

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report



Proposed Footpath & Public Lighting at Skreeny, Manorhamilton, Co Leitrim

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Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Natura Sites
- 3 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's)
- 4 Special Protected Areas (SPA's)
- 5 Map of Area
- 6 Assessment Criteria/Screening matrix
- 7 Finding of no significant Effects Report
- 8 Data Collection
- 9 Appendices

1. Introduction

Leitrim County Council proposes to construct a new footpath and public lighting on the R282 at Skreeny, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim. The main objective of this proposal is to provide walking infrastructure and enhance the safety of pedestrians from the town centre to Gleann Dara and Skreeny Manor housing developments and a number of detached dwellings along the R282. There is a cycle lane marked on both sides of the road at this location.

This scheme will encourage Active Travel and therefore discourage the use of motor vehicles for trips to local amenities.

The provision of the proposed footpath is aligned with the following policy and objectives of the County 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 Rooskey 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 Rooskey are indicated on the attached map (Map No 1) 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
002032	Boleybrack Mountain SAC

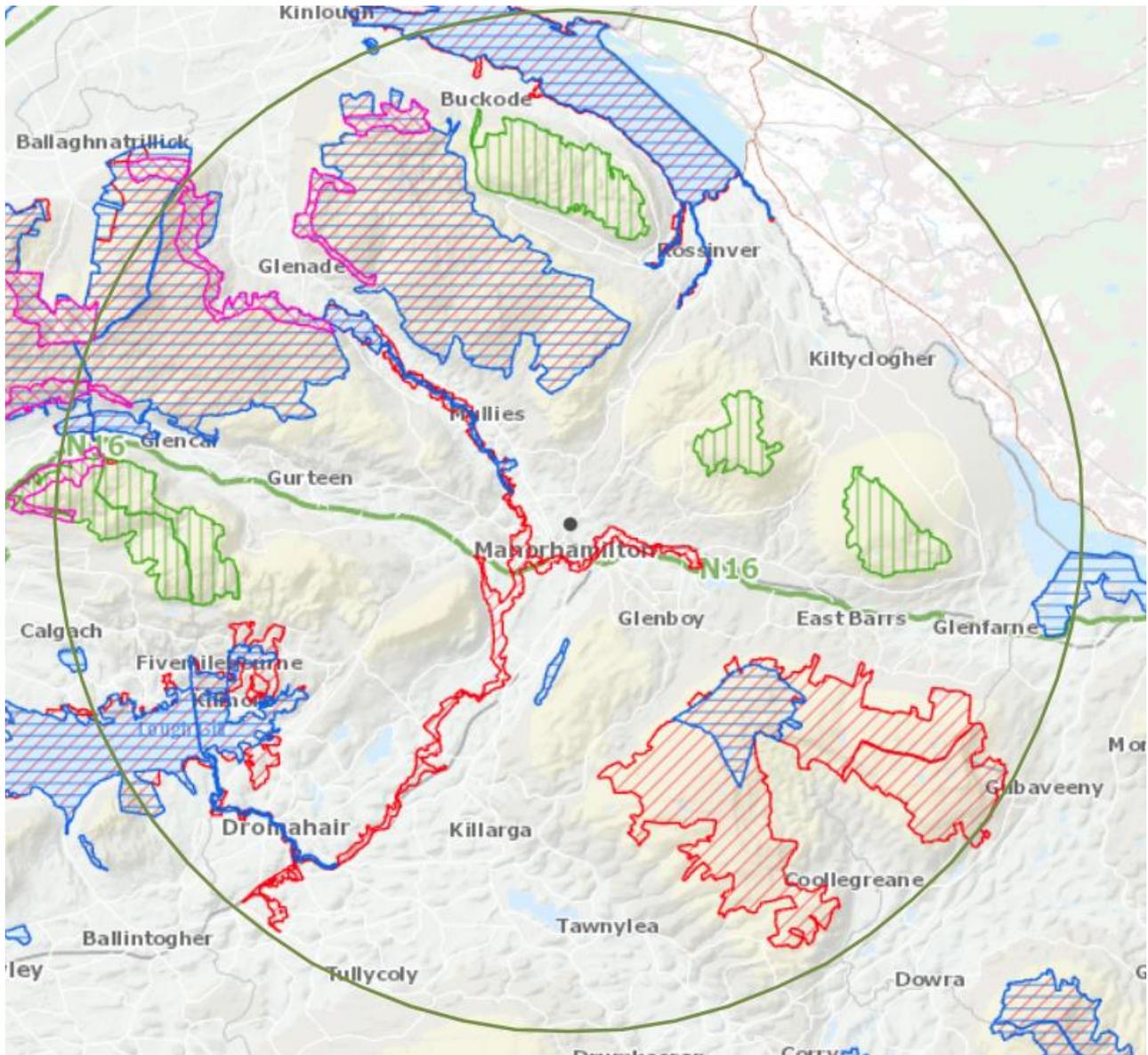
4 Special Protected Areas (SPA's)

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 Rooskey are indicated on the attached map and listed below.

Site Code	Site Name
004187	Sligo Leitrim Uplands SPA

5 Map of Area (15km Radius)



6 Assessment Criteria/Screening Matrix

Description of the Project

Leitrim County Council proposes to construct a new footpath and public lighting on the R282 at Skreeny, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim. The strategic aim of this project is to support Active Travel which will provide a change in how people travel. The main objective of this proposal is to provide walking infrastructure and enhance the safety of pedestrians from the town centre to Gleann Dara and Skreeny Manor housing developments and a number of detached dwellings along the R282. There is already a cycle lane marked on both sides of the road at this location.

The proposed development consists of the following:

- A 2.0m wide footpath along the western edge of the R282 carriageway. This will serve as a continuation of existing footpath to the south and will link same to Gleann Dara and Skreeny Manor housing developments.
- The total length of scheme is 220m.
- Public lighting- There are public lighting columns in place from the town centre extending as far as the entrance to Gleann Dara and Skreeny Manor. 4 no. new lighting columns will be installed at the north-west end of the works.
- There are three existing Eir telegraph poles that are currently restricting the proposed route of the new footpath. The most desirable solution is to divert the overhead services to underground ducting / chambers and remove the poles entirely. This would provide improved safety to pedestrians and enhance the aesthetics of the scheme
- Installation of drainage where required.

Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021

The provision of the proposed footpath 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 Walking trail & Cycle lanes

The volume of excavated material for the new walkways 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 Lough Melvin SAC, Lough Gill SAC, Boleybrack Mountain SAC and the Sligo/Leitrim Uplands SPA. 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 Lough Melvin SAC, Lough Gill SAC, Boleybrack Mountain SAC and the Sligo/Leitrim Uplands SPA.

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, Boleybrack Mountain SAC and the Sligo/Leitrim Uplands SPA collectively contain the following habitats and/or key species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive

[3130] Oligotrophic to Mesotrophic Standing Waters

[6410] *Molinia* Meadows

[1106] Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*)

[1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

[3150] Natural Eutrophic Lakes

[6210] Orchid-rich Calcareous Grassland*

[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*)
[3160] Dystrophic Lakes
[4010] Wet Heath
[4030] Dry Heath
[6410] *Molinia* Meadows
[7130] Blanket Bogs (Active)*
[A103] Peregrine Falcon (*falco peregrinus*)
[A346] Chough (*Pyrrhocorax*)

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 will facilitate a direct increase in pedestrian 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.

No conservation management plans for The Lough Melvin SAC, Lough Gill SAC, Boleybrack Mountain SAC and the Sligo/Leitrim Uplands SPA has yet to be published. It is felt that the proposal will not conflict with any of the operational objectives and management strategies of the SAC/SPA. The loss of habitat is miniscule in area and nature and is considered insignificant.

7 Finding of No Significant Effects Report

This project allows for the proper planning and development 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.

8 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.

9 Appendices

- 9.1** 000428 – Lough Melvin SAC Site Synopsis
- 9.2** 000428 – Lough Melvin SAC Standard Data Form
- 9.3** 00428 – Lough Melvin SAC Conservation Objective Series

- 9.4** 001976 – Lough Gill SAC Site Synopsis
- 9.5** 001976 – Lough Gill SAC Standard Data Form
- 9.6** 001976 – Lough Gill SAC Conservation Objective Series

- 9.7** 002032 – Boleybrack Mountain SAC – Site Synopsis
- 9.8** 002032 – Boleybrack Mountain SAC Standard Data Form
- 9.9** 002032 – Boleybrack Mountain SAC – Conservation Objective Series

- 9.10** 004187 – Sligo Leitrim Uplands SPA - Site Synopsis
- 9.11** 004187 – Sligo Leitrim Uplands SPA - Standard Data Form
- 9.12** 004187 – Sligo Leitrim Uplands SPA - Conservation Objective Series