

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report



**Construction of a Combined Footway/Cycleway along the R280 at
Melvin Fields, Kinlough, Co Leitrim.**

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4th February 2022

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Introduction

Leitrim County Council proposes to construct a new footway and cycleway along the R280 north of Kinlough, Co. Leitrim. The main objective of this proposal is to provide walking and cycling infrastructure linking two housing developments to the village centre of Kinlough to discourage the use of motor vehicles for journeys to local amenities. The development will also aid in the reduction of traffic speed in the area.

The proposed development will consist of a combined footway/cycleway and associated public lighting along both sides of the R280, north of Kinlough, Co. Leitrim, from the end of the existing (outbound) footpath, extending for a distance of approximately 246 metres. The provision of the proposed footway/cycle way is aligned with the following policy and objectives of Leitrim County Councils Development Plan 2015 - 2021:

Policy 46

It is the policy of the Council to encourage safe walking and cycling by providing linear parks, footpaths, cycle paths and public lighting in towns and villages.

- **Objective 39**

It is an objective of the Council to ensure all towns and villages have adequate footpaths and public lighting.

Under article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) an Appropriate Assessment of plans or projects may be necessary, with respect to ecological implications of any project whether within or outside a designated site, which does not directly relate to the management of the site but may impact upon its conservation objectives.

Thus, the purpose of this Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening report is to consider whether, based on best scientific knowledge, this project will have potential impacts upon the conservation objectives of any Natura sites, and if so, the development where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects.

Natura Sites refer to Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) designated under the Habitat's Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPA's) designated under the Bird's Directive. These sites are protected habitats of Flora and Fauna of European importance.

It is also the policy of Leitrim County Council to take appropriate steps to avoid, in these areas, the deterioration of natural habitats of species as well as disturbance of the species for

which the areas have been designated, in so far as the disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC Directive.

This is outlined in the County Development plan 2015-2021 which states “ *it is the policy of the council to protect and conserve Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area including Candidate and Proposed areas*”

Following this screening, if it is found that this project may have an impact on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site, or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, then an Appropriate Assessment of the Project must be carried out.

2 Natura Sites

Natura sites are protected habitats for Flora and Fauna of European importance. They comprise of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) and Special Protected Areas (SPA's). Site synopses in respect to SAC's and SPA's relevant to Kinlough are listed below and are included in this report

3 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's)

These are prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) lists certain habitats and species that must be protected. Sites proposed for designation are called candidate special areas of conservation (cSAC) and are legally protected under the Habitats Directives and EU Regulations. Details of these sites will be formally designated by the Minister as SAC. The SAC's closest to Kinlough are indicated on the attached map and are listed below.

Special Areas of Conservation in adjacent 15 km of the proposed works

Site Code	Site Name
000428	Lough Melvin SAC
001976	Lough Gill SAC
002303	Dunmuckrum Turlough's SAC
000625	Bunduff Lough & Machair / Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC
000138	Durnesh Lough SAC
000623	Ben Bulbin Gleniff & Glenade Complex SAC
001919	Glenade Lough SAC
001403	Arroo Mountain SAC
001680	Streedagh Point Dunes SAC

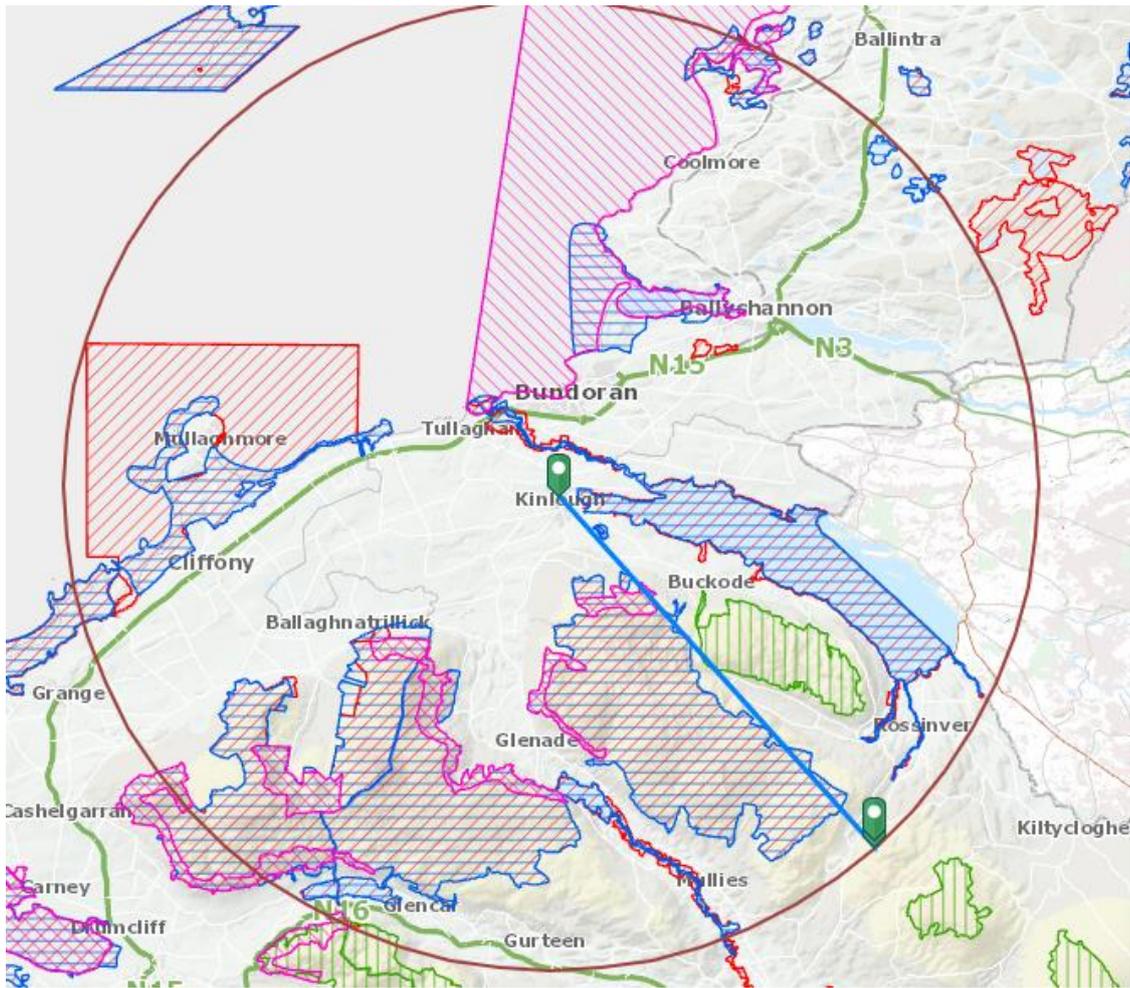
4 Special Protected Areas (SPA's)

These sites are areas of importance for birds (and often are also important for other types of wildlife). The EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) requires designation of SPA's for listed rare and vulnerable species, regularly occurring migratory species and wetlands, especially those of international importance, which attract large numbers of migratory birds each year. Any development in, near or adversely affecting an SPA should avoid any significant adverse impact on the feature for which the site has been designated. SPA's were given effect in Irish Law mainly under the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations 1985 (SI 291 of 1985)

The SPA's which relate to this proposed project in Kinlough are indicated on the attached map and listed below.

Site Code	Site Name
004187	Sligo Leitrim Uplands SPA
004151	Donegal Bay SPA

5 Map of Area (15km Radius)



1 Assessment Criteria/Screening Matrix

Description of the Project

Leitrim county Council proposes to construct a combined footway/cycleway and associated public lighting along both sides of the R280, north of Kinlough, Co. Leitrim, from the end of the existing (outbound) footpath, extending for a distance of approximately 246 metres.

The footway/cycleway will also consist of a 225mm wide concrete kerb with a macadam finished surface. Access will be provided via dished kerbing at each end of the scheme.

Public lighting- There are public lighting columns in place from the town centre extending as far as chainage 200meter. One additional lighting pole will be required.

There is existing drainage services in place however additional services may be required at constructions stage (i.e., drainage channels across existing vehicular entrances where challenging gradients are involved)

Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021

The provision of the proposed footway/cycleway is aligned with the following policy and objectives of the County Development Plan:

Policy 46

It is the policy of the Council to encourage safe walking and cycling by providing linear parks, footpaths, cycle paths and public lighting in towns and villages.

- **Objective 39**

It is an objective of the Council to ensure all towns and villages have adequate footpaths and public lighting.

Objective 113

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the provision of cycle lanes along public roads in urban/built up areas and in tourist areas, where appropriate and as funds allows

Describe the individual elements of this project that have potential for having significant effects on the Natura site.

This project has been devised to ensure that it will not give rise to significant adverse impact on the integrity of the SAC and the SPA in so far as the objectives and criteria for determining the needs of the site can be inferred from the relevant sites' synopsis.

Environmental and ecological best practice as outlined in the National Roads Authority publications and guidelines will be adhered to at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, the Guidelines for the Protection of Trees, Hedgerows and Scrub (NRA (2006), Guidelines on the Management of Noxious Weeds and Non Invasive Plant Species (NRA, 2010), with regard to the protection of riparian and wetland vegetation and habitats.

Removal of Mature Trees

No trees will be affected by these works

Removal of Hedgerows

No hedgerows will be affected by these works

Construction of walkway and cycleway

The volume of excavated material for the new walkway/cycleway is minimal. Waste material is top soil and sub soil. All spoil to be taken off site to a waste permitted facility in a timely manner to reduce any impact of silt run off. There will be no significant impact on any natura sites. Material and top soil storage areas will be cordoned off and stabilised outside of the SAC and SPA boundaries and away from any watercourse or drain to prevent the possible entry of suspended solids to the river.

The proposed works allows for proper planning and sustainable development of the area. All construction work will be undertaken in line with best practice, ensuring the minimisation of any impact of the surrounding environment.

Describe any likely direct/indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site

This project will not give rise to adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura site arising from its size, scale, area or land take.

Describe any likely direct/indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on Water Supply

The implementation of this project will not have any impact on drinking water in this area.

Describe any likely direct/indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on Emissions and waste

As described previously, any waste material generated by the works will be taken off-site to a waste permitted facility in a timely manner to reduce any potential for silt run off, thereby avoiding any significant impact on the SAC and SPA's as listed above. Material and top soil storage areas will be cordoned off and stabilised outside of the SAC and SPA boundaries and away from any watercourse or drain to prevent the possible entry of suspended solids to the river.

Due to the small-scale nature of this project, the emissions produced by vehicles/machinery involved in the construction work are deemed not to be significant.

Describe any likely direct/indirect or secondary impacts of excavation requirements for this project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects)

The minimal excavation required for this project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of the Natura sites. Waste material will be top soil and sub soil. All spoil will be taken off-site to a waste permitted facility in a

timely manner to reduce any potential for silt run off, thereby avoiding any significant impact on the SAC and SPA's as listed above.

Describe any likely changes to the Natura site arising as a result of reduction of the Habitat

This project will not require any land-take within the Natura Site

Describe any Habitat or Species Fragmentation as a result of this project

This project will not give rise to reduction of habitat or species fragmentation

Describe any Disturbance to Key Species as a result of this project

The Lough Melvin SAC, Lough Gill SAC, Dunmuckrum Turlough's SAC, Bunduff Lough & Machair / Trawalua / Mullaghmore SAC, Durnesh Lough SAC, Ben Bulbin Gleniff & Glenade Complex SAC, Glenade Lough SAC, Aaroo Mountain SAC, Streedagh point Dunes SAC, Sligo/Leitrim Uplands SPA and the Donegal Bay SPA collectively contain the following habitats and/or key species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive

- [3260] Floating River Vegetation
- [4010] Wet Heath
- [4030] Dry Heath
- [4060] Alpine and Subalpine Heaths
- [5130] Juniper Scrub
- [6210] Orchid-rich Calcareous Grassland
- [6230] Species-rich Nardus Grassland
- [6430] Hydrophilous Tall Herb Communities
- [7220] Petrifying Springs
- [7130] Blanket Bogs (Active)
- [7140] Transition Mires
- [7230] Alkaline Fens
- [8110] Siliceous Scree
- [8120] Calcareous Scree

[8210] Calcareous Rocky Slopes
[1013] Geyer's Whorl Snail (*Vertigo geyeri*)
[1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*)
[1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats
[1160] Large Shallow Inlets and Bays
[1170] Reefs
[2120] Marram Dunes (White Dunes)
[2130] Fixed Dunes (Grey Dunes)
[2190] Humid Dune Slacks
[21A0] Machairs
[1065] Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*)
[1395] Petalwort (*Petalophyllum ralfsii*)
[1220] Perennial Vegetation of Stony Banks
[1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows
[1410] Mediterranean Salt Meadows
[2120] Marram Dunes (White Dunes)
[1014] Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail (*Vertigo angustior*)
[3150] Natural Eutrophic Lakes
[1092] White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*)
[1833] Slender Naiad (*Najas flexilis*)
[3150] Natural Eutrophic Lakes
[91A0] Old Oak Woodlands
[91E0] Alluvial Forests
[1092] White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*)
[1095] Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*)
[1096] Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*)
[1099] River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*)
[1106] Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*)
[1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*)
[3180] Turloughs
[1150] Coastal Lagoons
[6410] Molinia Meadows
[3130] Oligotrophic to Mesotrophic Standing waters

No disturbance to the sensitive habitats or species will occur as part of this project.

Describe any reduction of Species Density as a result of this project

This project will not give rise to reduction of Species Density

Describe any impact on Climate Change

The provision of the proposed walkway/cycleway will facilitate a direct increase in pedestrian and cyclist usage along the route. This in turn, will result in a reduction in the carbon footprint caused by vehicular traffic, thereby providing a positive contribution to Climate Change.

Describe any likely impacts on the Natura site in terms of the key relationship that define the structure of the site

Disturbance to the surrounding environment will be limited to noise and vibration during the construction period. No disturbance to sensitive habitats or species will occur as part of this project.

It is felt that the proposal will not conflict with any of the operational objectives and management strategies of the SAC/SPA.

2 Finding of No Significant Effects Report

This project allows for the proper planning and sustainable development in the area.

It is the opinion of the author that the project does not have the potential to significantly impact on the integrity of the site and a Stage II Appropriate Assessment is not required. No Natura 2000 site was found to have the potential to be affected by this small-scale infrastructure project.

3 Data Collection

This assessment was a Desk top study carried out by members of Leitrim County Council Active Travel Office. Following completion of the assessment, the draft report was

reviewed by the Planning Department in advance of the proposed PART 8 application being placed on public display.

4 Appendices

000428 – Lough Melvin SAC Site Synopsis

000428 – Lough Melvin SAC Standard Data Form

000428 – Lough Melvin SAC Conservation Objective Series

000138 – Durnesh Lough SAC – Site Synopsis

000138 - Durnesh Lough SAC - Standard Data Form

000138 – Durnesh Lough SAC - Conservation Objective Series

000623– Ben Bulben, Gleniff & Glenade Complex SAC – Site Synopsis

000623– Ben Bulben, Gleniff & Glenade Complex SAC - Standard Data Form

000623– Ben Bulben, Gleniff & Glenade Complex SAC Conservation Objective Series

001976 – Lough Gill SAC Site Synopsis

001976 – Lough Gill SAC Standard Data Form

001976 – Lough Gill SAC Conservation Objective Series

002303 – Dunmuckrum Turlough's SAC – Site Synopsis

002303 – Dunmuckrum Turlough's SAC - Standard Data Form

002303 – Dunmuckrum Turlough's SAC - Conservation Objective Series

000625– Bunduff Lough & Machair/ Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC – Site Synopsis

000625– Bunduff Lough & Machair/ Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC - Standard Data Form

000625– Bunduff Lough & Machair/ Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC Conservation Objective Series

001919 – Glenade Lough SAC Site Synopsis

001919 – Glenade Lough SAC Standard Data Form

001919 – Glenade Lough SAC Conservation Objective Series

001403 – Arroo Mountain SAC – Site Synopsis

001403 – Arroo Mountain SAC - Standard Data Form

001403 – Arroo Mountain SAC - Conservation Objective Series

001680 – Streedagh Point Dunes SAC – Site Synopsis
001680 – Streedagh Point Dunes SAC - Standard Data Form
001680 – Streedagh Point Dunes SAC Conservation Objective Series

004187 – Sligo Leitrim Uplands SPA Site Synopsis
004187 – Sligo Leitrim Uplands SPA Standard Data Form
004187 – Sligo Leitrim Uplands SPA Conservation Objective Series

004151 – Donegal Bay SPA Site Synopsis
004151 – Donegal Bay SPA Standard Data Form
004151 – Donegal Bay SPA Conservation Objective Series