

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report



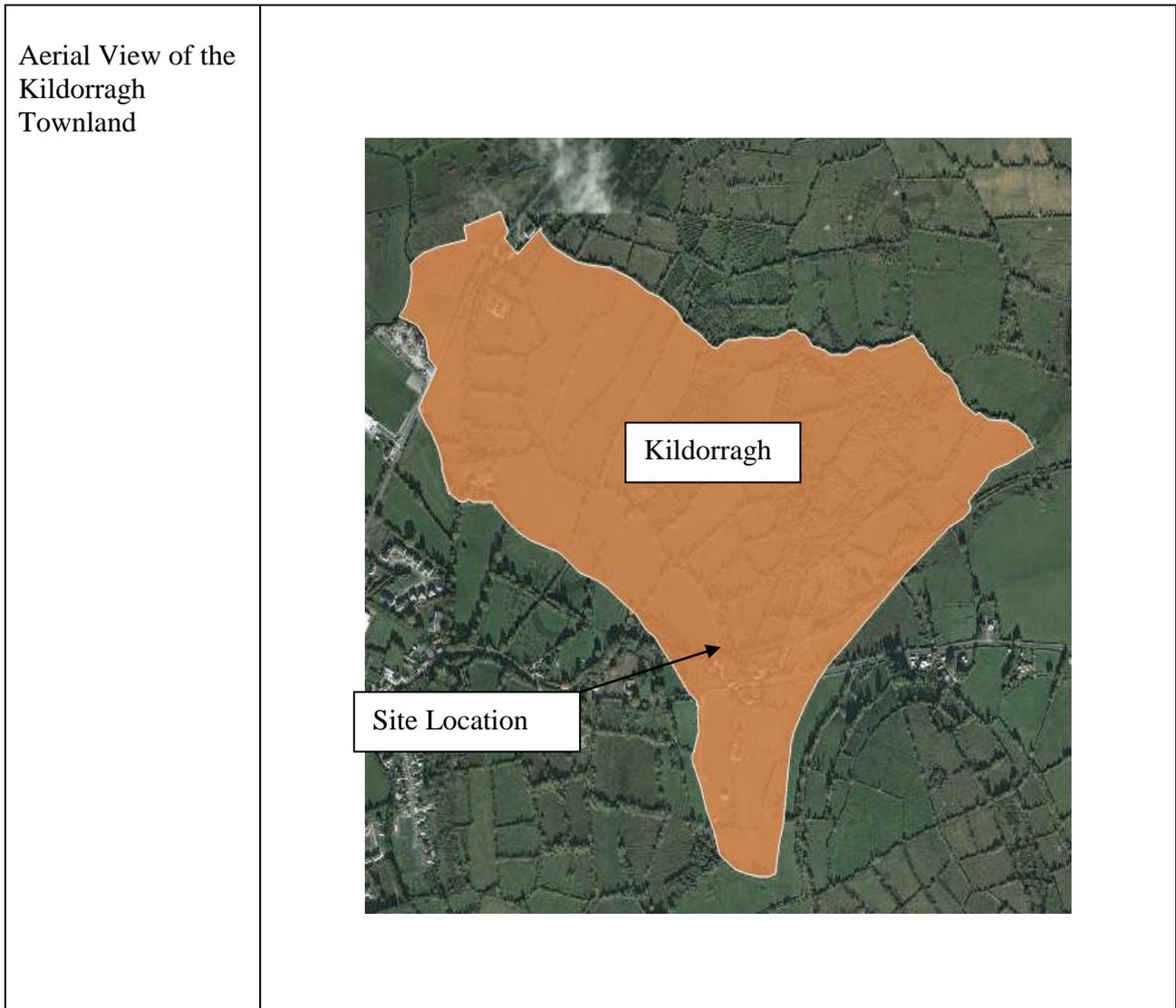
Proposed Wastewater Pumping Station at Kildorragh Td. Ballinamore , Co. Leitrim

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1 Introduction

This report is the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report for the Proposed Wastewater Pumping Station at Kildorragh Td. Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim, in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and the requirements of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2018.



1.1 The Appropriate Assessment Process

Requirement for an Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive

The requirement for an Appropriate Assessment is set out in the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The aim of the European Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora) is to create a network of protected wildlife sites in Europe, maintained at a good conservation status. The network of sites is referred to as Natura 2000 sites. In Ireland, the Natura 2000 network of European sites comprises Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's, including candidate SACs), and Special Protection Areas (SPA's, including proposed SPA'S). SACs are selected for the conservation of vulnerable and threatened habitat types and species (other than birds). SPA's are selected for the conservation of vulnerable and threatened species of birds and other regularly occurring migratory birds, and their habitats.

The European Habitats Directive (EHD) (Council of the European Communities 1992) was transposed into Irish legislation by the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997. The Directive specifies the scientific criteria on the basis of which Natura 2000 sites must be selected and sets out various procedures and obligations in relation to the nature conservation management which must be undertaken for the purpose of ensuring the protection of the Natura 2000 sites.

Stages in the Process

Article 6 of the Habitats Directive provides a strict assessment procedure for any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but which has the potential to have implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The proposed project, therefore, falls under the remit of Article 6.

According to the European Commission's guidance document, it has become generally accepted that the assessment requirements of Article 6 establish a stage by stage approach. The stages proposed by the guidance document are:

- **Stage One: Screening**

The process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant

- **Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment**

The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts.

- **Stage Three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions**

The processes which examine alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

- **Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain**

An assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed. This report documents the first of these stages. It examines the likely effects of the proposed waste water pumping station on any Natura 2000 sites affected by the project and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these sites will not be significantly impacted. The format of the following assessment is derived from the European Commission's guidance document *"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"* (2002).

2 Assessment Criteria/Screening Matrix

2.1 Description of the Project

The proposed works involves the provision of a wastewater pumping station with associated works and 975m of rising main.

The proposed Kildorragh Pump Station is located approximately 1km East of Ballinamore. The site location Map drawing no. 2019-CLGW-001 is enclosed under Appendix 1.

Leitrim County Council is developing a Greenway from Ballinamore to Corgar. This project received planning approval in 2017 (Plan Ref No 17-C-03). This Greenway will be constructed along the old railway line. At present some houses in the Kildorragh area have their percolation areas from their septic tanks on the old railway. When we construct this Greenway we will remove these percolation areas. It is therefore necessary to either provide new percolation areas or an alternative method of dealing with the effluent from the septic tanks.

Percolation tests were carried out in the area but none of the tests passed. It is therefore necessary to provide an alternative method of dealing with the effluent from the septic tanks. This pumping station will pump the effluent from the septic tanks to the public sewer network in Ballinamore at Lahard. The Ballinamore waste water treatment plant has sufficient capacity to deal with the extra loading. The proposed works are due to commence in the 2nd quarter of 2019.

This project is in compliance with the following policies and objectives of the County Development Plan (2015-2021):

4.6.3 Walking and Cycling

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 26

It is an objective of the Council to complete the design and progress to construction the provision of a walking/cycle way along the narrow gauge Railway from Dromod to Mohill and Ballinamore, and also along the former narrow gauge Railway route from Ballinamore towards Belturbet, in order to continue to secure this route, pending the re-introduction of rail line and services (such as a tourist/heritage train) along this former line.

4.11.2.1 Municipal Waste Water Treatment Systems

Policy 119

It is the policy of the Council, during the period of this plan, to seek the provision by Irish Water of waste water treatment facilities of adequate capacity and treatment standards in the County's towns and villages in accordance with the Water Framework Directive 2000 and EU Urban Wastewater Directive.

Objective 118

It is an objective of the Council to seek to remedy the risk of environmental damage from existing septic tanks and stand alone treatment systems at properties on the periphery of towns and villages by seeking the extension of the existing public sewers networks to service these properties.

Under article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 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 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. The proposed development is not located in an area designated for nature conservation. European sites within the likely zone of impact of the project were identified. Sites within a 15km radius of the proposed works were identified, as per NPWS Guidance. Map No 1 below identifies the sites with 15km of the proposed development.

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 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.

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.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's)

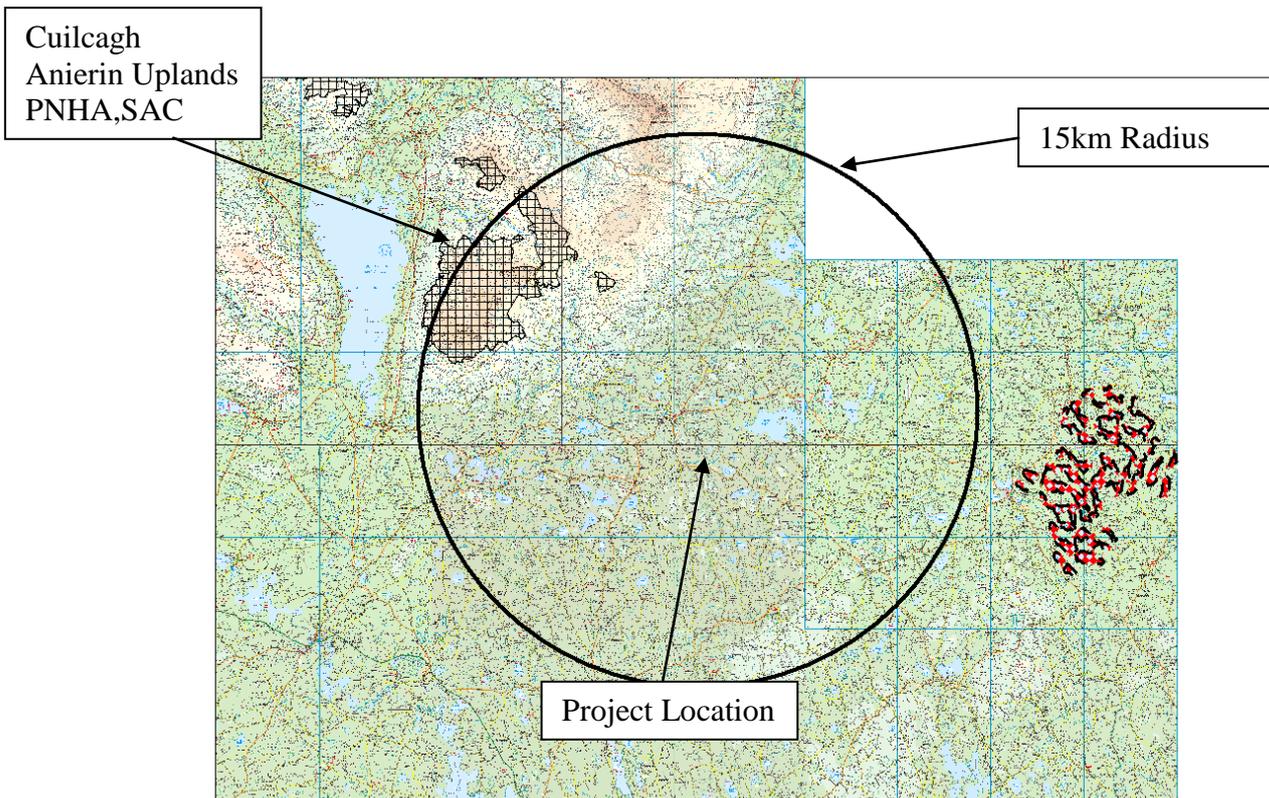
These are prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) lists certain habitats and species that must be protected. Sites proposed for designation are called candidate special areas of conservation (cSAC) and are legally protected under the Habitats Directive and EC Regulations. Details of these sites are forwarded to the EU Commission and once approved by the commission; these sites will be formally designated by the Minister as SAC. The SAC's within 15km of the proposed development are shown in Map No 1 and detailed below.

Table 1: Special Areas of Conservation adjacent to Kildorragh Td. (Ballinamore)

European Site	Distance from proposed Works (km)	Qualifying Interests which the European Site has been Designated	Conservation Objectives
Cuilcagh – Anierin Uplands Site Code 000584	10km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [3110] Oligotrophic Waters containing very few minerals • [3160] Dystrophic Lakes • [4010] Wet Heath • [4030] Dry Heath • [4060] Alpine and Subalpine Heaths • [6230] Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> Grassland • [7130] Blanket Bogs (Active) • [7140] Transition Mires • [7220] Petrifying Springs • [8110] Siliceous Scree • [8220] Siliceous Rocky Slopes • [1393] Slender Green Feather-moss (<i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i>) 	<p>This site has the generic conservation objective</p> <p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the habitats and/or species for which the SAC has been selected.</p>

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 features 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). There are no SAC’s within 15km of the proposed development



MAP No.1 – Map of Area – European Sites within 15km of Project Location

2.2 Assessment Criteria

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

The proposed project's nearest SAC is Cuilcagh – Anierin Uplands SAC (IE0000584) and is located 10km from the works. 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**

It is hoped that the construction of the pumping station and pipeline will avoid the removal of any mature trees or the disturbance of the roots of trees during construction works. The standard procedure to follow is to avoid any works beyond the area of the drip-point of the canopy of the tree in question, if possible. The working area along tree lines or around individual trees shall be kept to a minimum to reduce the area or length of sites or habitats that may be affected. Trees being retained at the margins of way leaves shall be temporarily fenced or at least identified by tape

to avoid accidental collisions from construction machinery. The working area shall be defined at the outset by the erection of fencing to define the limits of site works. The number of trees to be removed will be minimised to ensure the impact of the works is not significant. Any tree species which will be removed to facilitate the works will be replaced with similar species.

- **Removal of Hedgerows**

The majority of the pipeline sections are parallel to hedgerows. There will be no disturbance to these field boundaries. It may be necessary to remove short sections of hedgerow where the pipeline crosses into the field from the public road and/or at individual field boundaries. This will be minimized as far as possible by utilizing existing gates or natural gaps. A small section of hedgerow will be removed at the pumping station site. During hedgerow removal, strict attention shall be given to the removal of only what is absolutely necessary. Sections to be removed shall be carefully measured and marked prior to the arrival of construction machinery. When excavating trenches parallel to hedgerows, these shall be at least to the edge of the drip-point of the hedge canopy to avoid root disturbance, if possible. Sections of hedgerows to be removed shall be reinstated following construction works with native species. Extra hedgerow will be provided at the pumping station site as detailed on drawing no 2019-CLGW-003.

- **Installation of Pipelines**

The works are to be carried on the road and in fields. The works will be carried out by excavating a trench to the required levels and pipelaying accordingly. The road trench will be backfilled with crushed stone and the road reinstated to its original condition. The field excavations for the pumping stations will be carried out during good weather conditions to ensure minimum disturbance to the area, soil shall be stored on site and used to reinstate the trenches once completed. The trenches in the vicinity of the pumping stations will be backfilled with suitable material compliant with specification and reinstated to their original condition. It is envisaged that the project will last approx. twenty four weeks.

All spoil will be taken off-site to a waste permitted facility in a timely manner in order to reduce any potential for silt run off, thereby avoiding any significant impact on the area. Material and top soil storage areas will be cordoned off, stabilised and away from any watercourse or drain to prevent the possible entry of suspended solids to the river.

• **Construction of Pumping Stations**

The plan dimensions of the pumping station site boundaries will be approx. 10m x 10m. The site boundary will be secured by 2m high palisade fencing. There will be shrubs planted around the site boundary to minimize the visual impact of the pumping station.

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

The nearest Natura 2000 site is located 10km radius from the project. Any likely direct/indirect or secondary impact of the project on the Natura site are presented in the following table:

Item	Likely direct/indirect or secondary impacts of the project
Size and Scale	No direct impacts on any European sites are predicted by virtue of its size or scale.
Land take	There is no land take of any part of any European site. No direct impact with regard to land take was identified in relation to any European site.
Distance from the European site or key feature of the site	The nearest European site is location 10km from the proposed development. No direct impact with regard to distance was identified in relation to any European site.
Resource Requirements	There will be no exploitation of any resources within any European site as part of the proposed development.
Emissions	As described previously, any waste material generated by the works will be taken off-site to a waste permitted facility in a timely manner in order to reduce any potential for silt run off, thereby avoiding any significant impact on the area. Material and top soil storage areas will be cordoned off and stabilised 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.

Excavation Requirements	The volume of excavated material for the works is estimated to be approximately 100 tonnes in total. Waste material will be gravel, sub soil and top soil. All spoil will be taken off-site to a waste permitted facility in a timely manner in order to reduce any potential for silt run off, thereby avoiding any significant impact on the area.
Transportation Requirements	All transportation will be conducted within the existing public road network. As the site is 10km from the European site no direct or indirect impact were identified.
Duration of Construction, Operation, Decommissioning	As the site is 10km from the European site no direct or indirect impact were identified with regard to the different phases of the construction project.
Cumulative Impacts with other projects or plans	<p>The only other project that may have the potential to result in cumulative impact on the European site is the construction of the Greenway from Ballinamore to Corgar.</p> <p>This project has almost been subject to a screening report for Appropriate Assessment and based on the results of that report and this it is concluded that this development individually or in combination with other plans and projects will not have a significant adverse effect on European sites.</p>

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

The nearest Natura site is located 10km radius from the project and will not be impacted on.

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

Any impacts or disturbance as a result of the works are considered temporary and a rapid re-colonisation of any reinstated hedgerows will occur.

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

The main concern regarding species relates to the retention of the existing trees and other vegetation within the hedgerows. These issues do not arise in relation to sub-surface works within the confines of the public road. The locations for the pumping stations are contained within grassland fields and the respective landowners have agreed to relinquish ownership of the required area. These locations show no evidence of badger sets within the lands. There is no evidence of nesting or roosting of any fauna within these areas.

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

Due to the small-scale nature of the project, there is likely to be a negligible reduction in Species Density.

Describe any impact on Climate Change

The provision of the proposed sewerage scheme will facilitate a direct decrease in the requirement for percolation from existing septic tanks and stand alone treatment systems. This in turn, will result in a reduction in the carbon footprint, 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

The nearest Natura site is located 10km radius from the project and will not be impacted on.

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

The nearest Natura site is located 10km radius from the project and will not be impacted on.

3 Finding of no Significant Effects Report

Having considered the scale of the proposed project and its location in relation to Natura 2000 sites in the area, it is considered that the proposed project will not have any significant impact on habitats or species within any nearby Natura 2000 site or the integrity of these sites as a whole. Therefore there is no requirement to complete a full Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment.

4 Data Collection

This assessment was carried out by members of Leitrim County Council Design Office. In order to acquire information on the existing environment, a number of site

inspections were undertaken. 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.