



**FLYNN
FURNEY**

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Appropriate Assessment Stage 1: Screening

**Paulstown Playground, Kellymount, Co.
Kilkenny**

Document Details

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1 Introduction

1.1. Background

Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants have been appointed to provide the information necessary to allow the competent authority to conduct an Article 6(3) Screening for Appropriate Assessment for the proposed multifunctional local park on a preexisting playground and adjacent greenfield site at Paulstown Playground, Kellymount, Co. Kilkenny. A full description of the proposed works is given in Section 2 below.

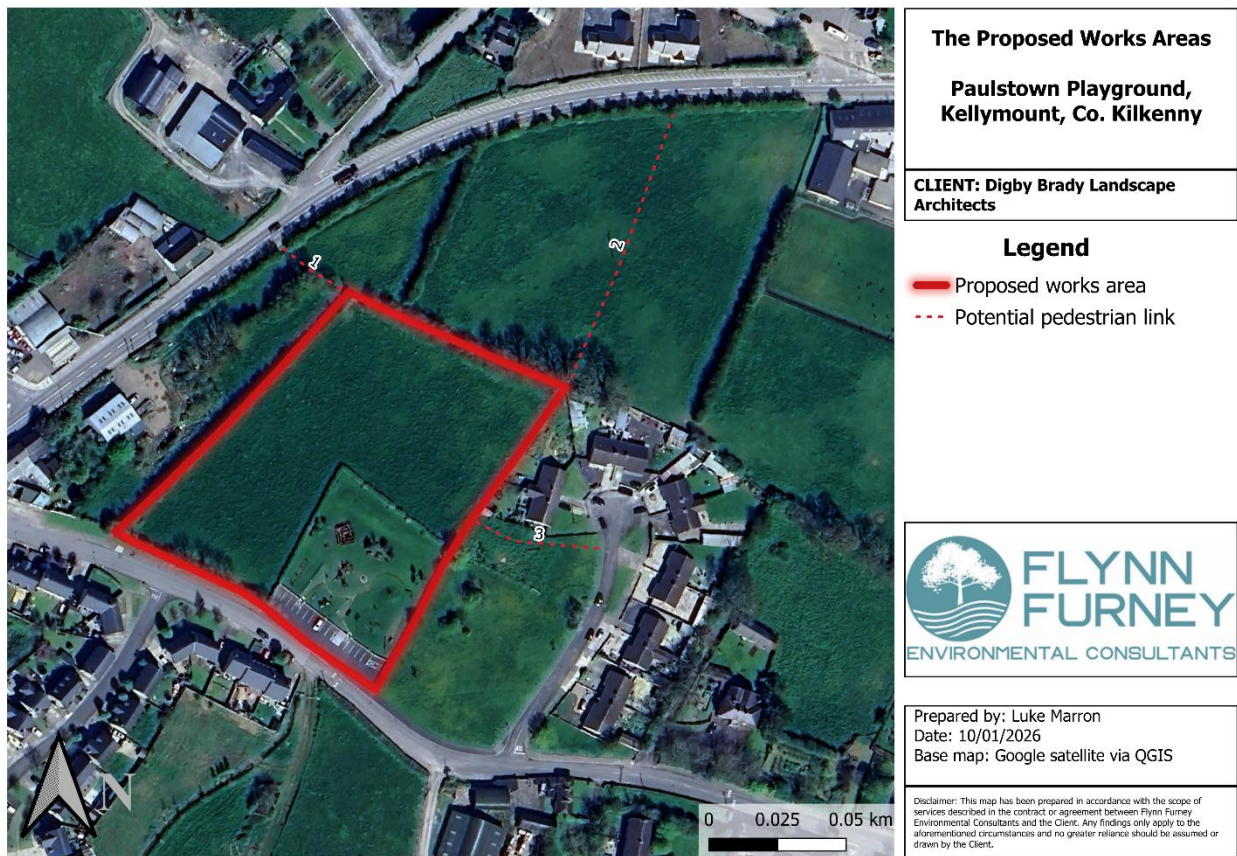


Figure 1 Location of Paulstown park and site boundary

Screening for Appropriate Assessment is required under Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive). This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared in accordance with the European Commission's Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2021) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018) as well as the Department of the Environment's Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010).

1.2. Relevant Legislation and Overall Screening Methodology

The methodology for this screening statement is set out in a document prepared for the Environment DG of the European Commission entitled 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC' (European Commission, 2019, amended 2021). This report and any contributory fieldwork were carried out in accordance with guidelines given by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009, amended 2010).

The process is given in Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive and is commonly referred to as 'Appropriate Assessments' (which in fact refers to Stage 2 in the sequence under the Habitats Directive Article 6 assessment). Article 6 of the Habitats Directive sets out provisions which govern the conservation and management of Natura 2000 sites. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the (Natura 2000) site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implication 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.”

Article 6(4) of the same directive states:

“If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.”

It is the responsibility of the proponent of the plan or project to provide the relevant information (*ecological surveys, research, analysis etc.*) for submission to the ‘competent national authority’. Having satisfied itself that the information is complete and objective, the competent authority will use this information to screen the project, i.e. to determine if an AA is required and to carry out the AA, if one is deemed necessary. The competent authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned. The appropriate assessment process has four stages. Each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. If, for example, the conclusions at the end of Stage One are that there will be no significant impacts on the Natura 2000 site, there is no requirement to proceed further. The four stages are:

1. Screening to determine if an appropriate assessment is required.
2. Appropriate assessment
3. Consideration of alternative solutions
4. Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest/Derogation

Table 1 The stages of AA

Stage 1: Screening for AA
<p>The aim of screening is to assess firstly if the plan or project is directly connected with or necessary to the management of Designated Site(s); or in view of best scientific knowledge, if the plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on a Designated Site. This is done by examining the proposed plan or project and the conservation objectives of any Designated Sites that might potentially be affected. If screening determines that there is potential for significant effects or there is uncertainty regarding the significance of effects, then it will be recommended that the plan or project is brought forward to the next stage of the AA process.</p>
Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment
<p>The aim of stage 2 of the AA process is to identify any adverse impacts that the plan or project might have on the integrity of relevant Designated Sites. As part of the assessment, a key consideration is ‘in combination’ effects with other plans or projects. Where adverse impacts are identified, mitigation measures can be proposed that would avoid, reduce or remedy any such negative impacts and the plan or project should then be amended accordingly, thereby avoiding the need to progress to Stage 3.</p>
Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions
<p>If it is not possible during Stage 2 of the AA process to conclude that there will be no adverse effects on site integrity, Stage 3 of the process must be undertaken which is to objectively assess whether alternative solutions exist by which the objectives of the plan or project can be achieved. Explicitly, this means alternative solutions that do not have adverse impacts on the integrity of a Designated Site. It should also be noted that EU guidance on this stage of the process states that, ‘other assessment criteria, such as economic criteria, cannot be seen as overruling ecological criteria’ (EC, 2002). In other words, if alternative solutions exist that do not have adverse impacts on Designated Sites; they should be adopted regardless of economic considerations. This stage of the AA process should result in the</p>

identification of the least damaging options for the plan or project.

Stage 4: Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)/Derogation

This stage of the AA process is undertaken when it has been determined that a plan or project will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Designated Site, but that no alternatives exist. At this stage of the AA process, it is the characteristics of the plan or project itself that will determine whether or not the competent authority can allow it to progress. This is the determination of ‘overriding public interest’. It is important to note that in the case of Designated Sites that include in their qualifying features ‘priority’ habitats or species, as defined in Annex I and II of the Directive, the demonstration of ‘overriding public interest’ is not sufficient and it must be demonstrated that the plan or project is necessary for ‘human health or safety considerations’. Where plans or projects meet these criteria, they can be allowed, provided adequate compensatory measures are proposed. Stage 4 of the process defines and describes these compensation measures.

1.1 Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

This report provides stage one: screening for appropriate assessment. It aims to establish whether a plan or project is likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites. The study is based on a preliminary impact assessment using both publicly available data and data collected during site visits and ecological surveys. This is followed by a determination of whether there is a risk that the effects identified could significantly impact any Natura 2000 sites, and if so, an AA is required. The need to apply the precautionary principle in making any key decisions in relation to the tests of AA has been confirmed by the European Court of Justice case law. Therefore, where significant effects are likely, possible or uncertain at the screening stage, AA will be required.

1.3. Reference Documents

The following relevant documents were considered in preparation of this report.

Table 2 Reference Documents

Name / Number	Description
Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities	National guidance on Appropriate Assessment for planning authorities. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, (2010 revision)
Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities	Circulars issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government with guidance relating to Appropriate Assessment. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10 (2010)
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	The guidance within this document provides a non-mandatory methodology for carrying out assessments required under Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive European Commission Environment Directorate-General, (2001 and updates April 2015 and September 2021).
Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC	Publication to the Member States with an interpretation of certain concepts in Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. EC Environment Directorate-General (2018)
Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle.	Publication relating to the use of the precautionary principle. European Commission (2000)

1.4. Statement of Authority

Information provided and prepared for this report was compiled by ecologists from Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants. A field assessment survey was undertaken by Lauren Woods on the 11th of September 2024. This report has been prepared by Luke Marron BSc (Wildlife biologist) and reviewed by Simon Furney BSc, MSc.

2 Description of Proposed Work

The development will consist / consists of:

The creation of a multifunctional communal park with a number of amenities including a 5-a-side all weather pitch. Park will also include parking for approximately 20 cars and associated pedestrian pathways.

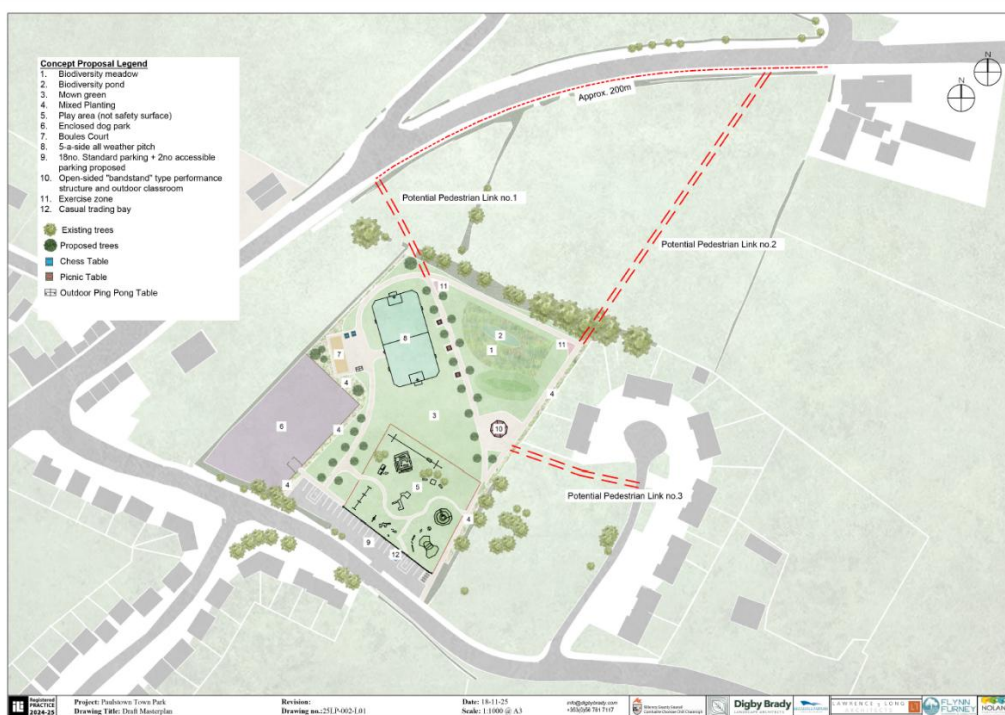


Figure 2 Paulstown Park landscape plan

3 Methodology

3.1 Desk Study

A desktop study was carried out as part of this screening process in December 2025. This included a review of available literature on the site and its immediate environs. Sources of information included the National Parks and Wildlife Service databases on protected sites and species data, and from the Environmental Protection Agency on watercourses.

3.2 Data Used to Carry Out the Assessment

The following sources of data were employed:

- Environmental Protection Agency (Appropriate Assessment Tool)
- EPA Maps (to identify watercourses, hydrology and Natura 2000 site boundaries)
- NPWS protected species database and online ma
- National Biodiversity Data Centre
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- An Bord Pleanála's online database

3.3 SPR Model

This assessment was carried out with regard to the source-pathway-receptor (*SPR*) approach, a standard tool in environmental assessment. The SPR concept in ecological impact assessment relates to the idea that for the risk of an impact to occur, a source is needed (*a development site*); an environmental receptor is present (*a lake*); and finally, there must be a pathway between the source and the receptor (*a watercourse linking the development site to the lake*). Even though there might be a risk of an impact occurring, that does not necessarily mean that it will occur, and even if it does occur, it may not be significant. Identification of a risk means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the risk and the characteristics of the receptor.

In this instance, the most relevant receptors are any relevant Natura 2000 sites with connectivity to the proposed works. These were considered during the desktop study stage of this screening assessment in order to assess the potential for significant effects upon their Qualifying Interests (*QIs*), Sites of Community Importance (*SCIs*) and Conservation Objectives (*COs*). This stage of the process is used to determine whether any of the Natura sites may be ‘screened out’. That is, that they can be regarded as not being relevant to the process, having no potential to be significantly affected or impacted upon.

3.4 Field Survey

The field survey was carried out on the 13th of December 2025. Baseline ecological conditions were assessed. Habitats were classified according to Fossitt (2000). Where applicable, the habitat types and species usage were recorded (Smith et al. 2011; Scannell and Synnott, 1987; Wyse Jackson et al. 2016). Habitats were classified and dominant plant species were noted according to the guidelines given by the JNCC (2010) with reference to Smith et al. (2011) & Scannell and Synnott (1987).

4 Results

4.1 Desk Study

4.1.1 Surface Water

There are no surface water networks directly adjacent to the site with the closest rivers being at least 1.2km to the north (River_Waterbody_Code - IE_SE_14M240860) or south (River_Waterbody_Code - IE_SE_14M031000) of the site. No hydrological features (drains or streams) are present on the site which form a connection to either of these waterbodies. Area lays withing the Barrow_SC_120 WFD sub-catchment of the greater 14 Barrow WFD catchment.

4.1.1.1 Ground Water vulnerability

Groundwater in the area of the proposed works has natural characteristics that mean it has moderate vulnerability to contamination by human activities, however, works at the site will not occur at depth.

4.1.2 Invasive Species Records

A search of NBDC records showed no invasive plant species recorded within 1km of the proposed works.

4.2. Field Study Results

4.2.1 Habitat Assessment

The following section describes the habitats found within the proposed project site. Photos of the habitats within the footprint of the proposed works and in the surrounding area are available in the Appendix.

4.1.3 Habitats Description

Several habitats were recorded within/adjacent to the proposed works area. A brief description of the habitats is listed below.

BL3 – Buildings and Artificial Surfaces

This category refers to artificial and modified surfaces such as the tarmacadam pathway and buildings located at the site. This category includes the area of parking to the front of the playground and surrounding roads. These areas are low in ecological value.

BL1 – Stonewalls and other stonework

This category refers to areas of stonework within the site. There are 2 stonewalls within the proposed works one which separates the playground from the parking area and another that runs along the back of the row of houses to the east. These walls are cement rather than old stone walls as such there is very little in terms of holes or gaps as such they are of low ecological value.

WL2 – Treeline

This category refers to areas of linear treelines. Treelines in this area survey as field boundaries and are mainly comprised of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). One such treeline runs along the northern boundary of the proposed works area which will be retained. This treeline is comprised of Ash trees with an understory of scrub species such as hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and dog rose (*Rosa canina*).

WL1 – Hedgerow

This category refers to linear strips of shrubs. Two hedgerows are present within the works area. The hedgerow which surrounds the preexisting playground is comprised entirely of the non-native invasive species cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*). As it is comprised of non-native species this hedgerow is of low ecological value. The other larger hedgerow which runs to the southwest and west of the works is a native hedgerow comprised mainly of hawthorn and bramble. This hedgerow provides some ecological value but is regularly maintained via cutting or flailing as indicated by remains of cut tree stumps or trunks which are present within the hedgerow.

GA1 Improved agricultural grassland

This category is used for intensively managed or highly modified agricultural grassland that has been reseeded and/or regularly fertilised and is now heavily grazed and/or used for silage making. Agricultural grasslands within and surrounding the site are relatively species poor fields used for grazing cattle and horses. These grasslands are of low ecological value.

GA2 – Amenity Grassland

This category refers to grasslands that are improved, or species-poor, and is managed for purposes other than grass production. This includes the grassy area within the playground and the lawn area to the east of the works. These areas are maintained and mowed regularly and are species poor. As such these areas are low in ecological value.

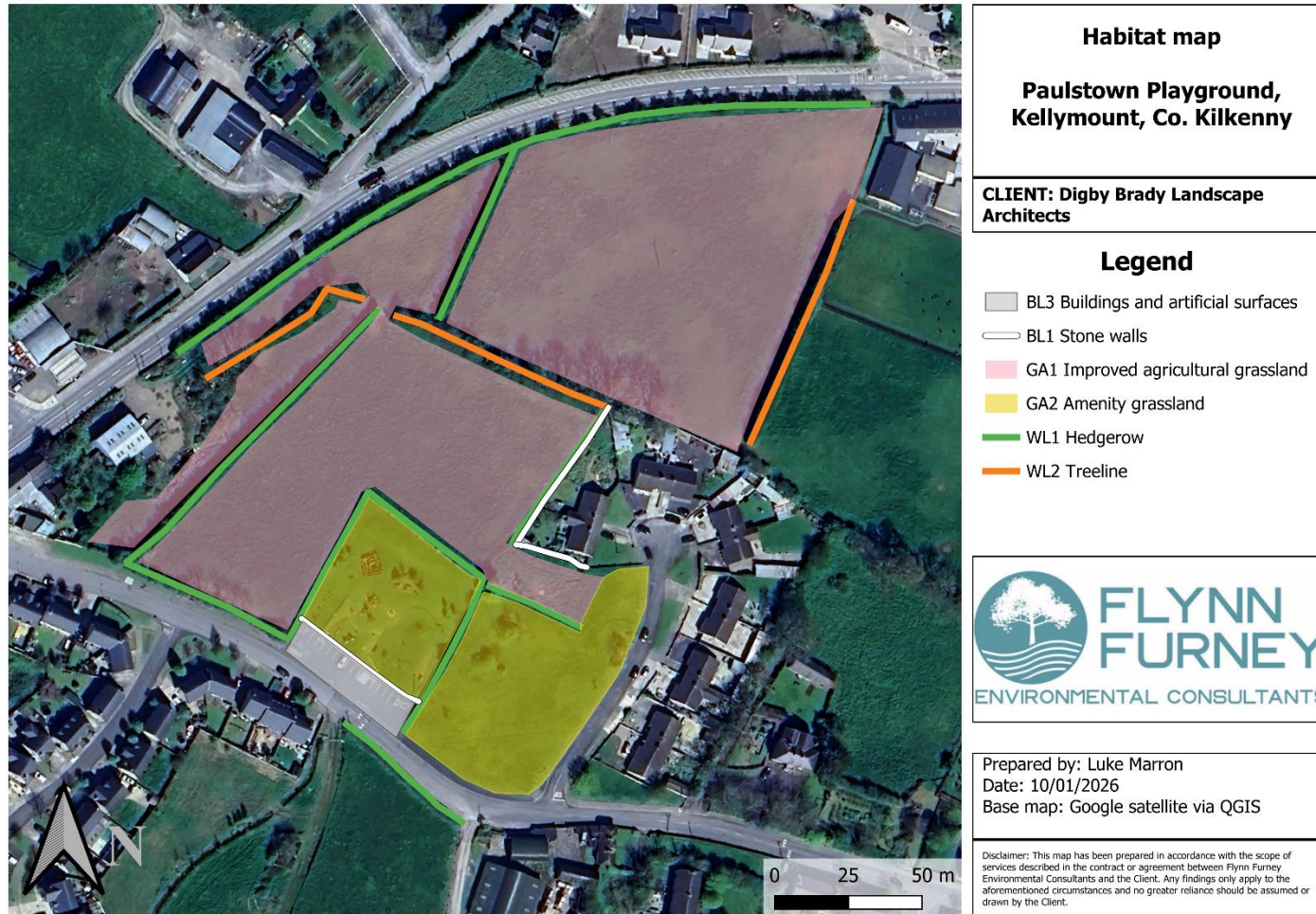


Figure 2 Habitat Map

4.1.4 Annex I Habitats

Annex I habitats, identified as of utmost conservation importance under the Habitats Directive, receive legal protection within the Irish framework through the transposition of the Directive into national law, primarily under the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations (S.I. 94 of 1997), which mandates the designation and conservation of Special Areas of Conservation to safeguard these critical habitats. **Table 3** assesses whether any habitat found during ground surveys has links with any of these habitat types.

Table 3 Summary of the habitats recorded on and surrounding the proposed project site

Habitat Recorded	Fossitt Code	Links with Annex I Habitats
Buildings and Artificial Surfaces	BL3	No
Stonewalls and other stonework	BL1	No
Hedgerows	WL1	No
Treelines	WL2	No
Amenity Grassland	GA2	No
Improved agricultural grassland	GA1	No

4.1.5 Significance of Habitats

The majority of the habitat types found within the site are those associated with urban areas and are of low ecological significance. There are no habitats listed on Annex I of Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) within the survey area. No species of rare, threatened or protected species of plants as per the Red Data List (Wyse Jackson et al., 2016) and no species listed on the Flora (Protection) Order 2022 were present.

4.1.6 Birds

A dedicated bird survey was not carried out, however, during the survey the majority of birds seen and

heard were typical of species within an urban setting.

4.1.7 Mammals

Most terrestrial mammals enjoy some level of legal protection in Ireland, with 13 listed on the EU Habitats Directive, 22 on national legislation in the Republic of Ireland, and 18 on national legislation in Northern Ireland. It is an offence to intentionally kill or injure a protected species or to wilfully interfere with or destroy the breeding site or resting place of a protected wild animal.

No evidence of protected mammals was located during surveys. Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) burrows were located along the treeline to the north of the proposed works area. As they are a non-native species rabbits are not protected in Ireland.

4.1.8 Bats

All bat species in Ireland are protected under the Wildlife Act 1976 and the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The lesser horseshoe bat which is found in the Republic of Ireland only is listed in Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive, while all bat species are listed in Annex IV of the same Directive. Bat roosts are also protected, meaning it's illegal to disturb or destroy them. It is illegal to intentionally kill, injure, or take a bat, possess a bat (alive or dead), or disturb its roost.

A dedicated bat survey was not carried out, however any areas of bat potential were noted. The ash treeline running along the northern section of the proposed works provides some bat potential. No large cavities or hollows were observed but some ivy cover was present. As such this treeline possess slow to moderate bat potential with some features providing shelter as a day roost but not likely to support large numbers. This treeline will be retained by works.

4.1.9 Lepidoptera

The Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) is listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC), which includes species of community interest whose conservation requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). No Marsh Fritillary or suitable habitat was recorded within the footprint of the site.

4.1.10 Amphibians

All species of Irish amphibians are legally protected under the Wildlife Act 1976, along with its amendments, and under Annex V of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), which prohibits the intentional killing, injuring, or disturbing of frogs, and also protects their breeding sites.

No evidence of amphibians was located during surveys nor were any areas of amphibian habitat potential located such as wet drains or areas of standing water.

4.1.11 Invasive Species

The European Union Regulation (No. 1143/2014) on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) lists 37 species (23 animals and 14 plants) whose potential adverse impacts are such that concerted action across Member States is required. Member States are required to provide for early detection and eradication of these species and must manage those species already widespread within their jurisdiction. The EU recently updated its list of invasive alien species of Union concern. The Convention on Biological Diversity defines Invasive Alien Species (IAS) as “a species that is established outside of its natural past or present distribution, whose introduction and/or spread threatens biological diversity”. Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) is not included on the EU ‘list’ of invasive species, nor are the other knotweed species which have been recorded in Ireland. These species are, however, covered by legislation in Ireland.

Part 1 of the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) and Amendment 2015 (S.I. No. 355/2015). Section 49 and 50 of Part 6 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) outlines the legal context for the prohibition of the introduction and dispersal of certain plant and animal species. Specifically, Section 49, paragraph 2 states that any person without the required licence “who plants, disperses, allows or causes to disperse, spreads or otherwise causes to grow” any plant species listed in Part 1 of the Third Schedule within the State shall be guilty of an offence.

Invasive species can have significant and detrimental impacts on Natura 2000 sites, which are designated to protect habitats and species of European importance. The introduction and spread of invasive species

can disrupt ecosystems, threaten native biodiversity, and compromise the achievement of conservation objectives.

No regulated third schedule invasive species were recorded within the footprint of the proposed extension or in the surrounding area during ground surveys. The Lesser invasive species Cherry laurel is present at the site as a maintained hedgerow around the playground. Cherry laurel does not require specific action.

5. Identification of the European Sites within the Likely Zone of Impact

The following methodology was used to establish which European Sites are within the Likely Zone of Impact of the proposed development:

- The most recent Geographic Information System (GIS) spatial datasets for designated European sites and water catchments were acquired from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) website (www.npws.ie) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website (www.epa.ie). These datasets were employed to discern European Sites susceptible to potential impacts from the Proposed Development.
- An investigation into the work site characteristics and the risks to the environment with consideration for the potential zone of impact was carried out to determine all probable pathways and risks to site conservation.
- A source-pathway-receptor model was utilised to identify European Sites within a 15km radius of the development site, providing contextual information on these sites based on site-specific conservation objectives. The assessment also considered European Sites beyond the 15km radius, employing a source-pathway-receptor approach to identify potential impacts. Hydrological catchment mapping facilitated the evaluation of potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Development site and European Sites.
- For Special Protection Areas (SPAs), lacking specific European or Irish guidance, the 'Assessing

Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPA)' guidance from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (2016) was consulted.

All pertinent European Sites are considered, identifying those within the likely Zone of Impact. This screening assessment evaluates direct and indirect impacts of the Proposed Development, considering size and scale, land-take, distance, resource requirements, emissions, excavation, transportation, and construction/operation duration. Site synopses and conservation objectives from the NPWS website were reviewed as of the report's preparation.

5.1. Works, Site Characteristics and Risks to the Environment

The principal risks posed from the project relate to surface water discharge from the site during the proposed works that may impact the water quality of the receiving environment, leading to likely significant effects (LSE) on any QIs or Site(s) of Community Importance (SCI) species.

Table 4 Potential Impacts, Effects and their zone of influence.

Potential Impact and Effect	Description	Zone of Influence
Construction/Installation of Infrastructure and potential QI habitat loss	The permanent loss of the habitats is present in the footprint of the proposed works.	Lands within the proposed footprint of works and access routes.
Changes in water quality and quantity/distribution resulting in habitat loss or degradation.	Reduction in the quality of retained habitat or loss of habitat from surrounding areas as a result of surface water or groundwater pollution.	Changes in surface water quality within the local water courses or surface water bodies including the rivers in close proximity associated with the proposed development.
Noise, dust, vibration and or human presence	Direct impact on species reducing	Within or adjacent to the works area for birds and 150m upstream and

resulting in disturbance.	their ability to forage or breed.	downstream for Otters.
Invasive Species	The spread of invasive species within designated sites as a result of this project.	Assessed based on the presence of invasive species stands within or surrounding the works area.

4.2 Designated Sites within the Zone of Influence (Zoi)

Designated Sites within the zone of influence are outlined below.

Table 5 Designated Sites within the Zoi

Site Name and Code	Qualifying Interests * = priority	Distance from Proposed Works	Conservation Objectives	Likely Impact Determination
River Barrow and River Nore SAC [002162]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estuaries [1130] • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] • Reefs [1170] • <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] • Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] • Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] 	3.1km	Detailed conservation objectives for this site were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002162	<p>There is no direct overlap between the proposed works and this SAC being separated by 3km.</p> <p>No QI species or QI supporting habitat were recorded at the site.</p> <p>There is no hydrological connection present between the site and the SAC.</p> <p>The size and scope of works are limited to development of a community park.</p> <p>Therefore, it is unlikely for significant impacts to occur on this SAC. This site will not be considered further.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260] • European dry heaths [4030] • <i>Hydrophilous</i> tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430] • Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220] • Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0] • Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0] • <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> 			
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	<p>(Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] • <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] • <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095] • <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096] • <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1099] • <i>Alosa fallax fallax</i> (Twaiite Shad) [1103] • <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106] • <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] • <i>Vandenboschia speciosa</i> (Killarney Fern) [6985] 			
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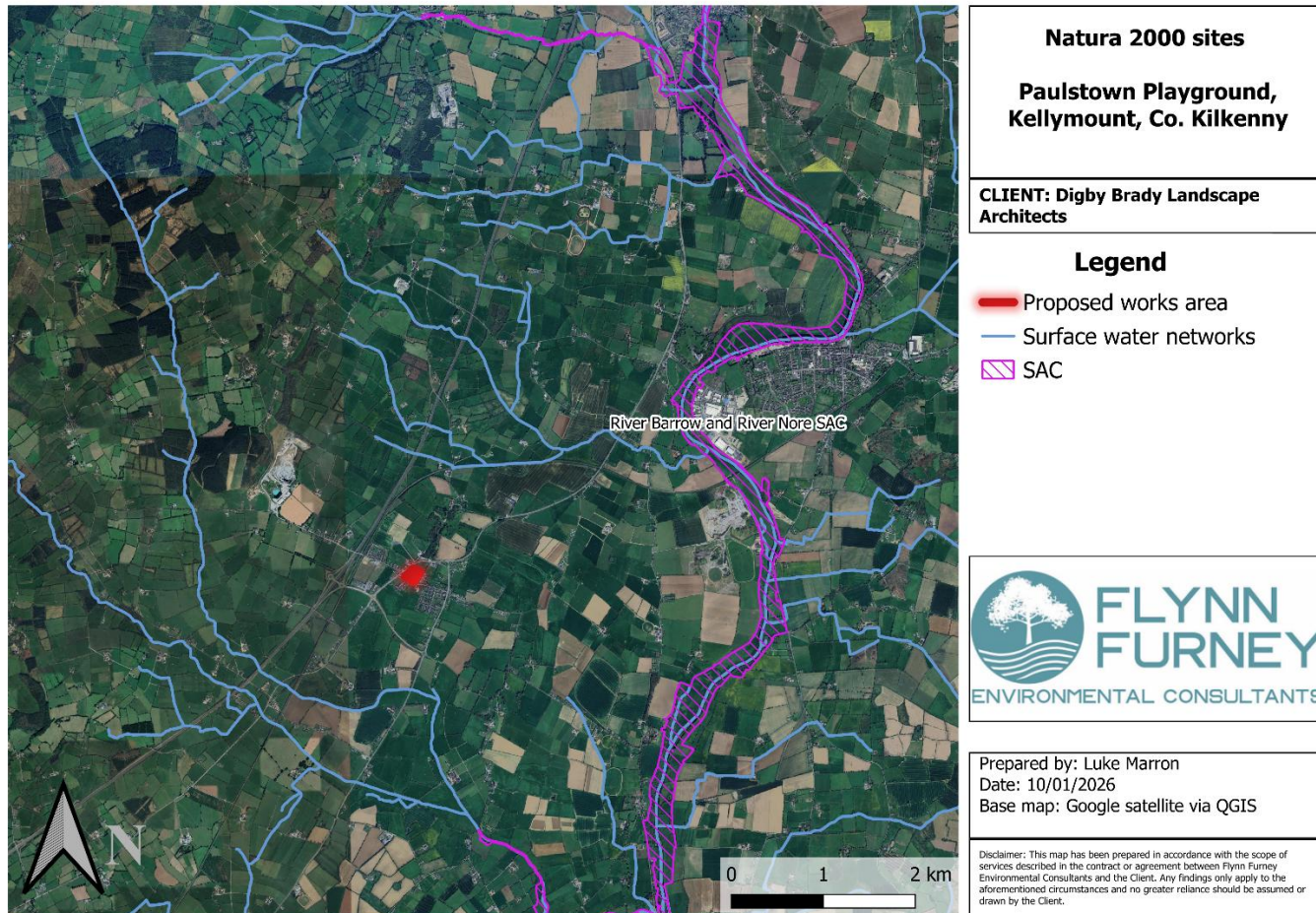


Figure 3 Location of closest Designated sites in relation to the proposed works

4.3 European Sites with the Potential to be Significantly Affected by the Proposed Development

Initial screening has identified no European site requiring further consideration in this assessment. All Natura 2000 sites are at a great remove and have no identifiable connectivity with the proposed works. Given the nature and scale of the works, there is no known vector, pathway or conduit for impacts between the proposed works and the remaining Natura 2000 sites. Therefore, the proposed works are considered extremely unlikely (NRA, 2009) to have any significant direct or indirect impacts on any Natura 2000 sites and they are not considered further in this screening assessment.

5 Assessment Criteria

5.1 Is the Project Necessary to the Management of the Designated Site(s)?

The proposed project is not necessary to or connected with the management of any Designated Sites.

5.2 Possible Direct, Indirect or Secondary Impacts

All impacts (both direct and indirect) have been assessed within this report. A conclusion has been drawn by the author that no significant impacts are predicted as a result of the proposed development.

5.3 Cumulative and In-Combination Impacts

A search of the Kilkenny and Waterford County Council planning registers was carried out in December 2025. Nearby projects were considered for any in combination or cumulative impacts. A conclusion has been made by the author that no cumulative or in-combination impacts upon any Natura site is predicted.

5.4 Conclusion

This report presents the information for the relevant authority, Kilkenny County Council, to carry out a screening for AA. A recommendation that a Stage II is not required is made, based on the findings of this assessment. It is for the relevant authority to reach one of the following conclusions:

- I. A Stage II AA of the proposed development is required if it *cannot* be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European Designated Sites.
- II. A Stage II AA of the proposed development is not required if it *can* be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European Designated Sites.

It is the conclusion of this report that the proposed development would not have a significant effect on European Designated Sites and progression to a Stage II appropriate assessment is not required. Accordingly, having carried out the Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening, the competent authority may determine that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of the proposed site investigation works is not required as it can be excluded, on the basis of objective scientific information following screening under Regulation 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, that the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European site.

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6 Appendix – 1. Site Photos

Appendix 1 Pictures of the site

Fig no.	Description	Picture
1	Hedgerow and agricultural grassland	

2 Amenity
grassland
area to east
of the
playground
with cherry
laurel
hedge on
the left



3 Agricultural
grassland
behind
playground
within
works area



4 Amenity
grassland in
playground
with cherry
laurel
hedge
surrounding
it



Clós Súgartha Bhaile Phóil
Paulstown Playground

5 BL3 parking
area with
cherry
laurel
hedge



6 Unmanaged agricultural grassland area with stonewall and ash treeline behind



7 Ivy cover on
ash tree
within ash
treeline

