydrological distance downstream of the proposed development.</p> <p>Therefore, taking a precautionary approach the potential for deterioration of surface water quality affecting the supporting habitat of SCI species has been identified. The potential effect requires further assessment and will be considered under the Wetland and Waterbird [A999] conservation objective.</p> <p>The proposed development site does not offer suitable supporting habitat for the SCI species for which the SPA is</p>	<p>Yes – Potential for significant effect has been identified and there is a need to progress to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 03/02/2021	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
			<p>designated. In addition, the site is located over 18km from the proposed development. As the proposed development is located over 18km inland from the SPA, and due to the lack of suitable supporting habitat on site for the species, there is no potential for impact on the species as a result of disturbance/displacement or habitat loss. As fully described in Chapter 7 ‘Ornithology’ of the accompanying EIAR, dedicated bird surveys were undertaken to industry standard best practice i.e. Scottish Natural Heritage (2017) <i>‘Recommended bird survey methods to inform impact assessment of onshore wind farms. Scottish Natural Heritage’</i>. None of the SCI bird species for which the SPA has been designated were recorded during these bird surveys of the site over the survey period September 2017 - September 2019. Therefore, it is not considered that there is any significant movement of the SCI species for Cummeen Strand SPA into, out of and between European sites in the vicinity of the proposed development site. Therefore, disturbance/displacement or collision risk related effects on SCI species have been excluded. As the Wetland and Waterbird [A999] conservation objective has been screened in due to potential hydrological connectivity, the SCI bird species have been screened in for further assessment as this is the supporting habitat for these bird species.</p> <p><b>This site is considered to be within the Likely Zone of Impact and further assessment will be provided in a Natura Impact Statement.</b></p>	

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 03/02/2021)	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
<p>Ballykenney-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101)</p> <p><b>Distance:</b> 43.1 km (approximately 61.0km surface water distance)</p>	<p>➤ Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]</p>	<p>This site has the generic conservation objective:</p> <p><i>‘To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests of this SPA.’</i> (NPWS Generic version 6.0, 2018)</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects as the project footprint is located entirely outside the designated site.</p> <p>Surface water connectivity between the proposed development site and the SPA exists via the Arigna River and River Shannon. However, any potential pollutants would have to travel over 60km via rivers and pass through a number of large waterbodies including Lough Allen, Lough Corry, Lough Nanoge, Lough Tap, Lough Boderg and Lough Bofin. Given the nature of the watercourses on the site, the attenuation effect of the intervening waterbodies as listed and the distance to the European Site, in the absence of any mitigation there is no potential for the proposed works to result in any significant effect thereon. This conclusion is confirmed in the detailed hydrological assessment that is provided in Chapter 9 of the EIAR with the relevant section from that chapter included in Section 3.1.1 below.</p> <p>The proposed development site is located over 43.1 km from the EU designated site and is located significantly outside the foraging range (5-8km) of the SCI species (SNH, 2016). As fully described in Chapter 7 ‘Ornithology’ of the accompanying EIAR for the proposed development, dedicated bird surveys were undertaken to industry standard best practice i.e. Scottish Natural Heritage (2017) ‘Recommended bird survey methods to inform impact assessment of onshore wind farms. Scottish Natural Heritage’. No records of the Greenland white-fronted goose were</p>	<p>No – Potential for significant effect has been excluded and there is no need to progress to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process.</p>



European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 03/02/2021	Conservation Objectives	Likely Zone of Impact Determination	Possibility of Significant Effects? (If Yes Progress To Stage 2 Of AA Process)
			<p>recorded during these bird surveys over the survey period September 2017 - September 2019. Therefore, it is not considered that there is any significant movement of Greenland white-fronted goose from Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA into, out of and between European sites in the vicinity of the proposed development site. Therefore, disturbance/displacement or collision risk related effects on SCI species have been excluded.</p> <p>Additionally, the SPA is not designated for Wetland and Waterbirds. There is therefore no potential for significant effects as a result of the proposed development.</p> <p><i>No pathways for significant effect on the European Site was identified. Thus it can be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the European site, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would therefore not have a significant effect on this European Site. development to result in effects on this European Site was identified.</i></p>	

3.1.1

## Hydrological conclusions with regard to European Sites that are Located Downstream in the River Shannon Catchment

Chapter 9 (Section 9.5.3.9) of the EIAR concludes that, in the absence of mitigation, there is no potential for the proposed development to result in significant effects on any downstream European Site within the River Shannon catchment. This further confirms the findings of this AA Screening Report. The conclusion, as provided in Chapter 9 of the EIAR is provided below:

*‘Due to the large downstream distance to Lough Forbes Complex SAC 43.1 km (approximately 61.0km surface water distance) and the fact that there are several lakes between the Proposed Development and the SAC (Lough Allen, Lough Corry, Lough Nanoge, Lough Tap, Lough Boderg and Lough Bofin), no effects on Lough Forbes are anticipated (even in the absence of mitigation) due to the large natural attenuation capacity of the watercourses and lakes’.*

3.2

## European Sites with the Potential to be Significantly Affected by the Proposed Development

### Lough Gill SAC [001976]

A potential indirect pathway for effect in the form of surface water pollution/degradation was identified in relation to the following aquatic dependent QIs associated with Lough Gill SAC:

- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*) [91E0]
- Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition* - type vegetation [3150]
- *Austropotamobius pallipes* (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]
- *Petromyzon marinus* (Sea Lamprey) [1095]
- *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey) [1096]
- *Lampetra fluviatilis* (River Lamprey) [1099]
- *Salmo salar* (Salmon) [1106]
- *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355]

### Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC (000627)

An indirect potential pathway for effect in the form of surface water pollution was identified in relation to the following aquatic dependent QIs associated with Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC:

- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]
- Estuaries [1130]
- *Phoca vitulina* (Harbour Seal) [1365]
- *Petromyzon marinus* (Sea Lamprey) [1095]
- *Lampetra fluviatilis* (River Lamprey) [1099]

### Cummeen Strand SPA (004035)

The potential for deterioration of surface water quality affecting the supporting habitat of SCI species associated with Cummeen Strand SPA has been identified:

- Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]

3.3

## Likely Cumulative Impact of the Proposed Works on European Sites, in-combination with other plans and projects

Where the potential for significant effects on European Sites has been identified in the preceding sections of this document, there is potential for the proposed development to result in in-combination effect. This potential is addressed in the NIS that accompanies this application.

Where no pathway for effect on a particular European Site was identified, there is no potential for effects to occur as a result of the proposed development when considered on its own. Therefore, it cannot contribute to any in-combination effects on that site when considered in combination with other plans and projects and no further assessment is required.

## 4. **ARTICLE 6(3) APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING STATEMENT AND CONCLUSIONS**

### 4.1 **Concluding Statement**

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant data and information set out within this Screening Report, it cannot be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the following sites:

- Lough Gill SAC [001976]
- Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC (000627)
- Cummeen Strand SPA (004035)

As a result, an Appropriate Assessment is required, and a Natura Impact Statement has been prepared in respect of the proposed development in order to assess whether the proposed development will adversely impact the integrity of these European Sites.

No pathways for significant effect on any other European Site were identified. Thus it can be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on any other European Sites than those listed above.

5.

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