AA SCREENING REPORT

Newtownmountkennedy River Walkway Project

Wicklow County Council

PROJECT NO. W335

JULY 2022

OCSC
O'CONNOR | SUTTON | CRONIN
Multidisciplinary
Consulting Engineers

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for

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NOTICE

DOCUMENT CONTROL & HISTORY

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APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Contractual Basis & Parties Involved

This report has been prepared by O'Connor Sutton Cronin & Associates Ltd. (OCSC) at the request of their Client, Wicklow City Council. The site for assessment comprises land adjacent to the Newtownmountkennedy River, Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow where the project proposes the addition of a walkway along the river with entry/exit points located on the Dublin Road and Main Street.

The report was completed by Eadaoin Butler BSc, Consultant Ecologist; reviewed by Luis Iemma BSc, MSc, Ph.D, Senior Ecologist; and approved by Eleanor Burke, BSc, MSc, DAS, MIEnvSc, CSci, Technical Principal, and the OCSC Environmental Division Manager.

1.2 Legislative Context

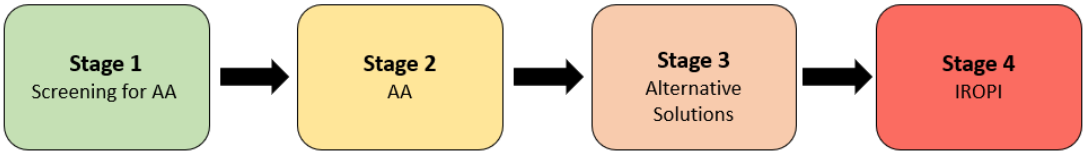
The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the "favourable conservation status" of habitats and species of European Community Interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives (Habitats Directive as above and Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds) with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as European Sites. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect such sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA. These requirements are implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning Development Act 2000 (as amended).

This AA screening is based on best scientific knowledge and has utilised ecological and hydrological expertise. In addition, a detailed online review of published scientific literature and 'grey' literature was conducted. This included a detailed review of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) website which contains mapping and available reports for relevant sites and describes sensitve qualifying interests/ special conservation interests and their conservation objectives. The EPA EnVision map viewer (EPA 2022) and available reports were also reviewed, as was the NPWS (2013) publication "*The Status of Protected EU Habitats and Species in Ireland*".

The ecological desktop study completed for the AA screening of the proposed development comprised of the following elements:

- Identification of European sites with 15 km of the proposed project boundary with identification of potential pathway links for specific sites (if relevant) greater than 15 km from the proposed project boundary;
- Review of the NPWS site synopses and conservation objectives for European sites within 15 km and for which potential pathways from the proposed site have been identified; and
- Examination of available information on protected species.

There are four main stages in the AA process as follows:



IROPI: imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI),

Stage One: Screening

The process that identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project of 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 European 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. If adequate mitigation is proposed to ensure no significant adverse impacts on European sites, then the process may end at this stage. However, if the likelihood of significant impacts remains, then the process must proceed to Stage Three.

Stage Three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

The process that examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoids adverse impacts on the integrity of the European 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 of plan should proceed.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation, and compensatory measures. This approach aims to avoid any impacts on European sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan or project making process and avoiding such impacts. Secondly, the approach involves the application of mitigation measures, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If potential impacts on European sites remain and no further practicable mitigation is possible, the approach requires the consideration of alternative solutions. If no alternative solutions are identified and the plan or project is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effects.

Ecological impact assessment of potential effects on European sites is conducted following a standard source-pathway-receptor model where, in order for an effect to be established, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect is not of any relevance or significance.

- Source(s) – e.g. pollutant run-off from proposed works;

- Pathway(s) – e.g. groundwater connecting proposed works to nearby qualifying wetland habitats; and
- Receptor(s) – qualifying aquatic habitats and species of European sites.

In relation to this report, receptors are the ecological features that are known to be utilised by the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of a European site. A source is any identifiable element of the proposed development that is known to interact with ecological processes. The pathways are any connections or links between the source and the receptor. This report provides information on whether direct, indirect, and cumulative adverse effects could arise from the proposed development.

1.3 Methodology and Approach

The AA Screening has been prepared taking into account legislation including the aforementioned legislation and guidance including the following:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities*, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009; 11 February 2010 revision.
- *Commission Notice: Managing Natura 2000 sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, European Commission, 2018.
- *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habiats Directive 92/43/EEC*, Euopean Commission Environment DG, 2002.
- *Managing Natura 2000 sites: the Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC,* European Commission, 2000.

The above documents have been used to carry out a desktop AA Screening based on the best available guidance and operating within the applicable legislation.

1.4 Scope of Works

To meet the project objectives the following scope of works were completed:

- Present a discussion of the proposed development and its potential effects on its receiving environment;
- Present a discussion of the current site status and key environmental influences around the site;
- Undertake and present a review of European sites in the region of the proposed development;
- Conduct and present a discussion on the screening of the identified European sites in relation to the potential effects arising from the project; and
- Provide a conclusion as to whether the proposed development is likely to, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, have a significant effect on any European site.

1.5 Limitations

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared for the sole use of Wicklow County Council ("the Client"). No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report or any other services provided by OCSC.

This assessment is based on a review of available historical information, environmental records, consultations, relevant guidance information, and reports from third parties. All information received has been taken in good faith as being true and representative.

This report has been prepared in line with best industry standards. The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by OCSC in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The assessment undertaken by OCSC and described was undertaken in May 2022 and is based on the information available during that period. The scope of this Report and the services are accordingly factually limited by these circumstances.

OCSC disclaim any undertaking or obligation to advise any person of any change in any matter affecting the Report, which may come or be brought to OCSC's attention after the date of the Report.

The conclusions presented in this report represent OCSC's best professional judgement based on review of the relevant information available at the time of writing. The opinions and conclusions presented are valid only to the extent that the information provided was accurate and complete.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

2.1 Project Description

This Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening report is prepared for the proposed walkway along the Newtownmountkennedy River in Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow. The proposed works comprise of a boardwalk which will connect the Dublin Road to Main Street. The walkway will include a new, two meter wide gravel footpath, public lighting, and a verge on each side of the path.

2.2 Site Location

The site is located west of Newtownmountkennedy town centre, Co. Wicklow. The study area location is identified in Figure 2.1.

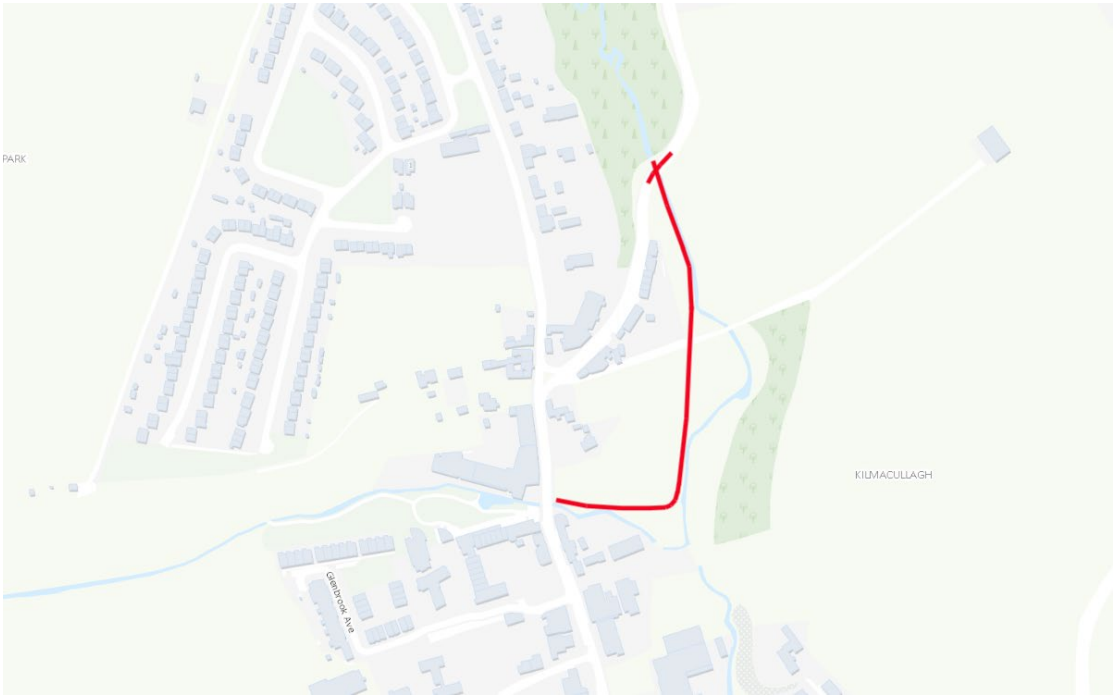


Figure 2.1: Regional Location - approximate site location in red (Source: OSI, 2022).

2.3 Study area

The study area consists of a small section of the Dublin Road, agricultural fields, a small, wooded area, and sections of the banks of the Newtownmountkennedy River. Refer to Figure 2.2 for an aerial photograph.

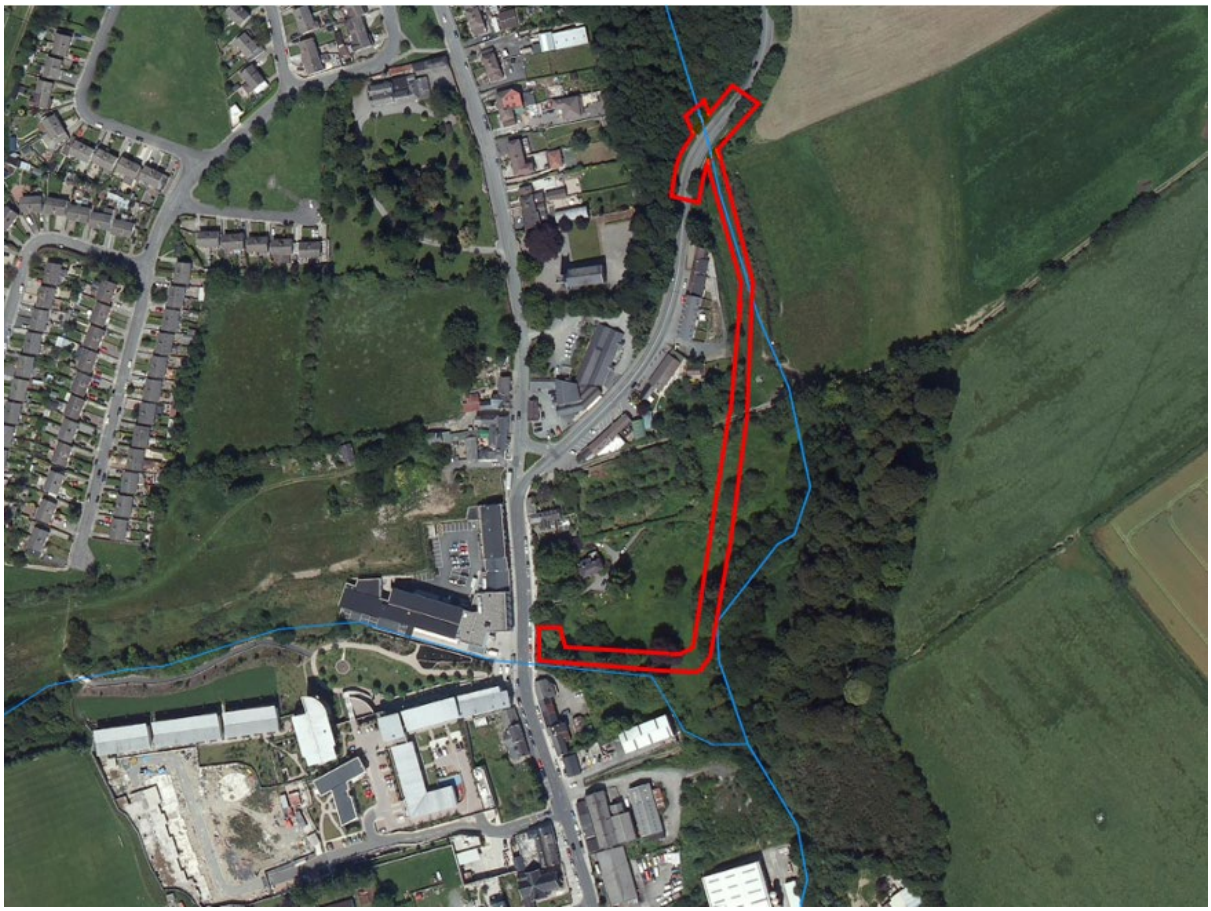


Figure 2.2: Study Area – site locations shown in red (Source: EPA Maps, 2022).

2.4 Surrounding Land Use

The immediately surrounding area consists of industrial, residential, educational, recreational/ community, and commercial/retail business land uses. To the north, the study area is bounded by the Dublin Road, agricultural land, and woodland. Residential areas border the site to the south and west. Agricultural land, the Newtownmountkennedy River, and woodlands border the site to the east. Refer to Table 2.1 for a full list of adjacent land uses.

Table 2.1 – Adjacent Land Uses

BOUNDARY	LAND USE
North	the Dublin Road, agricultural land, and woodlands
South	Residential and commercial premises
East	Woodland and the Newtownmountkennedy River; agricultural land further to the east
West	Golden Village Takeaway, The Mount Kennedy Inn, Dunnes Stores, and additional commercial and residential premises

2.5 Hydrology

There is a surface water feature mapped within the site area. The EPA designated tributary stream Newtownmountkennedy_020 runs from north to south within and to the east of the site and eventually into the Murrough Wetlands SAC, 4.5km downstream. The Glendarragh River borders the southern portion of the site and joins the Newtownmountkennedy River south of the site.

Based on the most recent water quality information 2013-2018, the Newtonmountkennedy_020, including its tributary, the Glendarragh, has an overall Water Framework Directive (WFD) Status of 'Poor' as shown in Figure 2.3. The EPA spatial dataset shows that the WFD River Waterbody Risk associated with the river is 'At Risk' of not meeting its 2027 WFD objectives (EPA 2022) as shown in Figure 2.4. WFD summary information for this stream is included in Table 2.2.

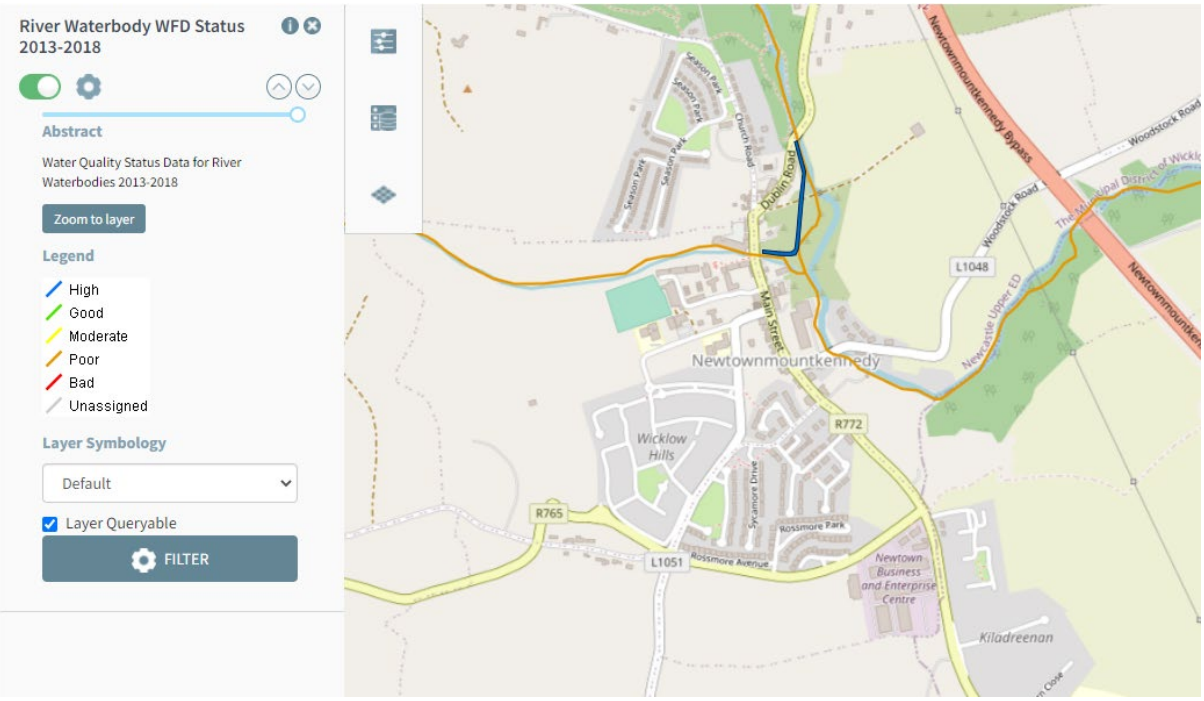


Figure 2.3: River Waterbody WFD Status (approximate site location indicated by the blue line) (Source: EPA Maps, 2022).

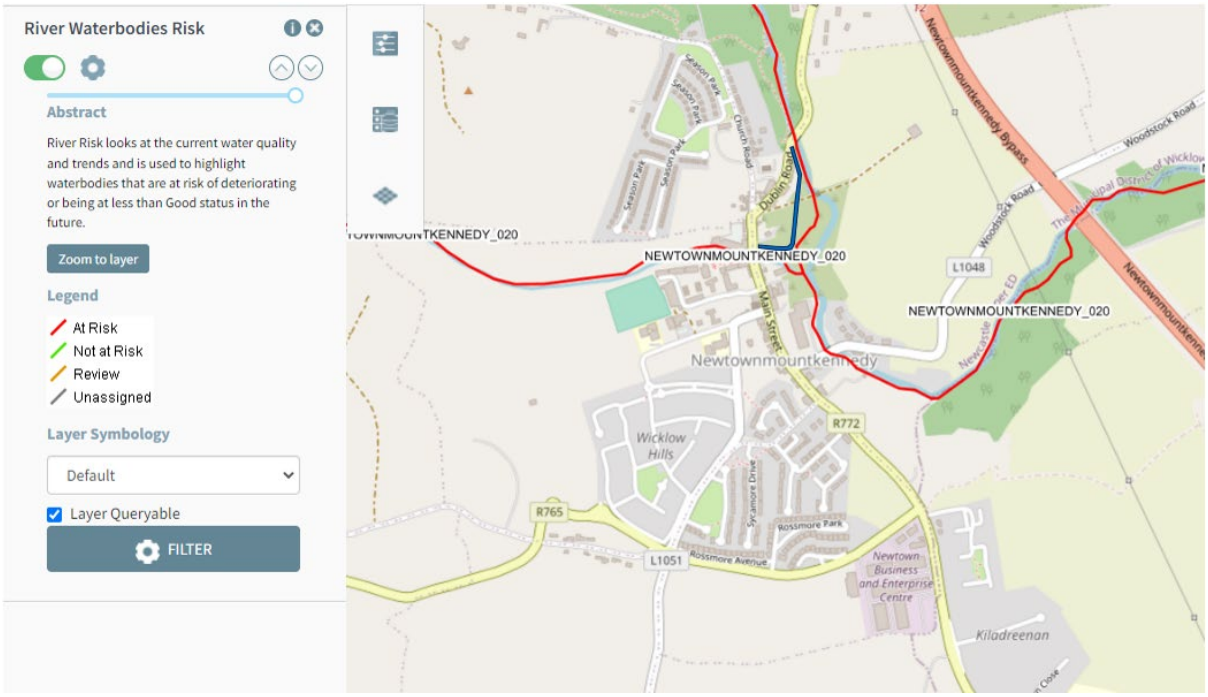


Figure 2.4: River Waterbodies Risk (approximate site location indicated by the blue line) (Source: EPA Maps, 2022).

Table 2.2 - WFD Summary Information – Newtownmountkennedy_020.

Waterbody Code	IE_EA_10N020600
Waterbody Name	NEWTOWNMOUNTKENNEDY_020
Waterbody Type	River
Iteration	SW 2013-2018
Status	Poor
Risk	At Risk

3 SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Screening Process

This stage of the process identifies any likely significant effects to European sites from a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. The screening phase was progressed in stages during which a series of questions were asked to determine:

- Whether a plan or project can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site.
- Whether the project will have a potentially significant effect on a European Site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, in view of the site's conservation objectives or if residual uncertainty exists regarding potential impacts.

An important element of the AA process is the identification of the "'conservation objectives", "Qualifying Interests" (QIs), and/ or "Special Conservation Interests" (SCIs) of European sites requiring assessment. QIs are the habitat features and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive for which each European Site has been designated and afforded protection. SCIs are wetland habitats and bird species listed within Annexes I and II of the Birds Directive. It is also vital that the threats to the ecological / environmental conditions that are required to support QIs and SCIs are considered as part of the assessment.

Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) have been designed to define favourable conservation status for a particular habitat or species at that site. According to the European Commission interpretation document 'Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC', paragraph 4.6(3) states:

"The integrity of a site involves its ecological functions. The decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on and be limited to the site's conservation objectives."

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

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

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

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

3.2 Identification of relevant European Sites

This section of the screening process describes the European sites which exist within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) of the site. The Department of the Environment (2010 revised) Guidance on AA recommends a 15 km buffer zone to be considered for Natura 2000 sites, but projects are

evaluated on a case-by-case basis. A review of all sites within the ZOI has allowed a determination to be made that, in the absence of significant hydrological links, the characteristics of the proposed works will not impose effects beyond the 15 km ZOI.

European sites that occur within 15 km of the proposed works are listed in Table 3.1 and illustrated in Figures 3.1 and 3.2. Details on the specific QIs and SCIs of each European Site are also identified in Table 3.1 as well as site-specific threats and vulnerabilities of each of the sites.

To determine the potential for effects from the proposed works, information on the qualifying features, known vulnerabilities, and threats to site integrity pertaining to any potentially affected European sites was reviewed. Background information on threats to individual sites and vulnerability of habitats and species that was used during this assessment included the following:

- Ireland's Article 17 Report to the European Commission "*Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland*" (NPWS, 2019);
- Site Synopses (NPWS 2019a); and
- NATURA 2000 Standard Data Forms (NPWS 2019b).

The assessment takes consideration of the SSCOs of each of the sites within the ZOI. Since the conservation objectives for the European sites focus on maintaining the favourable conservation condition of the QIs/SCIs of each site, the screening process focused on assessing the potential effects of the proposed works against the QIs/SCIs of each site. The conservation objectives for each site were consulted throughout the assessment process.

- Conservation objectives that have been considered by the assessment are included in the following NPWS documents:
    - Conservation Objectives for Wicklow Mountains SAC [002122]. Version 1.0 – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (July 2017).
    - Conservation Objectives for Wicklow Mountains SPA [004040]. Version 8.0 – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (March 2021).
    - Conservation Objectives for Knocksink Wood SAC [000725]. Version 8.0 – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (March 2021).
    - Conservation Objectives for Bray Head SAC [000714]. Version 1.0 - Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (April 2017).
    - Conservation Objectives for Glen of the Downs SAC [000719]. Version 1.0 - Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Dec 2020).
    - Conservation Objectives for Ballyman Glen SAC [000713]. Version 1.0 - Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (July 2019).
    - Conservation objectives for The Murrough SPA [004186]. Generic Version 8.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (March 2021).
    - Conservation objectives for The Murrough Wetlands SAC [002249]. Version 1.0 - Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Dec 2021).

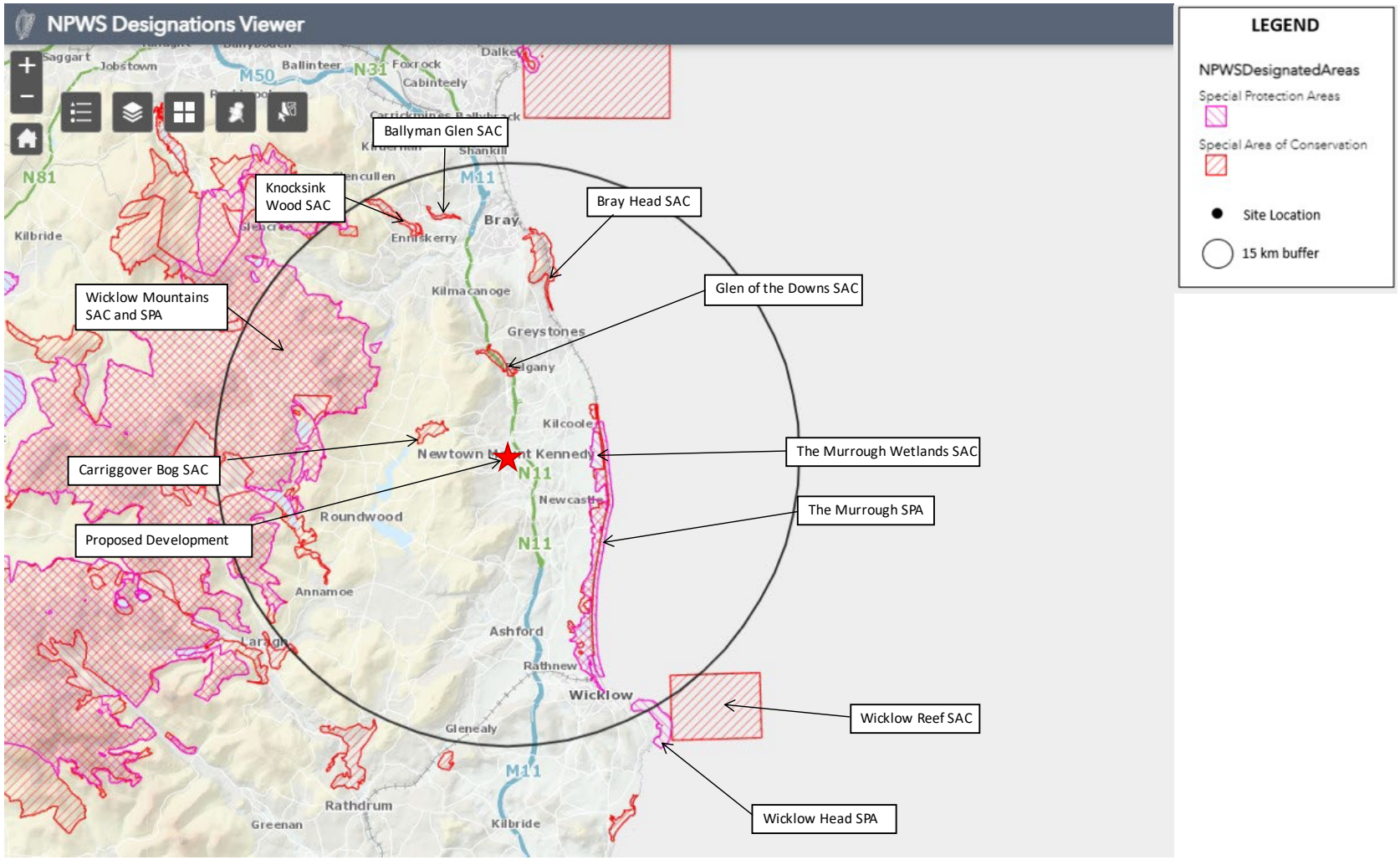


Figure 3.1: Designated Sites within 15km radius. Site location marked by a red star. (Source: NPWS Maps, 2022).

Figure 3.2: European Sites and EPA Rivers (approximate site location indicated by the red cross). (Source: EPA Maps, 2022).

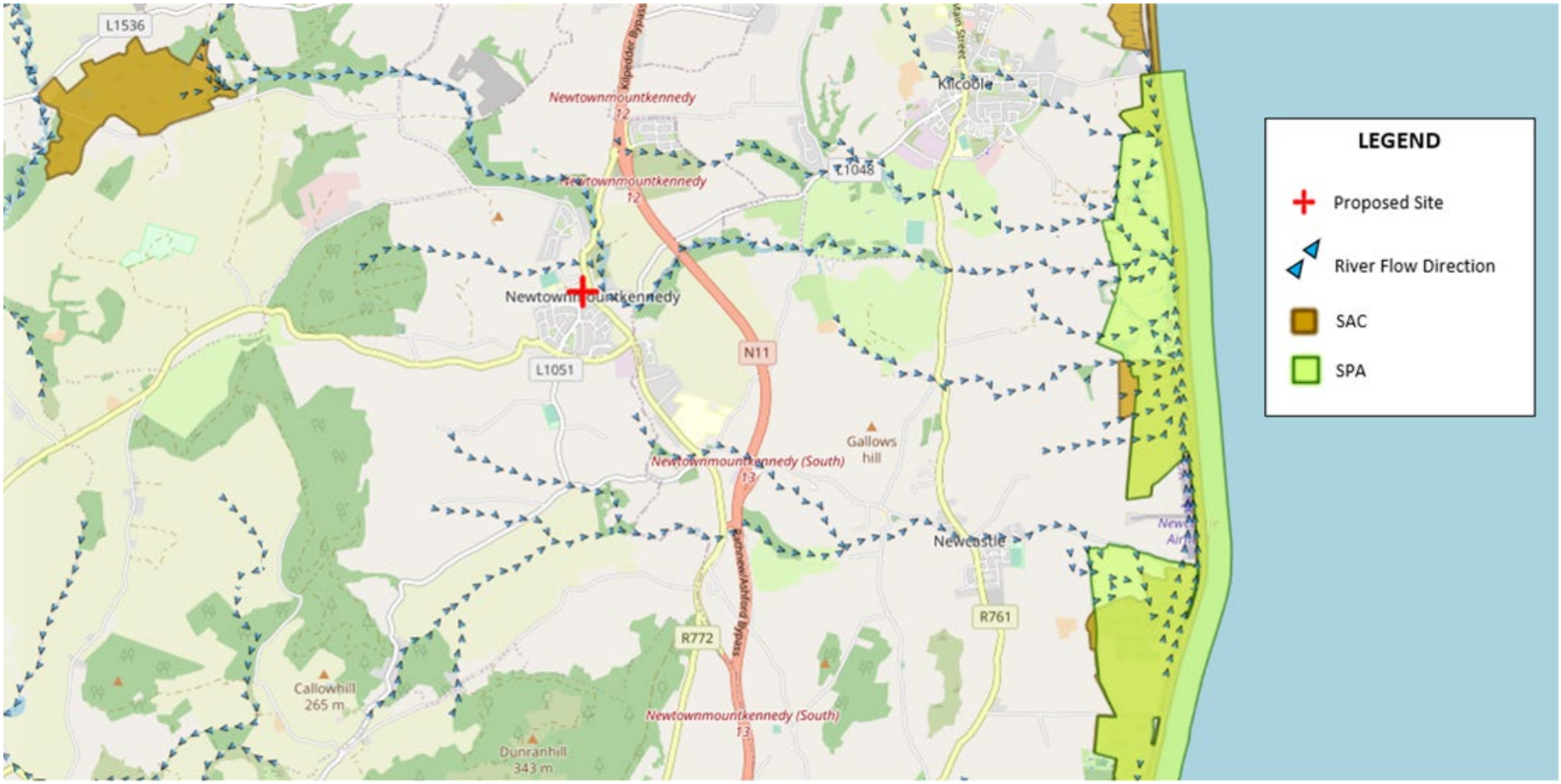


Figure 3.3: Nearest European Sites, EPA Rivers relative to study area (approximate site location indicated by the red cross). (Source: EPA Maps, 2021).

Table 3.1 European Sites within 15 kilometres (ZOI) to the proposed site.

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Site Synopsis and Existing threats or Sensitivities
000716	Carriggower Bog SAC	3.2 NW	[7140] Transition mires and quaking bogs	Carriggower Bog is situated on Calary plateau at the eastern edge of the Wicklow Mountains. The site is an area of wet bog and poor fen, flanked by the Vartry River on the south-western side. The bog was exploited for peat extraction until 100 years ago and the peat cuttings are now flooded. The remaining bog vegetation is characterised by bog moss (Sphagnum spp.) hummocks. Several species of Sphagnum are found including S. recurvum. On top of the hummocks Heather (Calluna vulgaris) and Cross-leaved Heath (Erica tetralix) are dominant. Between the hummocks, in the wet areas, Bog Asphodel (Narthecium ossifragum), Bogbean (Menyanthes trifoliata), and Common Cottongrass (Eriophorum angustifolium) are common, while Purple Moor-grass (Molinia caerulea) is locally abundant. This site is of conservation importance because it shows a good transition between fen and bog vegetation (with the fen being colonised by characteristic bog species). Transition mire, which is present at the site, is listed in Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The area holds a rich and varied flora, and it provides a habitat for some rare invertebrates. Carriggower Bog is the last remaining site in Wicklow from which some of these invertebrates are recorded. It also has ornithological interest, being an important site for Jack Snipe.
000719	Glen of the Downs SAC	3.8 N	[91A0] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles	Glen of the Downs is a semi-natural oak wood situated within an impressive glacial overflow channel. It is located on the Dublin-Wexford Road, about 7 km south of Bray, Co. Wicklow. The underlying rock is mostly quartzite, and it outcrops in a few places. The soil is a sandy loam, brown earth to brown podzolic, and is very dry over much of the site. Most of the site has been a nature reserve since 1980. The site includes some areas of mixed woodland, in which Beech (Fagus sylvatica), Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus), Scots Pine (Pinus sylvestris), and other non-native species occur. Bryophytes are notably scarce within the valley and may reflect the dryness of the site. However, some rare species have been recorded. The site is notable for the presence of the rare bryophytes Cephaloziella turneri, Pterigynandrum filiforme, and

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Site Synopsis and Existing threats or Sensitivities
				Plagiothecium curvifolium, the last named in its only Irish site. There are also several rare or scarce Myxomycete fungi, namely Echinostelium colliculosum, Licea marginata, L. perexigua, Perichaena vermicularis, Comatricha ellae (only known Irish site), Diderma chondrioderma, and Didymium crustaceum. Although exploited heavily in the past, this woodland is well developed, rich in species and is of high conservation significance. The site supports oak woodland of a type that is listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The glacial overflow channel is the largest example of such a feature in the country.
004186	The Murrough SPA	4.2 E	[A001] Red-throated Diver (Gavia stellata) [A043] Greylag Goose (Anser anser) [A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A050] Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A052] Teal (Anas crecca) [A179] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A184] Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) [A195] Little Tern (Sterna albifrons) [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds	The Murrough SPA comprises a coastal wetland complex that stretches for 13 km from Kilcoole Station, east of Kilcoole village in the north to Wicklow town in the south and extends inland for up to 1 km in places. The site includes an area of marine water to a distance of 200m from the low water mark. A shingle ridge runs along the length of the site and carries the Dublin-Wexford railway line. The Murrough SPA is an important site for wintering waterbirds, being internationally important for Light-bellied Brent Goose and nationally important for Red-throated Diver, Greylag Goose, Wigeon, Teal, Black-headed Gull, and Herring Gull. It is probably the most important site in the country for nesting Little Tern. The regular occurrence of Red-throated Diver, Little Egret, Whooper Swan, Greenland White-fronted Goose, Golden Plover, Little Tern, Sandwich Tern, Short-eared Owl, and Kingfisher is of note as these species are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Part of the Murrough SPA is a Wildfowl Sanctuary.
002249	The Murrough Wetlands SAC	4.5 E	[1210] Annual Vegetation of Drift Lines [1220] Perennial Vegetation of Stony Banks [1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows [1410] Mediterranean Salt Meadows [7210] Cladium Fens* [7230] Alkaline Fens	The Murrough is a coastal wetland complex which stretches for 15 km from Ballygannon to north of Wicklow town, and in parts, extends inland for up to 1 km. A shingle ridge stretches the length of the site and carries the mainline Dublin-Wexford railway. Recent farming and drainage practices and afforestation have greatly reduced the area and quality of the wetlands habitats - the area between Kilcoole and Newcastle is particularly affected. In 1997 there was some levelling of the sand hills

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Site Synopsis and Existing threats or Sensitivities
				below Killoughter station. Pollution, reclamation, and further drainage would adversely affect this site. A section of the wetlands at Blackditch, which includes alkaline and Cladium fen, has been acquired by BirdWatch Ireland and is being managed for nature conservation. This site is of importance as it is the largest coastal wetland complex on the east coast of Ireland. Although much affected by drainage, it still contains a wide range of coastal and freshwater habitats, including six listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive, some of which contain threatened plants. Areas on the site contain a rich invertebrate fauna, including several rarities. It is an important site for both wintering and breeding birds and supports a variety of species listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive
000714	Bray Head SAC	7.5 NE	[1230] Vegetated Sea Cliffs [4030] Dry Heath	This coastal site is situated in the north-east of Co. Wicklow between the towns of Bray and Greystones. The bedrock geology is Cambrian quartzites and shales (with mudstones and greywackes). Bray Head consists of a plateau of high ground, with five prominent quartzite knolls and has a maximum height of 241 m. The more exposed higher ground has a covering of shallow acidic soils, with protruding bedrock and scree. Elsewhere, deeper soils are formed by drift deposits and are calcareous in character. Bray Head has an important seabird colony. A census in 1999 gave the following populations: Fulmar (55 pairs), Shag (8 pairs), Kittiwake (781+ pairs), Guillemots (286 individuals), Razorbills (191 individuals), and Black Guillemots (123 individuals). A few pairs of gulls also breed. Both the Kittiwake and Black Guillemot populations are of national importance. Peregrine Falcon, an Annex I species of the E.U. Birds Directive, breeds at the site, as do Raven and Kestrel. Characteristic bird species of the heath areas include Stonechat, Whitethroat, Linnet, and Skylark. The heath and grassland habitats at this site are threatened by reclamation for agriculture and also by frequent burning. The site is a popular recreational area and is especially used by walkers. Bray Head is of high conservation importance as it has good examples of two habitats (sea cliffs and dry heath) listed on

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Site Synopsis and Existing threats or Sensitivities
				Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. It also supports a number of rare plant species and has ornithological importance.
002122	Wicklow Mountains SAC	7.6 W	[3110] Oligotrophic Waters containing very few minerals [3160] Dystrophic Lakes [4010] Wet Heath [4030] Dry Heath [4060] Alpine and Subalpine Heaths [6130] Calaminarian Grassland [6230] Species-rich Nardus Grassland* [7130] Blanket Bogs (Active)* [8110] Siliceous Scree [8210] Calcareous Rocky Slopes [8220] Siliceous Rocky Slopes [91A0] Old Oak Woodlands [1355] Otter (Lutra lutra)	Wicklow Mountains SAC is a complex of upland areas in Counties Wicklow and Dublin, flanked by the Blessington reservoir to the west and Vartry reservoir in the east, Cruagh Mountain in the north, and Lybagh Mountain in the south. Most of the site is over 300 m, with much ground over 600 m. The highest peak is 925 m at Lugnaquilla. The Wicklow uplands comprise a core of granites flanked by Ordovician schists, mudstones and volcanics. The form of the Wicklow Glens is due to glacial erosion. The topography is typical of a mountain chain, showing the effects of more than one cycle of erosion. The massive granite has weathered characteristically into broad domes. Most of the western part of the site consists of an elevated moorland, covered by peat. The surrounding schists have assumed more diverse outlines, forming prominent peaks and rocky foothills with deep glens. The dominant topographical features are the products of glaciation. High corrie lakes, deep valleys, and moraines are common features of this area. The substrate over much of the area is peat, usually less than 2 m deep. Poor mineral soil covers the slopes, and rock outcrops are frequent. The Wicklow Mountains are drained by several major rivers including the Dargle, Liffey, Dodder, Slaney, and Avonmore. The river water in the mountain areas is often peaty, especially during floods. Wicklow Mountains is important as a complex, extensive upland site. It shows great diversity from a geomorphological and a topographical point of view. The vegetation provides examples of the typical upland habitats with heath, blanket bog, and upland grassland covering large, relatively undisturbed areas. In all, twelve habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive are found within the site. Several rare or protected plant and animal species occur, adding further to its value.
004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA	7.6W	[A098]Merlin (Falco columbarius) [A103] Peregrine (Falco peregrinus)	This is an extensive upland site, comprising a substantial part of the Wicklow Mountains. Most of the site is in Co. Wicklow, but a small area lies in Co. Dublin. The underlying geology of the site is mainly of Leinster granites, flanked by Ordovician schists, mudstones and volcanics. The area was subject to glaciation

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Site Synopsis and Existing threats or Sensitivities
				and features fine examples of glacial lakes, deep valleys, and moraines. Most of site is over 300 m, with much ground being over 600 m; the highest peak is Lugnaquillia (925 m). The substrate over much of site is peat, with poor mineral soil occurring on the slopes and lower ground. Exposed rock and scree are features of the site. The predominant habitats present are blanket bog, heaths, and upland grassland. The Wicklow Mountains SPA is of high ornithological importance as it supports nationally important populations of Merlin and Peregrine, both species that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Part of Wicklow Mountains SPA is a Statutory Nature Reserve.
000725	Knocksink Wood SAC	11.9 NW	[7220] Petrifying Springs* [91A0] Old Oak Woodlands [91E0] Alluvial Forests*	Knocksink Wood is situated in the valley of the Glencullen River, just north-west of Enniskerry in Co. Wicklow. The fast-flowing Glencullen River winds its way over granite boulders along the valley floor. The steep sides of the valley are mostly covered with calcareous drift and support extensive areas of woodland. This site contains a substantial area of potentially ancient woodland. It has one of the most diverse woodland invertebrate faunas in Ireland, including some wet woodland organisms which are threatened at an international level. Vertebrates noted in the vicinity, either by tracks, sett, or sight, include Red Squirrel, Badger, Rabbit, and Deer. The woodland supports large populations of birds, including many common passerines (Robin, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Wren, Chaffinch) and crows, such as Rook, Hooded Crow, Magpie, Jackdaw, and Raven. Buzzard have been recorded in the area, and Dipper are occasionally seen on the river. The importance of this site lies in the diversity of woodland habitats which occur. Three habitats listed in Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive, two of which have priority status (petrifying springs and alluvial woodland), occur at this site. The presence of rare or threatened plants and invertebrates adds to the interest. Much of this site has been designated a Statutory Nature.
000713	Ballyman Glen SAC	12.3 NW	[7220] Petrifying Springs* [7230] Alkaline Fens	Ballyman Glen is situated approximately 3 km north of Enniskerry and straddles the County boundary between Dublin and Wicklow. It is orientated in an east-west direction with a stream running through the centre. The glen is bounded mostly

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Site Synopsis and Existing threats or Sensitivities
				by steeply sloping pasture with Gorse (Ulex europaeus) and areas of wood and scrub. An area of land that slopes towards the fen has been used as a landfill site for domestic refuse. The site is also used for a clay pigeon shoot and shattered clay pigeons are scattered throughout the area. The fen vegetation at this site is well developed, with an unusually large number of sedge species present. The presence of alkaline fen and of petrifying spring/seepage areas is also particularly notable, as these habitats are listed, the latter with priority status, on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Fens are rare in Wicklow and Dublin, and this is one of only two sites in Wicklow for the Narrow-leaved Marsh orchid.
002274	Wicklow Reef SAC	14 SE	[1170] Reefs	Wicklow Reef is situated just to the north of Wicklow Head on the east coast of Ireland in Co. Wicklow. The substrate is a mixture of cobbles, bedrock, and sand and is subject to strong tidal streams. Wicklow Reef is an example of a subtidal reef constructed by the honeycomb worm Sabellaria alveolata. In Irish waters this worm normally constructs reefs on intertidal rocks, in areas subject to some sand scour. Such reefs are widespread but uncommon. Sabellaria alveolata subtidal reefs are known to occur in the Mediterranean but this example is an extremely unusual feature and may be the first record for Britain and Ireland. Wicklow Reef is of high conservation value as it is the only documented example in Ireland of a biogenic reef. Further, it supports a number of uncommon species.
004127	Wicklow Head SPA	14.1 SE	[A188] Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla)	Wicklow Head is a rocky headland with extensive exposures of mica-schist. It is situated approximately 3 kilometres south of Wicklow town. A lighthouse is located near the base of the cliffs. The cliffs are highest immediately south of the lighthouse where they rise to about 60 m, and it is here that most of the seabirds breed. The site comprises the cliffs and cliff-top vegetation, as well as some heath vegetation. The marine area to a distance of 500 m from the base of the cliffs is included in the site. At the time this site was identified for Special Protection Area (SPA) designation, it was utilised by a nationally important

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Site Synopsis and Existing threats or Sensitivities
				population of Kittiwake and this species is regarded as a special conservation interest for this SPA. A survey in 2002 recorded a nationally important population of breeding Kittiwake (956 pairs) and other breeding seabirds including Fulmar (62 pairs), Shag (11 pairs), Herring Gull (20 pairs), Guillemot (281 pairs), and Razorbill (125 pairs). A survey of Black Guillemot in April 1998 recorded 70 individual birds within the SPA. The site also supports a pair of breeding Peregrine. Ravens nest annually on the cliffs, and the heath supports such species as Stonechat, Whitethroat, and Linnet. The occurrence of Peregrine, a species that is listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, is of note.

3.3 Assessment Criteria

3.3.1 Exclusion from Appropriate Assessment

As set out in the provisions of the Habitats Directive, Plans or Projects that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site do not require AA. For this exception to apply, management is required to be interpreted narrowly as nature conservation management in the sense of Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive. This refers to specific measures to address the ecological requirements of annexed habitats and species (and their habitats) present on a site(s). The relationship should be shown to be direct and not a by-product of the plan, even if this might result in positive or beneficial effects for a site(s).

In this case however, the proposed development at the Main Road in Newtownmountkennedy is neither necessary for, nor directly connected with the management of a European Site. As such, the development cannot be excluded from AA.

3.3.2 Elements of the works with the potential to give risk to Effects

The construction and operational phases of the proposed walkway have the potential to introduce effects such as indirect disturbance due to noise/vibrations and surface water run-off into the Newtownmountkennedy river. These effects are examined in detail in relation to the sensitive receptors of each of the European sites identified with regard to the conservation objectives and the potential pathways for effects.

3.3.3 Identification of Potential Effects and Screening of Sites

This section documents the final stage of the screening process. It uses the information collected on the sensitivity of each European Site and describes any potential effects to the integrity of European sites resulting from the proposed works. This assumes the absence of any controls, conditions, or mitigation measures. In determining the potential for effects, a number of factors have been taken into account. Firstly, the sensitivity and reported threats to the European Site and secondly, the individual elements of the proposed works and the potential effect they may cause to the site were considered.

Sites are screened out based on one or a combination of the following criteria:

- Where it can be shown that there are no significant pathways such as hydrological links between activities of the proposed works and the site to be screened;
- Where the site is located at such a distance from proposed works that effects are not foreseen; and
- Where it is that known threats or vulnerabilities at a site cannot be linked to potential impacts that may arise from the proposed works.

3.4 Assessment of Significance of Potential Effects

Assessment is the process of evaluating the importance or significance of project/plan effects (whether negative or positive). The following parameters are described when characterising impacts (following guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Environmental Protection Agency, and National Roads Authority):

Direct and Indirect Impacts – An impact can be caused either as a direct or as an indirect consequence of a proposed development;

Magnitude - Magnitude refers to size, amount, intensity, and volume. It should be quantified if possible and expressed in absolute or relative terms (e.g. the amount of habitat lost, percentage change to habitat area, percentage decline in a species population). Magnitude measures the size of an impact, which is described as high, medium, low, very low, or negligible.

Extent - The extent is the spatial or geographical area over which the impact/effect may occur under a suitably representative range of conditions (e.g. noise transmission under water);

Duration - The time for which the effect is expected to last prior to recovery or replacement of the resource or feature.

- Temporary: Up to 1 Year;
- Short Term: The effects would take 1-7 years to be mitigated;
- Medium Term: The effects would take 7-15 years to be mitigated;
- Long Term: The effects would take 15-60 years to be mitigated; and
- Permanent: The effects would take 60+ years to be mitigated.

Likelihood – The probability of an impact/effect occurring taking into account all available information.

- Certain/Near Certain: >95% chance of occurring as predicted;
- Probable: 50-95% chance as occurring as predicted;
- Unlikely: 5-50% chance as occurring as predicted; and
- Extremely Unlikely: <5% chance as occurring as predicted.

The 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, European Commission Environment DG, 2001' outlines the types of effects that may affect European sites. These include effects from the following activities:

- Land take
- Resource Requirements (Drinking Water Abstraction Etc.)
- Emissions (Disposal to Land, Water or Air)
- Excavation Requirements
- Transportation Requirements
- Duration of Construction, Operation, Decommissioning

In addition, the guidance outlines the following likely changes that may occur at a designated site, which may result in effects on the integrity and function of that site:

- Reduction of Habitat Area
- Disturbance to Key Species

- Habitat or Species Fragmentation
- Reduction in Species Density
- Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value (Water Quality, Etc.)
- Climate Change

The elements detailed above were considered with specific reference to each of the European sites identified within a 15km radius.

3.4.1 Land Take/Habitat Loss

The proposed development will see a minor land take with the addition of the walkway along the river. Since the nearest European Site or qualifying habitat feature is 3.2km from the site (i.e. Carriggower Bog SAC), there will be no effects posed to European sites in this respect.

3.4.2 Resource Requirements

There are no resource requirements (i.e. mineral/drinking water abstractions, etc.) for the proposed development which will be additional to existing requirements. Therefore, there will be no interactions with resources necessary for the maintenance of the ecological integrity of any European sites.

3.4.3 Duration of Works

The construction phase of the proposed works is anticipated to short term in nature. Given the relatively small-scale and short-term nature of the construction works, the duration of the works will not have a significant impact on nearby European sites.

3.4.4 Emissions (Disposal to Land, Water or Air)

Construction Phase:

Construction phase elements of the plan may give rise to increased temporary site effects such as noise or contamination due to dust. The closest surface water feature, (Newtownmountkennedy_020), is located adjacent to the eastern and southern portions of the proposed works. Although the scale of works is deemed to be small and there are no anticipated in-stream works, the close proximity of the works to the Newtownmountkennedy_020 stream means that there is an indirect hydrological link and therefore potential for significant effects on The Murrough Wetlands SAC and The Murrough SPA which are located 4.5km and 4.2km downstream respectively (Figures 3.2 and 3.3).

Operational Phase:

Due to the small predicted magnitude of discharge which will not contribute to additional surface water discharge to the river and the distance (minimum of 4.5km direct to The Murrough Wetlands SAC) between the proposed project and the European site with indirect connectivity, it is considered that the surface water drainage from the proposed works in its operational phase will not have a significant impact on nearby European sites.

3.4.5 Excavation Requirements/ Erosion/Sedimentation

The proposed development does not require major excavation works. Some small-scale works will be completed.

The Carriggower Bog SAC is located approximately 3.2km to the northwest of the proposed site. The land between the site and the SAC is mixed use with residential, recreational, educational, and commercial/retail businesses. Its topography is undulating in nature with several hills and troughs and a low-lying plain surrounding the site. There is a potential for erosion of bare ground and/or sediment movement resulting from surface run-off during the construction phase. However, due to local topography, these works are not expected to impact on the nearest European site.

The project is expected to be relatively small in scale and short term, so although the indirect hydrological link via the Newtownmountkennedy River poses a low potential risk to The Murrough SAC and SPA, there are no anticipated significant effects to the European Sites. However, in an abundance of caution this assessment will be proceeding to Natura Impact Statement.

The impacts associated with the proposed development are not considered to be significant. Therefore, given the scale and time frame of the development, the effects arising from these works will be negligible.

3.4.6 Transportation Requirements

There will be a minor temporary increase in traffic during the construction phase. However, these effects are considered to be negligible with regard to European sites due to the small-scale nature of the works, the distances observed, and the indirect pathways for effects.

3.4.7 Duration of Construction, Operation, Decommissioning

The proposed project duration is short term. The construction will result in a raised walkway which will be a permanent feature with no decommissioning phase. The duration of the construction will have negligible effects on European sites as long as mitigation measures are implemented even considering the indirect hydrological link to a European site. Therefore, this assessment will be proceeding to Natura Impact Statement.

3.4.8 Habitat Reduction

There are no supporting habitats identified within the site footprint for any Annex I or Annex II species. The nearest European site or qualifying habitat feature is located 3.2km from the site. As such, there will be no reduction of habitat of European sites resulting from the proposed development.

3.4.9 Species Disturbance

Of the protected species and habitats identified, the nearest is Carriggower Bog SAC located 3.2km from the proposed development. As such, disturbance from noise, vibrations, lighting, etc. are not a valid link. There are no pathways for disturbance effects identified due to the distance between the proposed development and the nearest European site.

3.4.10 Habitat or species fragmentation

Given the scale, timeline, and distance from the European sites, the proposal is considered to have no potential effects on any European site in this regard.

3.4.11 Changes in Key indicators of Conservation Value

The nearest hydrologically connected European site is 4.2km away from the proposed river walkway installation. There is a surface water feature within the site area (Newtonmountkennedy_020 stream) that flows from north to south to the east of the proposed works, eventually flowing into The Murrough Wetlands SAC and The Murrough SPA. Therefore, the proposed development has a low potential to likely give rise to adverse effects on the designated European sites and therefore in an abundance of caution this assessment will be proceeding to Natura Impact Statement.

3.4.12 Climate Change

Due to the nature and scale of the proposed work, the effects of the proposed development on climate and Ireland's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol are not anticipated to be significant.

Table 3.2 Screening assessment of the potential effects arising from the proposed works

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Characterisation of Potential Effects	Potential Significant Effects	Potential In-combination Effects
000716	Carriggower Bog SAC	3.2 NW	[7140] Transition mires and quaking bogs	Threats to the site include: B01 (forest planting on open ground); K02.01 (species composition change (succession)); J02.01 (Landfill, land reclamation and drying out, general); A04.03 (abandonment of pastoral systems, lack of grazing); A08 (Fertilisation); E01.03 (dispersed habitation); J02.08 (Raising the groundwater table /artificial recharge of goundwater); A04.02.03 (non-intensive horse grazing). There are no sources for effect to the terrestrial habitats of the SAC. There is no hydrological link given the site's location downstream of the protected area. Construction phase effects such as dust are known to persist over a short distance (less than 250 meters); all other effects from the sites are identified to be localised.	No	No
000719	Glen of the Downs SAC	3.8 N	[91A0] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles	Threats to the site include: G02.01 (golf course); G05.07 (missing or wrongly directed conservation measures); G02.06 (attraction park); I01 (invasive non-native species); J01.01 (burning down); G01.02 (walking, horseriding, and non-motorised vehicles); G05.04 (Vandalism); D01.02 (roads, motorways); A04 (grazing). There are no sources for effect to the terrestrial habitats of the SAC. There is no hydrological link given the site's location downstream of the protected area. Construction phase effects such as dust are known to persist over a short distance (less than 250 meters); all other effects from the sites are identified to be localised.	No	No
004186	The Murrough SPA	4.2 E	[A001] Red-throated Diver (Gavia stellata) [A043] Greylag Goose (Anser anser) [A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota)	Threats to the site include: D01.04 (railway lines, TGV); A08 (Fertilisation); G01.02 (walking, horseriding, and non-motorised vehicles).	Yes	Yes

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Characterisation of Potential Effects	Potential Significant Effects	Potential In-combination Effects
			[A050] Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A052] Teal (Anas crecca) [A179] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A184] Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) [A195] Little Tern (Sterna albifrons) [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds	There are sources for effect to the terrestrial habitats of the SPA. There is a direct hydrological link given the site's location upstream of the protected area. Although no in-stream works will be carried out, there are potential impacts anticipated to the SPA due to the fact that the proposed works will be very close to a surface water feature (Newtownmountkennedy_020).		
002249	The Murrough Wetlands SAC	4.5 E	[1210] Annual Vegetation of Drift Lines [1220] Perennial Vegetation of Stony Banks [1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows [1410] Mediterranean Salt Meadows [7210] Cladium Fens* [7230] Alkaline Fens	Threats to the site include: G01.02 (walking, horseriding, and non-motorised vehicles); A08 (Fertilisation); K01.01 (Erosion); D01.01 (paths, tracks, cycling tracks); E03.02 (disposal of industrial waste); C01.01 (Sand and gravel extraction); B (Sylviculture, forestry); J02.12.01 (sea defense or coast protection works, tidal barrages); D01.04 (railway lines, TGV); J02.05.01 (modification of water flow (tidal & marine currents)). There are sources for effect to the terrestrial habitats of the SAC. There is a direct hydrological link given the site's location upstream of the protected area. Although no in-stream works will be carried out, there are potential impacts anticipated to the SAC due to the fact that the proposed works will be very close to a surface water feature (Newtownmountkennedy_020).	Yes	Yes
000714	Bray Head SAC	7.5 NE	[1230] Vegetated Sea Cliffs [4030] Dry Heath	Threats to the site include: A10.01 (removal of hedges and copses or scrub); G01.03 (motorised vehicles); E01 (Urbanised areas, human habitation); J01.01 (burning down); D01.01 (paths, tracks, cycling tracks); K02.01 (species composition change (succession)); K01.01 (Erosion); G05.04 (Vandalism). There are no sources for effect to the terrestrial habitats of the SAC. There is no hydrological link given the site's location within a different hydrologic catchment area to the protected area. Construction phase effects such as dust	No	No

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Characterisation of Potential Effects	Potential Significant Effects	Potential In-combination Effects
				are known to persist over a short distance (less than 250 meters); all other effects from the sites are identified to be localised.		
002122	Wicklow Mountains SAC	7.6 W	[3110] Oligotrophic Waters containing very few minerals [3160] Dystrophic Lakes [4010] Wet Heath [4030] Dry Heath [4060] Alpine and Subalpine Heaths [6130] Calaminarian Grassland [6230] Species-rich Nardus Grassland* [7130] Blanket Bogs (Active)* [8110] Siliceous Scree [8210] Calcareous Rocky Slopes [8220] Siliceous Rocky Slopes [91A0] Old Oak Woodlands [1355] Otter (Lutra lutra)	Threats to the site include: F04.02 (collection (fungi, lichen, berries, etc.)); A05.02 (stock feeding); G01.02 (walking, horseriding, and non-motorised vehicles); A04 (grazing); G01.04 (mountaineering, rock climbing, speleology); G01 (Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities); K04.05 (damage by herbivores (including game species); G05.04 (Vandalism); G04.01 (Military manouvres); G05.07 (missing or wrongly directed conservation measures); I01 (invasive non-native species); G05.06 (tree surgery, felling for public safety, removal of roadside trees); E03.01 (disposal of household/ recreational facility waste); C01.03 (Peat extraction); G02.09 (wildlife watching); B06 (grazing in forests/ woodland); F03.02.02 (taking from nest (falcons); D01.01 (paths, tracks, cycling tracks); J01.01 (burning down); E01 (Urbanised areas, human habitation); G01.03.02 (off-road motorized driving). There are no sources for effect to the terrestrial habitats of the SAC. There is no hydrological link given the site's location downstream of the protected area. Construction phase effects such as dust are known to persist over a short distance (less than 250 meters); all other effects from the sites are identified to be localised.	No	No
004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA	7.6W	[A098]Merlin (Falco columbarius) [A103] Peregrine (Falco peregrinus)	Threats to the site include: G01.02 (walking, horseriding, and non-motorised vehicles); B (Sylviculture, forestry); A04 (grazing); C01.03 (Peat extraction); D01.01 (paths, tracks, cycling tracks). There are no sources for effect to the terrestrial habitats of the SPA. There is no hydrological link given the site's	No	No

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Characterisation of Potential Effects	Potential Significant Effects	Potential In-combination Effects
				location downstream of the protected area. Construction phase effects such as dust are known to persist over a short distance (less than 250 meters); all other effects from the sites are identified to be localised.		
000725	Knocksink Wood SAC	11.9 NW	[7220] Petrifying Springs* [91A0] Old Oak Woodlands [91E0] Alluvial Forests*	Threats to the site include: E01.02 (discontinuous urbanisation); D01.01 (paths, tracks, cycling tracks); G02.08 (camping and caravans); D01.02 (roads, motorways); B01 (forest planting on open ground); E03.01 (disposal of household / recreational facility waste); G03 (Interpretative centres); G05.04 (Vandalism); G05.07 (missing or wrongly directed conservation measures); G01.02 (walking, horseriding, and non-motorised vehicles); D05 (Improved access to site); B01.02 (artificial planting on open ground (non-native trees); B02.03 (removal of forest undergrowth); I01 (invasive non-native species); A04 (grazing). No spatial overlap. No direct impacts on habitats. Given distance, hydrological link unlikely. Construction phase effects such as dust are known to persist over a short distance (less than 250 meters); all other effects from the sites are identified to be localised.	No	No
000713	Ballyman Glen SAC	12.3 NW	[7220] Petrifying Springs* [7230] Alkaline Fens	Threats to the site include: B01 (forest planting on open ground); E01.01 (continuous urbanisation); D01.02 (roads, motorways); A01 (Cultivation); E03.01 (disposal of household / recreational facility waste); H02.01 (groundwater pollution by leakages from contaminated sites); A08 (Fertilisation); E01.02 (discontinuous urbanisation); A04 (grazing); A10.01 (removal of hedges and copses or scrub); H01.03 (other point source pollution to surface water). No spatial overlap. No direct impacts on habitats. Given distance, hydrological link unlikely. Construction phase	No	No

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Characterisation of Potential Effects	Potential Significant Effects	Potential In-combination Effects
				effects such as dust are known to persist over a short distance (less than 250 meters); all other effects from the sites are identified to be localised.		
002274	Wicklow Reef SAC	14 SE	[1170] Reefs	Threats to the site include: F02.02.05 (benthic dredging); J02.11.01 (Dumping, depositing of dredged deposits); F05.02 (date mussel-fishing); F02.01.02 (netting); F02.02.01 (benthic or demersal trawling); F02.01.01 (potting). No spatial overlap. No direct impacts on habitats. Given distance, hydrological link unlikely. Construction phase effects such as dust are known to persist over a short distance (less than 250 meters); all other effects from the sites are identified to be localised.	No	No
004127	Wicklow Head SPA	14 SE	[A188] Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla)	Threats to the site include: G01.02 (walking, horseriding, and non-motorised vehicles). No spatial overlap. No direct impacts on habitats. Given distance, hydrological link unlikely. Construction phase effects such as dust are known to persist over a short distance (less than 250 meters); all other effects from the sites are identified to be localised.	No	No

4 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

4.1 Summary

The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. This AA screening has been prepared for the proposed addition of a walkway along the Newtownmountkennedy river located to the east of Newtownmountkennedy town centre, Co. Wicklow and is based on best scientific knowedge and has utilised ecological and hydrological expertise. In addition, a detailed online review of published scientific literature and 'grey' literature was conducted.

There is surface water feature mapped within the site area, the Newtonmountkennedy_020, that flows through a bridge beneath the Main Road. This watercourse eventually flows into The Murrough Wetlands SAC (4.5km downstream from the site) and the Murrough SPA. Despite the fact that the site works are not anticipated to cause any discharge to the body of water, there is low potential for indirect impacts downstream into the SAC and SPA from construction related emissions into the stream.

Since The Murrough SPA is an important site for wintering waterbirds, being internationally important for Light-bellied Brent Goose and nationally important for Red-throated Diver, Greylag Goose, Wigeon, Teal, Black-headed Gull, and Herring Gull and being also probably the most important site in the country for nesting Little Tern, even indirect impacts could lead to decreased ecological value of the site.

There will be no:

- Reduction in habitat area
- Disturbance to key species
- Habitat or species fragmentation
- Reduction in species density
- Changes in key indicator of conservation value
- Climate change

There might be:

- Emissions of materials downstream to the SAC and SPA.

4.2 Conclusion

This stage 1 screening for AA of the proposed addition of a walkway along the Newtownmountkennedy river connecting the Dublin Road and Main Street in Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow shows that implementation of the proposed project may be cause significant effects on The Murrough SPA and The Murrough Welands SAC. These European sites are located 4.2 and 4.5 kilometres east of the proposed development site and are indirectly connected via a hydrological link. The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during the construction and operational phases as a result of the implementation of the project.

Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the project characteristics, taking into account the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated that there is a low potential for adverse effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interest or the conservation objectives of downstream European sites.

It is concluded that the project has a low potential to give rise to adverse effects on the designated European sites with which it is hydrologically linked. This evaluation is made in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species for which these sites have been designated. However, in an abundance of caution, a Stage Two is required for the project.