

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

**Pedestrian Scheme
Ballyguilemore, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow**

Wicklow County Council

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November 2022**

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1 INTRODUCTION

Deborah D’Arcy was commissioned by Wicklow County Council to carry out an appropriate assessment screening under Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive in relation to the proposed pedestrian scheme works on the L-5103L-5103 at Ballyguilemore, due south of Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow (Figure 1). An Appropriate Assessment screening report is required in respect of the proposed development, with particular consideration of the closest European Site located at a distance of approximately 1.2 km due east of the works; the Wicklow Head SPA (site code: 004127). It is noted that this European Site is indirectly connected to the proposed works via the Dunbur Lower Stream, which is crossed by the project and therefore comprises a hydrological pathway.

The project proposal and Screening to inform AA has been completed following a detailed site survey and desk study, with specific reference to the European Sites within the zone of influence of the proposed development; taking account of the qualifying interests and conservation objectives of all relevant European Sites. This assessment and associated reporting has been completed by Deborah D’Arcy on behalf of Wicklow Co. Co., utilising the experience of a qualified professional ecologist. The evaluation and assessment conclusion statement is determined based on the project description and detail provided by Wicklow Co. Co. The Screening Assessment to inform the Appropriate Assessment process will be completed by Wicklow Co. Co. as the competent authority, in accordance with their legislative remit under Article 42 of the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations, 2011. In this regard Wicklow Co. Co. will complete an AA Screening Determination with reference to the conclusion statement presented in this AA Screening Report.

1.1 Statement of Competency

Deborah D’Arcy is an Ecologist with an MSc in Ecological Assessment and 9 years ecological consultancy experience and is an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, the chief professional body for Ecologists in Ireland and as such is bound by their professional code of conduct.

1.2 Legislative context

The purpose of AA screening is to determine, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, alone and in combination with other plans or projects, could have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. The need to apply the precautionary principle in making any key decisions in relation to the tests of AA has been confirmed by European Court of Justice case law. Therefore, where significant effects are likely, uncertain or unknown at screening stage, AA will be required. Stage 1 Screening for AA is undertaken without the consideration of any mitigation measures, unless potential impacts can be clearly avoided through modification or re-design of the project (DoEHLG, 2010). If significant effects on Natura sites cannot be ruled out then a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Statement is required. The Natura 2000 network provides an ecological infrastructure for the protection of sites that are of particular importance for rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats and species within the EU. The Natura 2000 network in Ireland is made up of European Sites which include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)

This screening report has been compiled in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC which establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment. The Habitats Directive is transposed into Irish Law by the European Communities Natural Habitats Regulations S.I. No. 477 of 2011.

Article 6(3) “Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”

1.3 Guidelines

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidelines for Planning Authorities. DoEHLG, 2010.
- Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management: OPR Practice Note PN01. Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021.
- Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10 Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities
- Managing Natura 2000 sites – The Provisions of Article 6 of The Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2000.
- 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, 2002.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg (EC 2018).
- Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. Rulings of the European Court of Justice. Final draft September 2014.
- CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

These works are being carried out in anticipation of the new GAA grounds to be developed at (GPS 52.965168, -6.032396) by St. Patrick’s GAA Club, Wicklow Town. The relocation of the GAA club to this site will result in increased traffic flows along the L-5103 to the club. At existing L-5103 road is approximately 5.0 metres wide. It will be necessary to widen the road by 0.5m in order to cater for the increased traffic flows. In addition to this installation of a footpath which has a width of approximately 1.8 metres wide. This requires a setback of existing boundaries by approximately 2.3 to 2.5m to facilitate the widened road, footpath and possible public lighting.

2.1 Site Location

The proposed scheme is located on the L-5103, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow. The works will start at the end of the existing footpath on the L-5103 (GPS 52.969614, -6.034986) and will terminate at the proposed site for the new Wicklow GAA ground which will be located about 550m further south (GPS 52.965168, -6.032396). The proposed site is of linear form and extends over 550m. The extent of the proposed scheme is illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1 Site Location



2.2 Project Description

Wicklow County Council intends to undertake the construction of circa 550m footpath which includes 550m of road widening, slip form kerb, drainage and associated accommodation works on the L-5103 at Ballyguilmore, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow. It will be necessary to widen the road by 0.5m in order to cater for the increased traffic flows. In addition to this installation of a footpath which has a width of approximately 1.8 m wide. This requires a setback of existing boundaries by approximately 2.3m - 2.5m to facilitate the widened road, footpath and possible public lighting. The existing and proposed cross section of the L-5103 is outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2-1 Existing and Proposed Cross-Section of the L-5103

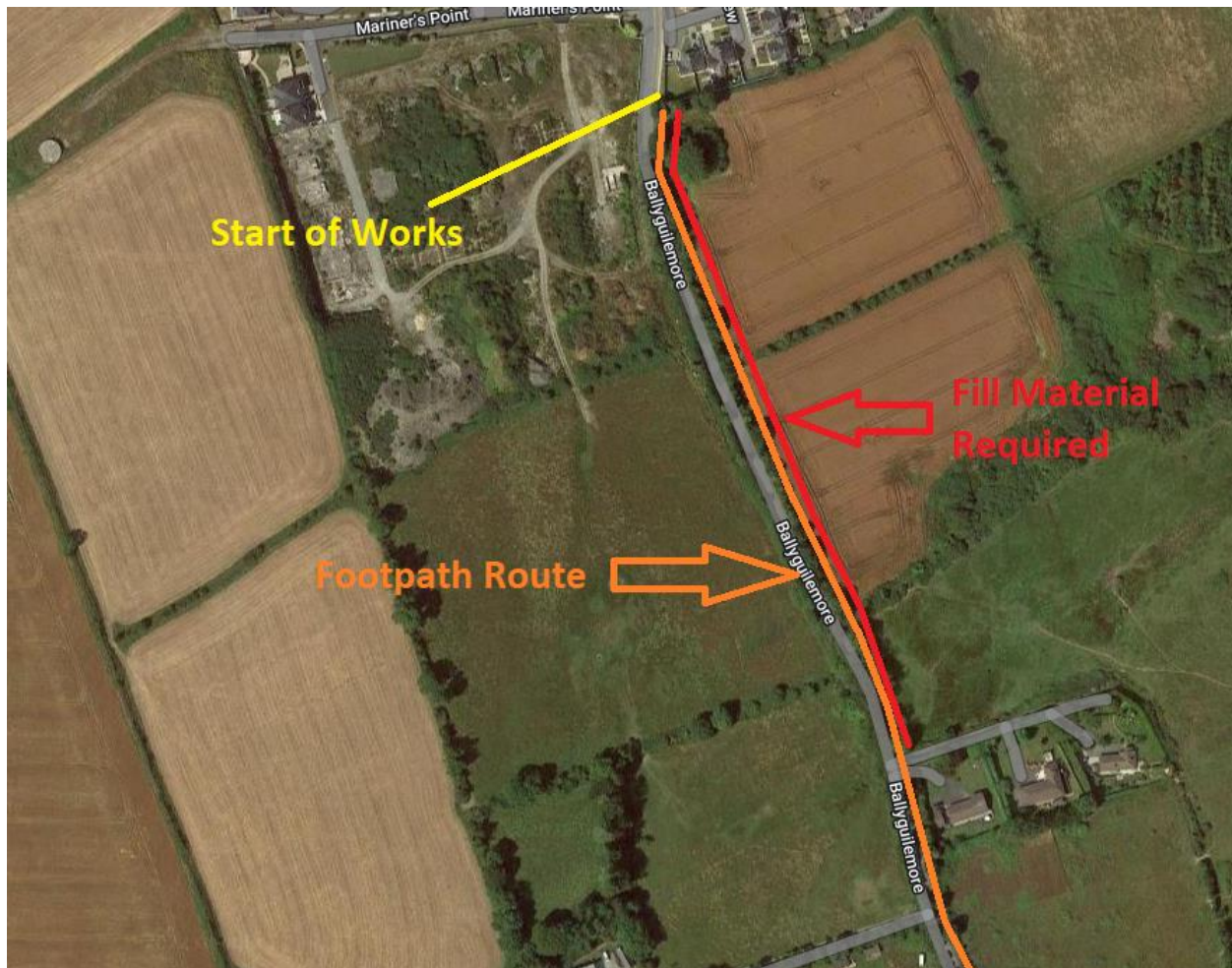
Cross section elements	Existing (m)	Proposed Scheme (m)
Carriageway	5	5.5
Southbound Footpath	0	1.8 – 2.0
Total	5	7.3 – 2.0

It is proposed to excavate the southbound (eastern) verge to accommodate the proposed scheme, including that of private land, subject to landowner agreement. Underground utilities are to be retained where possible but may need to be diverted if impacted by the proposed scheme. The drainage system will be over edge drainage. There may be a requirement for gullies along the eastern verge across the scheme length. **Detailed drainage design has not yet been undertaken. The drainage design will ensure no direct discharge to surface water from any element of the works without appropriate attenuation and treatment such that there will be no significant increased pollution or rate of run off of water to surface watercourses.**

A site survey was undertaken in May 2022. There are no private domestic residences or commercial properties, or other significant public infrastructure directly within the proposed scheme. However, there are boundary walls, front gardens and agricultural lands. The entire road corridor is bordered on both sides by mature treelines and hedgerows. In order to facilitate the proposed scheme, it will be necessary to remove all of the existing hedgerow and treeline in the eastern road verge. The hedgerow and verges on the western side of the road will not be modified in any way as part of this project. Wicklow County Council (WCC) propose to retain as much of the existing hedgerow and tree line as possible and only remove where necessary. Areas for subsequent replacement hedgerow and tree planting have been identified on the eastern verge.

At the start of the proposed scheme, over 350m, the private agricultural land is approximately 1m-2m below the existing road level, and as a result it will be necessary to import fill onto these lands in order to facilitate the proposed road widening and footpath. It is proposed to import this material from the abandoned housing development to the west of the proposed scheme, as there is unused fill material present. Wicklow County Council have obtained approval in principle and have lodged an Article 27 declaration to the EPA. The proposal is currently awaiting a response. A schematic of the proposed scheme and the infill requirements of private lands on the L-5103 is presented in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2 Proposed Scheme



2.3 Construction Methodology

This project is not due to commence until after 1st September 2022. It is expected that works will take approximately 3-4 months to complete, subject to weather conditions and will be completed in Q4 2022 or Q1 2023. Access to the work site will be via the existing road corridor L-5103. No additional access requirements are identified. The proposed scheme will be restricted to normal working hours as follows:

- 07:00 to 18:00 from Monday to Friday; and
- No allowance for weekend works.

The proposed site compound will be located on the existing ghost estate located adjacent to the works (GPS 52.969835, -6.035717) to minimise disturbance and utilise an existing hardstanding area. It will also mean that the haulage of material to/from the compound to the site is minimised. The proposed scheme will comprise the following:

- Signed off method statement and SSWP to be always kept on site;
- All safety documentation to be always kept on site;
- All staff to wear appropriate PPE;
- Set up the traffic management and warning signage including measures to control pedestrians;

- Set up site compounds complete with welfare unit, canteen, toilet etc. ;
- Area of works to be made safe for site personnel and the public by a trained SLG card holder in accordance with the roads traffic manual. (Appropriate fencing/barriers and signage to be used);
- Carry out all necessary tree pruning works and verge clearance, on a piecemeal basis trying to maintain compliance with Section 40 of The Wildlife Act 1976, where possible;
- Area of works to be CAT scanned prior to any excavation by trained personnel;
- If underground services are present, hand dig around the services to locate them;
- Commence excavation of existing road verge at the Wicklow end of the works. All of the excavated verge material will be reused as fill material on the agricultural lands;
- Subject to EPA approval, commence the importation of fill material from the abandoned residential development mentioned above to raise the ground levels on the agricultural lands;
- Carry out necessary works to maintain existing road side drainage. At some locations additional drainage may be required. If this is the case then it is likely that gully's will be constructed and piped into existing drainage channels in adjoining agricultural lands with the approval of the individual landowners. Excavation works will progress southwards;
- Ducting and sleeves will be installed along the footpath route to facilitate the **possible** future public lighting of the scheme. The columns will be installed at 30m intervals;
- Set out guide pins with tape indicating the top level of the kerb will be placed an offset behind the kerb face. A second guide pin will be placed behind this pin holding a guide line in clamps steering the footpath mould to line and level. The kerbing machine will be placed alongside the guideline with sensors attached to it;
- The macadam surface will be placed on 150mm of sub base to Cl 804 installed and compacted to Series 800 specification;
- Following completion of the footpath, remove traffic management and warning signs.

2.4 Operation Phase

The operational phase will coincide with the end of construction and the commissioning of the road widening and pedestrian footpath. Maintenance will be undertaken as required by Wicklow County Council, and would likely include path cleaning, gully clear out and landscaping etc.

2.5 Description of the Receiving Environment

A field survey including a phase 1 habitat survey (Fossitt, 2000) and fauna survey of the proposed pedestrian scheme and road widening works, including nearby surrounding areas, was carried out in May 2022. The project incorporates the public road corridor (L-5103L-5103) at Ballyguilemore, and extends due south. There are no private domestic residences or commercial properties, or other significant public infrastructure directly within the works area. However, there are boundary walls, front gardens and agricultural lands. The entire corridor of the scheme is bordered by mature treelines (WL2) and hedgerows (WL1). There are trees and mature hedgerow required for removal along the eastern verge to allow for the widening of the road and pedestrian accommodation. Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Sessile oak *Quercus petraea* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* dominate treeline sections along the route, with a well-developed beech *Fagus sylvatica* treeline on the western verge. It was noted that the majority of ash trees along the route were badly affected by the highly infectious 'ash dieback' disease. The hedgerow habitat within the works area is

dominated by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, with elder *Sambucus nigra*, willow *Salix* spp., bramble *Rubus fruticosus* spp. agg., male and buckler fern species *Dryopteris* spp., angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, bush vetch *Vicia sepium*, hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, greater stitchwort *Stellaria holostea*, and herb robert *Geranium robertianum*

Mature trees and the hedgerow corridors along the route on both sides of the road, including the open fields which are delineated with hedgerow boundaries means the study area is of local importance for bat species. All bat species are listed on Annex IV of the EC Birds and Habitats Regulations and also protected under the Wildlife Act (amendment 2000); see specific guidelines for the protection of Annex IV species under the Habitats Directive (EC, 2021).

No signs of mammal dwellings were noted from the hedgerows on either side of the road verge; however, mature trees were evaluated as being of low to moderate bat potential within the proposed works area.

The Dunbur Lower Stream (EPA code: 10D14) is a minor first order watercourse shown on EPA mapping (www.gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps), which rises directly west of the L-5103 in Ballyguilemore and crosses the road corridor of the works area. This watercourse flows due east to meet the sea within the Wicklow Golf Course. The confluence of this watercourse with the Irish Sea is directly adjacent to the Wicklow Head SPA (site code: 004127), see Figure 3 below. This watercourse channel was found to be dry during the survey undertaken in May, 2022. The location of the works in the upper headwaters means this is a temporary watercourse at this location, with no fisheries value at this location. However, the potential hydrological pathway downstream to the coast is noted.

The proposed scheme is underlain by the Wicklow Groundwater Body (IE_EA_G_076), Poorly Productive Bedrock. The groundwater status is 'Good'. The groundwater vulnerability is High to Extreme vulnerability across the proposed scheme (The aquifer is Poor Aquifer (PI) – Bedrock which is generally unproductive except for local zones

2.5.1 *Invasive plant species*

There were a number of non-native ornamental species planted within private property boundaries along the road corridor; however, these do not correspond to listed invasive species. No species listed on the Third Schedule of the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations, 2011 were recorded. There are no invasive species records for the 1km squares T3292 or T3192 in which the project scheme and the derelict construction site (source of infill) are located.

Figure 3. Proposed pedestrian scheme at Ballyguilemore, Wicklow (green line, approx.). Red hatch shading showing the Wicklow Head SPA located due east of the works, connected via the Dunbur Lower Stream.



Representative Photographs from the site survey



Plate 1. Northern end of the scheme at Ballyguilemore. Storage compound to be located to the left of image.



Plate 2. View south showing treeline along the eastern verge.



Plate 3. View south, well-developed hedgerow and treeline on both road verges. Eastern (left of image) hedgerow / treeline to be removed.



Plate 4. Mature ash tree with significant ash dieback disease evident. Characteristic of most ash trees within the study area.



Plate 5. The road is elevated above the agricultural lands. Drainage channels connected to the Dunbur Lower Stream were dry during the survey.



Plate 6. Well developed hedgerow on eastern verge, left of image.

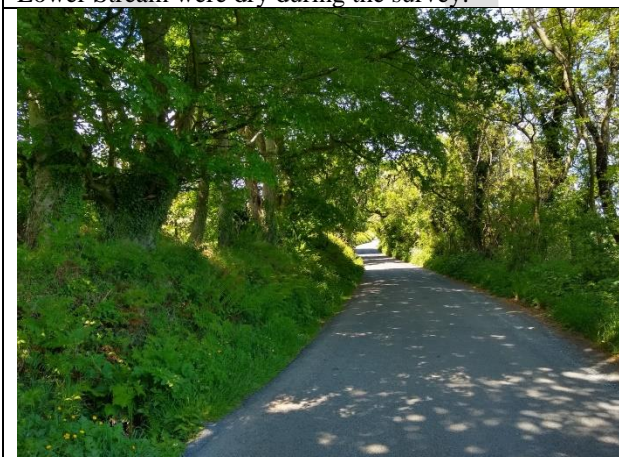


Plate 7. Treeline on western verge, view north. Ash dominated treeline on eastern verge, right of image.

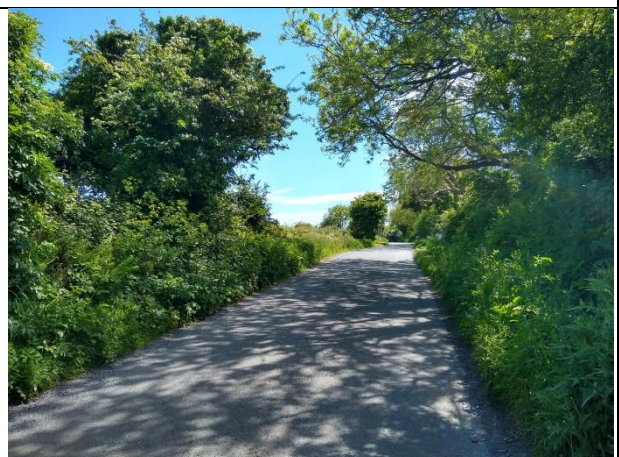
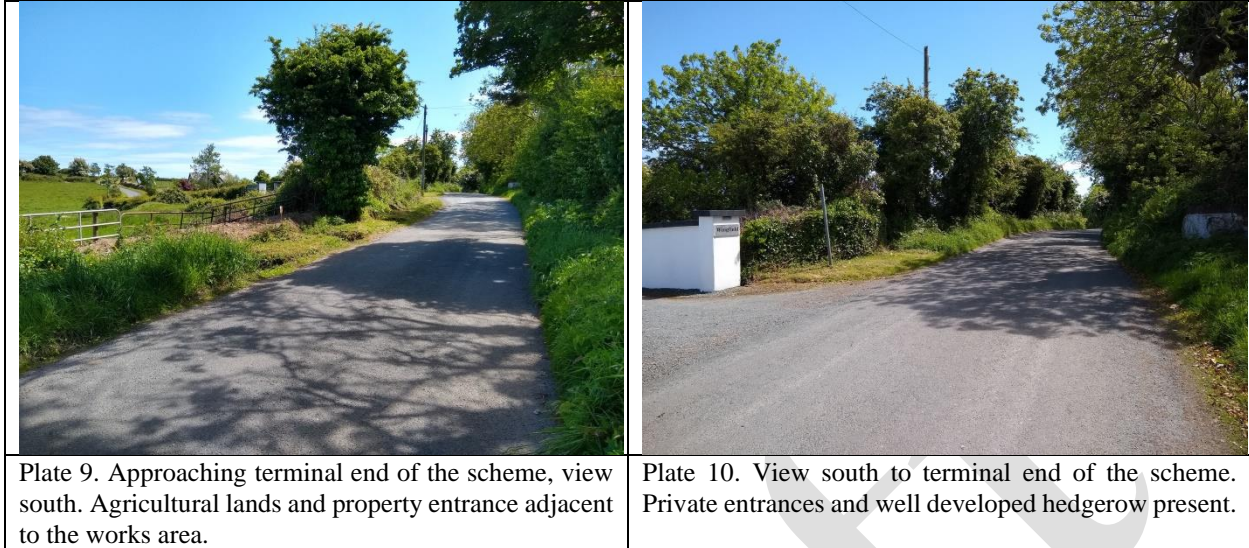


Plate 8. Hawthorn and hedgerow understory verge, view south.



3 SCREENING ASSESSMENT

3.1 Introduction

This stage of the process identifies any likely significant effects upon European Sites from the proposed footpath works, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. The Screening Assessment is progressed in order to determine: whether the proposal can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site; and whether the proposal has the potential to give rise to significant effects on a European site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, in view of the site's conservation objectives or conversely, that the potential for significant effects cannot be excluded. In the instance of this proposal, it is not directly connected to or necessary for the management of any European site, therefore the potential for significant effects must be evaluated.

3.2 Identification of Relevant European Sites

A standard source-receptor-pathway conceptual model was used to identify a preliminary list of 'relevant' European sites (i.e. those which could be potentially affected due to connectivity via impact pathways). This conceptual model is a standard tool in environmental assessment. In order for an effect to occur, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism means there is no likelihood for the effect to occur. In the context of the proposed works, the model comprises:

- Source(s) – e.g. noise disturbance, habitat loss, pollution.
- Pathway(s) – e.g. drains and streams connecting to European Sites; increased human activity; creation of barriers to movement/migration.
- Receptor(s) – Qualifying habitats and species of European Sites.

There are no designated conservation areas within the proposed development site boundary. Therefore, the proposed project does not directly impact on any Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Natural Heritage Area (NHA), Special Protection Area (SPA), National Park or Nature Reserve. The designated European

Sites identified in the wider 15km buffer of the proposed development are presented in Figure 4 in line with published guidance (NPWS, 2010). Potential pathways for impacts affecting European Sites outside of this buffer were also evaluated; however, given the size and scale of the proposed development, no pathways for effects at this extent were identified.

It is vital that an assessment of potential source-pathway-receptor links is undertaken to assess potential impact links between the receptor (European Sites) and source (proposed development) to establish the risk of any likely significant effects. Taking account of the most recent guidance published by the OPR (2021) the only pathways for connectivity to any European Site are identified via surface water hydrological connectivity, potentially occurring within a 5km radius. Therefore, although there are European Sites within a wider 15km radius, only those sites within a 5km radius are considered with regard to the potential for significant effects, in the absence of impact pathways in the wider buffer zone (see Table 1).

No additional SPA or SAC sites were screened in following this process. Additional designated sites including proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA's), Natural Heritage Areas and RAMSAR sites were also reviewed, as although they do not form part of the Appropriate Assessment, they often provide important supporting functions to European Sites. Information collected on the sensitivity of the Qualifying Interests (i.e. the stated Conservation Objectives) of each European Site identified in Table 1 was assessed with reference to the proposed development, including any likely significant effects from the construction and operation.

There are five European sites within approx. 5km of the proposed works (Table 1). However due to the small scale of the works and from the review of hydrological pathways associated with the works area, only the Wicklow Head SPA is evaluated as being within the zone of influence, with reference to hydrological pathways via the first order Dunbur Lower Stream, which is crossed by the scheme and discharges to the coast adjacent to the SPA site boundary (Figure 4).

Figure 4 European Sites within a 15km buffer zone of the proposed pedestrian scheme on the L-5103L-5103, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow.

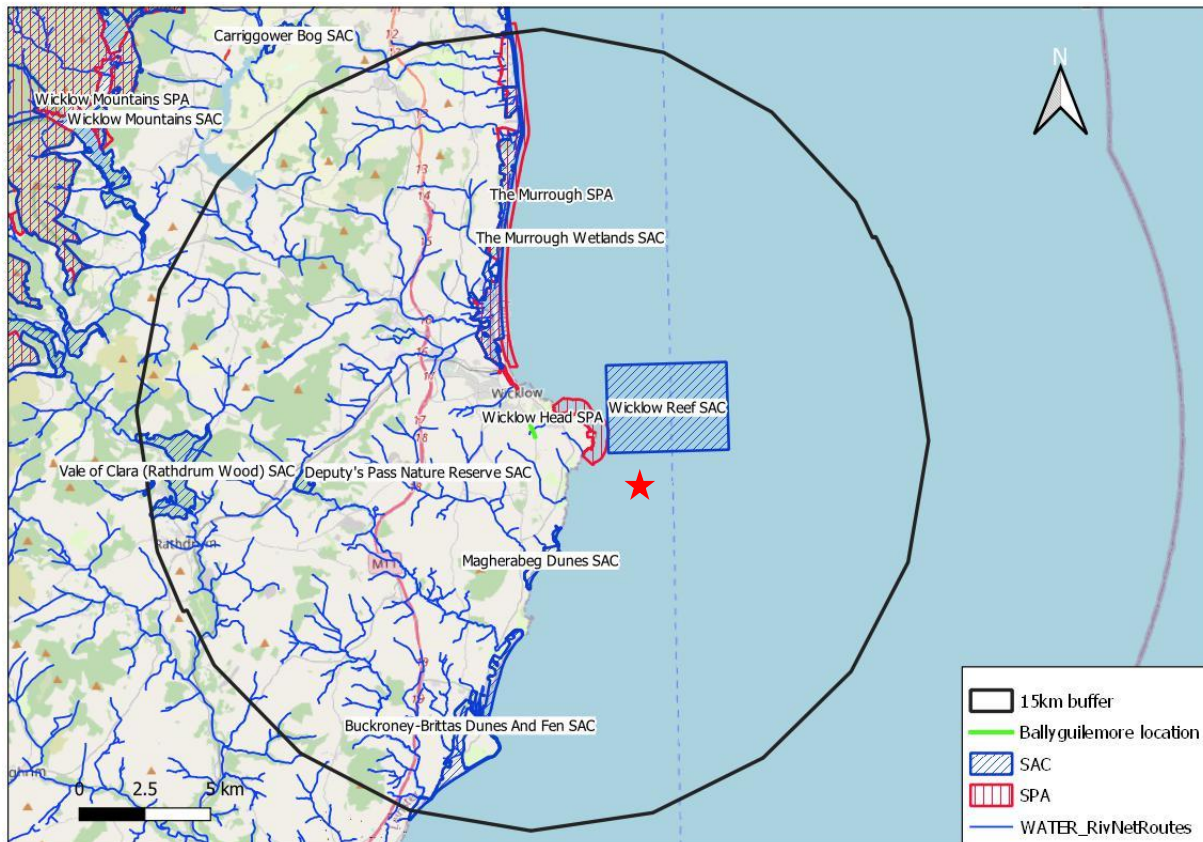


Table 1 European Sites within the 5km zone of influence of the proposed pedestrian scheme.

Site Name	Distance To (km)	Qualifying Interests (* denotes a priority habitat)	Conservation Objectives	Potential Impact Pathways / Connectivity
The Murrough Wetlands SAC 002249	2.7	1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines; 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks; 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i>); 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>); 7210 Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davalliana</i> *; 7230 Alkaline fens	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation-objectives/CO002249.pdf	No. There are no pathways or potential connectivity for impacts identified between the proposed works and this designated site.
Wicklow Reef SAC 002274	2.9	1170 Reefs	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation-objectives/CO002274.pdf	No. There are no pathways or potential connectivity for impacts identified between the proposed works and this designated site.

Site Name	Distance To (km)	Qualifying Interests (* denotes a priority habitat)	Conservation Objectives	Potential Impact Pathways / Connectivity
Magherabeg Dunes SAC 001766	3.7	1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines; 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes; 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes); 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)*; 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>)*	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO001766.pdf	No. There are no pathways or potential connectivity for impacts identified between the proposed works and this designated site.
Wicklow Head SPA 004127	1.2	A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>)	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004127.pdf	The proposed scheme crosses the Dunbur Lower Stream, approx. 1km west of this SPA. Works at his watercourse comprise a hydrological pathway to the SPA; therefore the potential connectivity for impacts between the proposed works and this designated site requires evaluation, in view of the SCIs and conservation objectives of the site.
The Murrough SPA 004186	1.8	A001 Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>); A195 Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>); A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>); A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>); A043 Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>); A050 Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>); A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>); A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>); A999 Wetlands	http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004186.pdf	No. There are no pathways or potential connectivity for impacts identified between the proposed works and this designated site.

3.3 Potential for Significant Effects on European Sites

Assessment of the likely effects direct and indirect of the proposed project was undertaken by carrying out an ecological field survey of the proposed site, desktop review, and consideration of the information pertaining to the conservation objectives of the European Sites for which pathways for potential impacts occur. It is vital that an assessment of potential source-pathway-receptor links is undertaken to assess potential impact links between the receptor (European Sites) and source (proposed development) to establish the risk of any likely significant effects. It used the information collected on the sensitivity of the Qualifying Interests of each European Site and describes any likely significant effects from the construction, operation and decommissioning stages of the proposed development. This assumes the absence of mitigation measures with the exception of those incorporated in the design stage as specified in the project

proposal. The Screening Assessment identifies the likelihood of significant effects arising from the proposed development, both in isolation and potentially in combination with other plans or projects (Table 1). Potential impacts were assessed with regard to the features of interest and conservation objectives of the closest European Sites: Wicklow Head SPA. However, it is noted that all European Sites are located at a distance of over 1km from the proposed works, are coastal or marine in nature and thus are subject to significant dilution capacity with regard to impacts from the proposal. There is a hydrological pathway identified by way of the Dunbur Lower Stream which is crossed by the project and which discharges to the Irish Sea in proximity to the Wicklow Head SPA.

3.3.1 Potential Direct Effects

The proposed pedestrian scheme at Ballyguilemore, Wicklow is located outside of and isolated from any European Site boundary; at a distance of approximately 1.2 km from the closest site the Wicklow Head SPA, see Figure 3 and Figure 4. It is located at a distance of 1.8 km from the next closest designation, The Murrough SPA, and 2.7km from the Murrough Wetlands SAC. No pathways for direct impacts to the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of these European Sites were identified. There are no suitable supporting habitats for species listed for these sites within the works area.

Therefore, it is evaluated that there are no potential direct effects arising during the proposed construction phase of the development. The operational phase of the development will not give rise to any direct discharge or emission to a European Site. There is therefore no likelihood of direct impacts arising from the proposed development during either the construction or operational phases which would have the potential to give rise to significant effects on any European Site, in view of the conservation objectives for these designations (Table 2).

3.3.2 Potential Indirect Effects

The proposed development is located entirely along the verge and within adjacent agricultural lands along the L5102 road corridor at Ballyguilemore, with the requirement for some reinstatement works and replanting along the works boundary. Taking account of the distance of separation between the works and any designated European site, at a distance from any pathways for impacts relating to indirect disturbance, there are no potential disturbance effects identified.

The headwaters of the first order Dunbur Lower Stream is crossed by the proposed project along the L-5103L-5103. This minor watercourse meets the Irish Sea in proximity to the Wicklow Head SPA. The watercourse and any drainage channels associated with it were found to be dry within the study area during the ecological survey completed in May 2022. The potential for connectivity of impacts from the works area to this designation are evaluated as low. Furthermore the potential for indirect impacts with regard to water quality are evaluated as being of low potential for indirect effects on the Wicklow Head SPA, taking account of the short term duration of the works, the size and scale of the footpath works, and the dilution capacity within the Irish Sea at the confluence of the stream.

No significant impact related to water quality or hydromorphological impacts from the operational phase of the proposed scheme is anticipated given that the drainage design when finalized will include appropriate attenuation and treatment such that there will be no significant increased pollution or increased rate of water

run off to surface watercourses. No increased emissions of polluted (e.g) hydrocarbon run off are predicted from a pedestrian and cyclist scheme as there no increased vehicle traffic is anticipated.

Furthermore, this SPA is designated for Kittiwake which are utilizing the cliffs around Wicklow Head and foraging / feeding in the wider area of the Irish Sea. There is no potential for significant indirect effects on this species in view of the Conservation Objectives for this SCI, with regard to the proposed project.

There are no ecological receptors identified within or directly adjacent to the site identified as qualifying interests of any European Site, or associated with the conservation objectives of any European Site. Based on proximity and topography/geographic distribution, any source / receptor pathways for potential impacts affecting designated European Sites can be excluded based on the distance of sensitive receptors from the development.

The discreet and isolated character of the construction phase, combined with the small scale of the construction works along the existing road verge negates the potential for indirect effects on the qualifying Annex I habitats, Annex II species, or Annex I bird species of the SAC and SPA sites within the wider study area.

Taking account of the size and scale of the proposed development, as well as the distance of separation via hydrological pathways there are no potential impacts identified which would have the potential to indirectly affect the qualifying interests of any European Site, in view of their conservation objectives.

A review of the remaining designated European Sites within the wider study area has been completed, with reference to the qualifying interests and conservation objectives for these sites. Based on the small size and scale of the proposal, in addition to the distance of separation, there are no indirect effects identified with regard to the construction or operational phase of the project (Table 2).

3.3.3 Potential Cumulative and In-combination Effects

The proposed development is located within the road corridor of the existing L-5103L-5103 and the adjacent hedgerow and agricultural lands adjoining. Taking account of the project description in terms of its size, scale and duration of the proposed construction works, the development will not give rise to any significant noise, traffic, dust, or surface water emissions during the proposed construction or operational phases with regard to transmission to any European Site; these environmental effects are evaluated as being localised and limited to within the site boundary and immediate environs.

On the basis of the above, and with reference to the imperceptible effects of the proposal in isolation, it is evaluated that the proposed development does not have the capacity to interact cumulatively or in-combination with other proposals to give rise to significant effects on any designated European Site.

Table 2. Evaluation of potential pathways for significant effects on European sites identified within the study area of the proposed development.

Site Name	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Potential Pathways for Effects	Potential for significant direct / indirect effects	Potential for significant cumulative / in-combination effects
The Murrough Wetlands SAC 002249	2.7	1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines; 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks; 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>); 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>); 7210 Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> *; 7230 Alkaline fens	There are no pathways for direct, indirect or cumulative impacts identified with regard to this SAC, with regard to the coastal habitats listed as qualifying interests. No interactions with the Conservation Objectives or their supporting features are identified arising from the proposed development.	No likelihood of potential direct or indirect effects.	No likelihood of potential cumulative or in-combination effects.
Wicklow Reef SAC 002274	2.9	1170 Reefs	There are no pathways for direct, indirect or cumulative impacts identified with regard to this SAC, with regard to the subtidal marine qualifying interests. No interactions with the Conservation Objectives or their supporting features are identified arising from the proposed development.	No likelihood of potential direct or indirect effects.	No likelihood of potential cumulative or in-combination effects.
Magherabeg Dunes SAC 001766	3.7	1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines; 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes; 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes); 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)*; 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>)*	There are no pathways for direct, indirect or cumulative impacts identified with regard to this SAC, with regard to the coastal habitats listed as qualifying interests. No interactions with the Conservation Objectives or their supporting features are identified arising from the proposed development.	No likelihood of potential direct or indirect effects.	No likelihood of potential cumulative or in-combination effects.
Wicklow Head SPA 004127	1.2	A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>)	There are no pathways for direct, indirect or cumulative impacts identified with regard to this SPA, with the exception of the Dunbur Lower Stream. This hydrological pathway has been assessed and it is evaluated that there is no	No likelihood of potential direct or indirect effects.	No likelihood of potential cumulative or in-combination effects.

Site Name	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Potential Pathways for Effects	Potential for significant direct / indirect effects	Potential for significant cumulative / in-combination effects
			potential for significant effects arising with regard to Kittiwake, listed as SCI for this site. No interactions with the Conservation Objectives or their supporting features are identified arising from the proposed development.		
The Murrough SPA 004186	1.8	A001 Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>); A195 Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>); A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>); A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>); A043 Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>); A050 Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>); A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>); A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>); A999 Wetlands	There are no pathways for direct, indirect or cumulative impacts identified with regard to this SPA, taking account of the waders and waterbirds listed as SCIs. No interactions with the Conservation Objectives or their supporting features are identified arising from the proposed development.	No likelihood of potential direct or indirect effects.	No likelihood of potential cumulative or in-combination effects.

4 CONCLUSION STATEMENT

The proposed project has been assessed taking into account:

- the nature, size and location of the proposed project and the associated works and possible impacts arising from same;
- the qualifying interests, conservation objectives and conservation status of the European Site: Wicklow Head SPA;
- the potential for impacts arising from the works on the Natura sites; and
- the potential for cumulative impacts

The proposed pedestrian scheme on the L-5103L-5103 at Ballyguilemore, Wicklow, Co. Wicklow are not located within or directly adjacent to any designated European Site. The Appropriate Assessment screening process considered the potential for significant effects which may arise during the construction and operational phases of the development.

This assessment comprised an evaluation of the pathways for effects on the qualifying interests of designated European Sites, with reference to the location, size, scale, and duration (construction and operation) associated with the proposal. Taking account of the processes involved, the isolated nature of the construction and operation phase with regard to pathways for impacts on any SAC / SPA, and the distance of separation between European Sites in the wider study area, it has been evaluated that there are no likely significant effects on the qualifying interests or the conservation objectives of any designated European Site. In particular, no potential for significant effects are identified with respect to the closest European Site, the Wicklow Head SPA, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. There are no elements of the project which could interact with the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of any European Site via impact pathways, no potential for significant effects arising via any such impact pathways are identified. The development site is located at a distance from the boundary of the Wicklow Head SPA (approx. 1.2 km). With regard to hydrological connectivity identified along the route of the proposed works; the scale of the proposed works, in addition to the distance of separation and the respective sensitivity of the special conservation interests precludes the potential for significant effects via any hydrological impact pathways.

It is concluded that there are no likely potential impacts, whether direct, indirect or cumulative/in-combination, which could give rise to significant effects on the qualifying interests or the conservation objectives of any designated European Site. Consequently, this proposed development does not require Appropriate Assessment process and can be screened out.

5 REFERENCES

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