SAC
Environmental Assessments

366A Seacoast Road, Bellarena

Ulster Gliding Club Ltd

HRA Stage 1: Screening

January 2024

Notice

This document and its contents have been prepared and are intended solely as information for **Ulster Gliding Club Ltd** and use in relation to **366A Seacoast Road, Bellarena**.

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This document does not purport to provide legal advice.

This document has 51 pages including the cover.

Client signoff

Client	Ulster Gliding Club Ltd
Project	366A Seacoast Road, Bellarena
Job number	P2301
Client signature/ date	

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Terms of Reference

1.1.1. SAC Environmental Assessments were commissioned by Ulster Gliding Club Ltd to produce a Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (sHRA) Stage 1: Screening Report for the proposed removal of concrete blocks from the beach at 366A Seacoast Road, Bellarena, hereafter referred to as 'the Proposed Scheme'. The overall project and the Proposed Scheme are described in more detail in Section 2 below. The purpose of the sHRA is to identify potential impacts to European Sites.

1.1.2. European Sites refer to sites protected in the UK under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). These include Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). In addition, in accordance with UK policy[1], listed and proposed Wetlands of International Importance are included, which form part of a global network of protected sites created under the Ramsar Convention (also referred to as Ramsar sites), as well as potential SPAs (pSPAs), possible SACs (pSACs), and proposed Ramsar sites (pRamsar). All of the above sites will be referred to as European Sites within this report.

1.1.3. Note that this document uses the original terms for features such as European Sites and refers to the legislation that was current when they were designated. However, it is recognised that the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) are now amended by The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

1.2. Background to Habitat Regulations Assessment

1.2.1. The need for HRA arises from Regulation 43 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) which requires that a Competent Authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation, for a plan or projects which may have a 'likely significant effect' on a European Site (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) and is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site, must make an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the implications of the plan or project for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives. These regulations transpose inter alia Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and remain relevant following the UK's departure from the EU. This approach is in line with the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), hereafter referred to as the Habitat Regulations. Causeway, Coast and Glens Borough Council are the Competent Authority for the Proposed Scheme and must undertake an HRA to ascertain if the proposed works are likely to give rise to a significant effect on any European Sites.

1.2.2 The stages of HRA process are:

- Stage 1 – Screening: To test whether a Proposed Scheme either alone or in combination with other projects is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site;
- Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment: To determine whether, in view of a European Site's conservation objectives, the Proposed Scheme (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site with respect

[1] Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 181.

to the site's conservation objectives. If adverse impacts are anticipated, potential mitigation measures to alleviate impacts should be proposed and assessed;

- Stage 3 & 4 – Derogations: Where a Proposed Scheme is assessed as having an adverse impact (or risk of this) on the integrity of a European Site, there should be an examination of alternatives (e.g., alternative locations and designs of development). Where no alternative solutions have been identified and where adverse impacts remain. In exceptional circumstance (e.g., where there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest), compensatory measures must be put in place to offset negative impacts.

1.2.3. This report is a shadow HRA Stage 1: Screening only.

1.3. The Site

1.3.1. The Proposed Scheme is located at land approximately 0.6 kilometres (km) north-west of The Ulster Gliding Club, 366A Seacoast Road, Bellarena, Limavady, County Londonderry, BT49 0LA, at Irish Grid Reference: C 65548 33171 (Easting 265548, Northing 433171) as shown in Appendix A (hereafter referred to as the Site).

1.3.2. Works in relation to the Proposed Scheme will occur above the mean high-water springs (MHWS); however, access from the foreshore of Lough Foyle is required.

1.3.3. No ecological field surveys have been undertaken in relation to the Proposed Scheme; however, from a study of satellite imagery and video evidence, the Proposed Scheme appears to be located between semi-fixed dune and fixed dune habitat, adjacent to the boundaries of Lough Foyle SPA.

1.4. The Proposed Scheme

1.4.1. Large concrete blocks, partially buried along the shore for approximately 41 metres (m), are deemed to be an unauthorised sea defence installation. These concrete blocks were installed 15 to 18 years ago in an attempt to arrest subsidence / erosion.

1.4.2. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council served Ulster Gliding Club Ltd with an enforcement notice (Planning Reference: LA01/2021/0032/CA), dated 8th August 2023, instructing Ulster Gliding Club Ltd to:

- Permanently remove the unauthorised sea defence installation (concrete blocks) that run north from Irish Grid Ref: C 65544 33163 to C 65552 33195;
- Permanently remove any rubble or materials associated with the permanent removal of the unauthorised sea defence installation (Concrete blocks);
- Comply with the above points by acquiring a marine licence from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Marine and Fisheries Division (MFD) before commencing any of the required works; and,
- To comply within 154 days (now extended to 221 days) from the date on which the notice takes effect (22nd September 2023).

1.4.3. Ulster Gliding Club Ltd therefore propose to use a telehandler with attachments and a tractor and trailer to remove the concrete blocks from their current location. The vehicles will access the blocks from the beachside via the gate at Irish Grid Reference: C 65498 33080 to reduce the risk of further destabilising the dune system.

1.4.4. Following removal, Ulster Gliding Club Ltd. are prepared to plant native species (marram grass *Ammophila arenaria* and sea lyme grass *Leymus arenarius*), if permitted, in affected areas to aid beach stabilisation.

2. Methodology

2.1. Habitats Regulations Assessment Guidance

2.1.1. This report has been prepared in accordance the following guidance:

- Guidance explaining the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019[2]; and
- The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook[3].

2.2. European Site Selection

2.2.1. All European Sites where potential direct, indirect, and in-combination impacts could reasonably be considered possible were selected for screening. The selection of sites is subject to professional judgement about potential effect pathways:

- Is within 2 km of any other European Site;
- Is within 5 km of a hydrologically connected European Site;
- Is within 50 km of a European site with highly-mobile qualifying species (cetaceans, pinnipeds and fish species);
- Has potential hydrological or hydrogeological linkage to a European Site with a groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystem which triggers the criteria for assessment of European Sites.

2.3. Consideration of Transboundary Effects

2.3.1. Projects have the potential to affect Natura 2000 sites in other Member States, and that other Member States or interested parties may wish to make representations about those effects as part of the development consent process. Such issues might be raised as part of the transboundary environmental impacts assessment process which may be required under the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009.[4]

2.3.2. In cases where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect (either alone or in combination) on a Natura 2000 site in another Member State, all relevant information as reasonably practicable about those effects has been obtained.

2.3.2. The Habitats Directive was initially transposed into Irish law in 1997 by the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 94 of 1997)6, with later amendment regulations (S.I. No. 233 of 1998; S.I. No. 378 of 2005). The Birds Directive was anticipated by the Wildlife Act (1976) and its provisions covered many of the requirements of the Birds Directive. Article 7 of the Habitats Directive makes the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) applicable to SPAs.[5]

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[2] DAERA (2020) *Guidance explaining The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.* Available at: (daera-ni.gov.uk)

[3] Tyldesley D., Chapman C. (2020) *The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook. Nov 2023 Edition.* DTA Publications Limited.

[4] Department of Energy and Climate Change (2015) Guidelines on the assessment of transboundary impacts of energy developments on Natura 2000 sites outside the UK. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/408465/transboundary_guidelines.pdf

[5] Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2010) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities

2.4. Obtaining Information on European Sites with the potential to be affected by the Scheme

2.4.1. Gathering the information on the European sites included in the Stage 1 Screening involved a desk-based review of the following sources:

- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Natural Environment Map Viewer[6] for information on the location of the European sites in Northern Ireland;
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) website[7] for the conservation objectives and site synopsis of European sites in the Republic of Ireland (RoI),
- NPWS Designations Viewer[8] for information on the location of the European sites in the Republic of Ireland,
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) website[9] for data sheets relating to European sites, and National Site Network - Standard Data Forms; and
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs website[10] for the citation, conservation objectives and supplementary advice on conservation objectives for European sites.

2.5. Obtaining Information on Other Projects and Plans

2.5.1. In accordance with the Habitats Regulations, there is a need to consider the potential for LSE of the project or plan 'in combination' with other projects and plans.

2.5.2. Details of any project or plan that has been assessed under the Habitats Regulations for potential impacts on the same European Sites has been obtained from the NI Planning Portal.[11]

2.6. Screening for LSE of the Project 'Alone' and 'In-combination'

2.6.1. Following the gathering of information on the European Sites an assessment has been undertaken to predict the LSE of the Proposed Scheme 'alone' on each European site. In order to inform this process, all parts of the Proposed Scheme were assessed to see whether they could result in LSE on each European Site.

2.6.2. The potential for LSE of the Proposed Scheme 'in-combination' with other projects and plans for each European site has also been considered in this HRA. As part of this process HRAs that have been completed due to possible impacts on the European Sites included in this HRA were reviewed in order to determine whether there is the potential for in-combination effects.

2.6.3. LSE is assessed by reference to the conservation objectives of the qualifying features (interest features) of the European Site. Any project or plan that causes the cited interest features of a site to fall into unfavourable condition should be considered to have an LSE on the site. Furthermore, the vulnerabilities of the European Site (as detailed in the Standard Data Form) have been taken into consideration as these indicate the sensitivities of the European Site and

[6] Available: https://gis.daera-ni.gov.uk/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=bb721449cb8949e7a4f90c722bd2d80b

[7] Available: https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites

[8] Available: NPWS Designations Viewer (arcgis.com)

[9] Available: https://jncc.gov.uk

[10] Available: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications

[11] Northern Ireland Public Register (planningsystemni.gov.uk)

are potential pathways by which they may be affected. Stage 1 of the HRA process does not assess effects on the integrity of each European sites, this forms Stage 2 of the HRA process.

2.6.4. Projects or plans can adversely affect a site by:

- Causing delays in progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the site;
- Interrupting progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the site;
- Disrupting those factors that help to maintain the favourable conditions of the site;
- Interfering with the balance, distribution and density of key species that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the site.

2.7. Assessing Likely Significant Effects

2.7.1. A critical part of the HRA Screening process is determining whether or not the proposals are likely to have a significant effect on European Sites and, therefore, if they will require an Appropriate Assessment. The concept of 'likely significant effect' as embodied in Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and regulation 61(1) of the Habitats Regulations is central to their operation. Its interpretation is well established in law and guidance and embraces the precautionary principle.

2.7.2. The European Court Waddenzee judgement[12] provides clarification regarding the term 'likely'. It concludes that 'any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site is to be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on that site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.'

2.7.3. Clarification has also been provided through case law on the meaning of 'likely' in relation to Bagmoor Wind Ltd v The Scottish Ministers[13]. 'The word 'likely' in the regulation is not to be construed as an expression of probability, in a legal sense, but as a description of the existence of a risk (or possibility).' Consequently, if the possibility of a significant effect cannot be excluded based on objective information, an Appropriate Assessment will be required.

2.7.4. The European Court Waddenzee judgement also provides further clarification regarding the term 'significant': 'where a plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a site is likely to undermine the site's conservation objectives, it must be considered likely to have a significant effect on that site. The assessment of that risk must be made in the light inter alia of the characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the site concerned by such a plan or project.'

2.7.5. The Bagmoor Wind case also provides guidance on the term 'objective.' It states: 'Objective, in this context, means information based on clear verifiable fact rather than subjective opinion.' The Habitats Regulations Handbook[14] states: "It will not normally be sufficient for an applicant merely to assert that the plan or project will not have an adverse effect on a site, nor will it be appropriate for a competent authority to rely on reassurances based on supposition or speculation. On the other hand, there should be credible evidence to show that there is a real rather than a hypothetical risk of effects that could undermine the site's

[12] European Court of Justice (2004) CASE C-127/02. Landelijke Vereniging tot Behoud van de Waddenzee, Nederlandse Vereniging tot Bescherming van Vogels against Staatssecretaris van Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Visserij.

[13] The Scottish Courts [2012] CSIH 93 Bagmoor Wind Limited against The Scottish Ministers

[14] Tyldesley D., Chapman C. (2020) *The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook. Nov 2023 Edition.* DTA Publications Limited.

conservation objectives. Any serious possibility of a risk that the conservation objectives could be undermined should trigger an 'appropriate assessment'.''

2.7.6. The test for likelihood of significant effects requires that consideration is given to potential causes and potential effects (i.e. any potential impact pathways). To do this, information on the Proposed Scheme is needed to identify the potential causes of effects and information on the European Site is needed to identify any potential implications related to these effects. In the absence of a potential impact pathway, it can be concluded that no LSE would arise. Relevant aspects (effects) of the Proposed Scheme have been checked against all features of the relevant European Sites (i.e. screened) to determine whether a likely significant effect may arise.

2.7.7. The judgement as to whether a significant effect is likely needs to be based on the best readily available information. Sources of information may include evidence from projects where similar operations have affected sites with similar qualifying features and conservation objectives and the judgement of relevant specialists that an effect is likely, as well as survey data collected to-date for a particular project. In line with the precautionary principle, where there is uncertainty and/ or information is lacking in relation to the capacity of the effect to undermine the site's conservation objectives, it must be assumed that there will be an effect, unless further information can be made available to eliminate any areas of doubt.

2.7.8. The implication of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) judgement referred to as People Over Wind (Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta, Case C-323/17) is that competent authorities cannot take account of any "measures that are intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the envisaged project on the site concerned", when considering at the HRA screening stage whether the plan or project is likely to have an adverse effect on a European Site. The effect of this is that the screening stage must be undertaken on a precautionary basis with no regard to any proposed integrated or additional avoidance or mitigation measures. Where the likelihood of significant effects cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information, the competent authority must proceed to carry out an Appropriate Assessment to establish whether the plan or project will affect the integrity of the European Site, which can include at that stage consideration of the effectiveness of the proposed avoidance or reduction measures.

2.7.9. Subsequent caselaw (R (Langton) v SSEFRA & Natural England: [2018] EWHC 2190) included a statement that elements that 'are not the mitigating or protective measures which featured in the People Over Wind ruling' and 'are properly characterised as integral features of the project…' should reasonably be included in a HRA screening decision. (R (Langton) v SSEFRA & Natural England: [2019] EWHC Civ 1562) did not challenge this view.

2.7.10. Case law in 2017 referred to as the 'Wealden Judgement'[15] prompted Natural England to make their internal guidance on assessing the effects of road traffic emissions on European Sites public.

2.8. Screening Matrices

2.8.1. The screening assessment has been undertaken using screening matrices, which are presented in full in Section 3 and Section 4.

[15] Wealden District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Lewes District Council and South Downs National Park Authority [2017] EWHC 351

2.9. ASSI Assessment

2.9.1. Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI's) were originally designated under The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, subsequently replaced by the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002.

2.9.2. Owners and occupiers of land within an ASSI will need to apply for written consent from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to carry out certain works or activities.

2.9.3. An assessment of the impact of the Proposed Scheme on Lough Foyle ASSI, located, has been included in Appendix C.

3. Screening Assessment

3.1. European Sites Screened in for Assessment

3.1.1. A total of **48 European sites are located within 50 km of the Proposed Scheme**, as illustrated in Appendix B.

3.1.2. Of these 48 sites, **38 have been screened out** as they do not meet the screening criteria detailed in Paragraph 2.2.1. These sites, listed in Table 1 below, will not be considered further within this assessment:

TABLE 1: EUROPEAN SITES SCREENED OUT

Designation	Site Name	Distance from Proposed Scheme (km)
SPA	Lough Foyle (RoI)	11.37
	Trawbreaga Bay (RoI)	23.04
	Lough Swilly (RoI)	28.89
	Malin Head (RoI)	32.49
	Inishtrahull (RoI)	35.38
	Horn Head to Fanad Head (RoI)	38.35
	Sheep Island	41.14
	Fanad Head (RoI)	42.54
	Antrim Hills	43.70
	Rathlin Island	45.63
	Lough Fern (RoI)	47.48
	Greers Isle (RoI)	47.67
	Lough Neagh and Lough Beg	48.14
SAC	North Inishowen Coast (RoI)	10.26
	Bann Estuary	11.60
	Magheradrumman Bog (RoI)	12.15
	Carn Glenshane Pass	25.68
	Banagher Glen	26.96
	Garry Bog	27.50
	North Antrim Coast	29.68
	Hempton's Turbot Bank (RoI)	30.17
	Lough Swilly (RoI)	30.92
	Inishtrahull (RoI)	35.70
	Wolf Island Bog	36.14

	Main Valley Bogs	38.22
	Dead Island Bog	38.50
	Ballynahone Bog V	39.18
	Ballyhoorisky Point to Fanad Head (RoI)	40.96
	Curran Bog	42.87
	Mulroy Bay (RoI)	44.12
	Teal Lough	45.20
	Ratlin Island	45.63
	Breen Wood	45.80
	Kindrum Lough (RoI)	47.20
	Ballyarr Wood (RoI)	48.25
Ramsar	Garry Bog	27.50
	Ballynahone Bog	39.18
	Lough Neagh and Lough Beg	48.11

3.1.3. A total of ten European sites have been screened in for consideration in the formal Screening stage. These European Sites considered within this HRA Screening are listed in Table 2 and considered individually in more detail in Table 3 to Table 12.

TABLE 2: EUROPEAN SITES SCREENED IN

Designation	Site Name	Distance from Proposed Scheme (km)	Reason for Inclusion in Assessment
SPA	Lough Foyle	Adjacent	Within 2 km and hydrologically connected
SAC	Magilligan	1.59	Within 2 km
	River Roe and Tributaries	3.78	Highly mobile qualifying species (Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* only)
	Skerries and Causeway	15.90	Highly mobile qualifying species (Harbour porpoise *Phocoena phocoena* only)
	River Faughan and Tributaries	21.21	Highly mobile qualifying species (Atlantic salmon only)

	River Finn (RoI)	34.54	Highly mobile qualifying species (Atlantic salmon only)
	River Foyle and Tributaries	34.35	Highly mobile qualifying species (Atlantic salmon only)
	Leannan River (RoI)	44.87	Highly mobile qualifying species (Atlantic salmon only)
	Owenkillew River	46.50	Highly mobile qualifying species (Atlantic salmon only)
Ramsar Site	Lough Foyle	Adjacent	Within 2 km and hydrologically connected

TABLE 3: LOUGH FOYLE SPA (SITE CODE: UK9020031)

Location of European Sites	Lough Foyle is situated on the north coast of Northern Ireland immediately downstream and extending to the north-east of the city of Londonderry.	
Brief Description of the European Site[16]	This major sea lough is remarkably shallow, with extensive mud and sand flats exposed at low tide. Though considerably diminished by historical reclamation schemes, notably around Myroe, Ballykelly and Longfield, it hosts the second largest area of inter-tidal habitat in Northern Ireland. The shoreline is generally engineered except around the Roe Estuary and northwards. Adjoining agricultural land is of importance as high tide roosts and in supporting wintering geese and swans.	
Conservation Objectives[17]	To maintain or enhance the population of the qualifying species To maintain or enhance the range of habitats utilised by the qualifying species To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained; To ensure there is no significant disturbance of the species and To ensure that the following are maintained in the long term: ▪ Population of the species as a viable component of the site ▪ Distribution of the species within site ▪ Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species	
Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site[18]	**Negative Impacts**	**Positive Impacts**
	Modification of cultivation practices Hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial) Invasive, non-native species Changes in abiotic conditions	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Modification of cultivation practices Hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial)

[16] DAERA-NI Lough Foyle SPA. Available at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/protected-areas/lough-foyle-spa

[17] DAERA-NI (2015) Lough Foyle SPA Conservation Objectives. Available at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/lough-foyle-spa-conservation-objectives-2015.pdf

[18] JNCC Standard Data Form – Lough Foyle SPA. Available at: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9020031.pdf

	Utility and service lines Changes in biotic conditions Airports, flightpaths Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Other ecosystem modifications Marine and freshwater aquaculture Marine water pollution Pollution to surface waters (limnic, terrestrial, marine and brackish)		
Qualifying Features	**Impact Pathway**	**Screening Assessment**	**Potential for LSE**
ARTICLE 4.1 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC) Over winter the area regularly supports: Whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus* (Iceland/UK/Ireland) 8.6% of the all-Ireland population (5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96) Bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica*	**Land take**	The concrete blocks to be removed are located adjacent to Lough Foyle SPA; however, the access route for the excavator may include land within the boundaries of Lough Foyle SPA. There is therefore the potential for some temporary habitat loss/disturbance. The access route is yet to be defined but is unlikely to be more than 150m, impacting a maximum area of circa 300m^2. This represents 0.001% of the total Lough Foyle SPA site area (2194.22 hectares) and is unlikely to result in an LSE. Potential for LSE cannot be ruled out until the access route is fully defined	**Yes**
	Noise	Qualifying species are susceptible to noise disturbance; however, the presence of the airfield and associated activities (e.g. weekly grass mowing) and Magilligan MotoX track located circa 1 km south of the Proposed Scheme means baseline noise levels can be high. The Proposed Scheme is scheduled to take place between mid-March and mid-April, and works are not predicted to last longer than one week and are very localised. Noise is therefore unlikely to result in a LSE upon over-wintering qualifying bird species.	**No**
	Vibration	Some temporary, localised vibration can be expected from excavator movements but are not predicted to result in an LSE to qualifying features.	**No**

(Western Palearctic - wintering) 11.9% of the all-Ireland population (5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96).	**Water pollution**	Marine processes are predicted to quickly dilute and disperse pollutants and contaminants generated during the Proposed Scheme; however, pollution to surface waters and marine water pollution are listed as threats to this European Site. Pollution events have the potential to have a LSE if not mitigated for appropriately.	**Yes**
	Air pollution	Only low-level, localised vehicle emissions will be produced, for a short duration, during the removal of the concrete blocks.	**No**
	Dust	Qualifying species are not sensitive to the small levels of dust deposition expected from the Proposed Scheme; therefore, no LSE is predicted.	**No**
	Introduction of invasive species	Invasive, non-native species are listed as a threat to Lough Foyle SPA. There is a risk that invasive non-native species will be transported from other sites on the tracks/wheels etc of equipment, or existing invasive non-native invasive species will be further spread by the proposed activities.	**Yes**
ARTICLE 4.2 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC) Over winter the area regularly supports: Light-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota* [Canada/Ireland] 18.7% of the biogeographic population (5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96).	**All pathways**	**As above for Article 4.1**	**Yes**
ARTICLE 4.2 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC)	**All pathways**	**As above for Article 4.1**	**Yes**

An internationally important assemblage of birds. In the non-breeding season the area regularly supports: 36,599 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96) including the species listed above plus: red-throated diver *Gavia stellata,* great crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus,* Berwick's swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii,* greylag goose *Anser anser,* shelduck *Tadorna tadorna,* teal *Anas crecca,* mallard *Anas platyrhynchos,* wigeon *Anas penelope,* eider *Somateria mollissima mollissima,* red brested merganser *Mergus serrator,* oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus,* golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria,* grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola,*			

lapwing *Vanellus vanellus,* knot *Calidris canutus,* dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina,* curlew *Numenius arquata,* redshank *Tringa totanus,* greenshank *Tringa nebularia,* horned grebe *Podiceps auritus.*			

TABLE 4: MAGILLIGAN SAC (SITE CODE: UK0016613)

Location of European Sites	Magilligan lies in the extreme north-west corner of County Londonderry. The site hosts the area of intact dune principally from Magilligan Point to Benone, as well as dune elements along the Lough Foyle shore.
Brief Description of the European Site[19]	The main habitats are the series of dune grasslands together with dune slacks. These habitats also support notable populations of the marsh-fritillary butterfly and petalwort. The site is of international importance for earth science with complex contemporary coastal processes, especially in the region of Magilligan Point, and associated dune forms, together with features important to understanding post-glacial sea-level history. It is the largest coastal depositional feature in Ireland, whilst its well-researched developmental history, combined with rigorous dating, makes it one of only a handful of sites in Europe sufficiently well researched for elucidation of a reliable sea level and sand dune chronology. The dunes also host an important series of fossil soil horizons.
Conservation Objectives[19]	To maintain (or restore where appropriate) the ▪ Dunes with *Salix repens* ssp. *Argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*) ▪ Embryonic shifting dunes ▪ Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)

[19] DAERA-NI (2015) Magilligan SAC Conservation Objectives. Available at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/land-information-magilligan-conservation-objectives-2015.pdf

	▪ Humid dune slacks ▪ Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) ▪ Marsh Fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia* ▪ Petalwort *Petalophyllum ralfsii* to favourable condition.		
Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site[20]	**Negative Impacts**	**Positive Impacts**	
	Fire and fire suppression Problematic native species Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources) Human induced changes to hydraulic conditions Biocenotic evolution, succession Changes in abiotic conditions Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Grazing Military use and civil unrest	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Forest exploitation without planting or natural regrowth Grazing Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Military use and civil unrest Mowing / cutting of grassland	
Qualifying Features	**Impact Pathway**	**Screening Assessment**	**Potential for LSE**
Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)	**Land take**	Magilligan SAC is located approximately 1.59 km north of the Proposed Scheme and no land will be lost from Magilligan SAC as a result of any of the Proposed Scheme.	**No**
	Water pollution	The Proposed Scheme is not hydrologically connected to Magilligan SAC; therefore, there is no viable pathway of effect.	**No**
	Air pollution	Only low-level, localised vehicle emissions will be produced, for a short duration, during the removal of the concrete blocks. It is considered that the any air pollution generated during the removal of the concrete blocks will not be significant enough in scale, or travel the distances required to have an effect on the SAC.	**No**

[20] JNCC Standard Data Form – Magilligan SAC. Available at: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0016613.pdf

Dunes with Salix repens ssp. Argentea (*Salicion arenariae*) Humid dune slacks	**Dust**	Qualifying species are not sensitive to the small levels of dust deposition expected from the Proposed Scheme; therefore, no LSE is predicted.	**No**
	Introduction of invasive species	The Proposed Scheme is not hydrologically connected to Magilligan SAC; therefore, there is no viable pathway of effect.	**No**
Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: Embryonic shifting dunes Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes)	**All pathways**	**As above for 'Annex I habitats'**	**No**

Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: Marsh Fritillary Petalwort	**All pathways**	**As above for 'Annex I habitats'**	**No**

TABLE 5: RIVER ROE AND TRIBUTARIES SAC (SITE CODE: UK0030320)

Location of European Sites	The River Roe and Tributaries includes the Curly River, the Gelvin River, the Bovevagh River (and its tributary the Altahullion Burn), the Wood Burn, the Owenbeg (and is tributary the Clogherna Burn), the Owenrigh River, the Black Burn (and its tributary the Currawable Burn) and the Owenalena River.
Brief Description of the European Site[21]	The area is of special scientific interest because of the physical features of the river and its associated riverine flora and fauna. In total, the area encompasses approximately 87km of watercourse and is notable for the physical diversity and naturalness of the banks and channels, especially in the upper reaches, and the richness and naturalness of its plant and animal communities, in particular the population of Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar*, which is of international importance and in the extent of Upland Oakwood present.
Conservation Objectives[29]	To maintain (or restore where appropriate) Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar* to favourable condition. The objective requirements for Atlantic salmon are to:

[21] DAERA-NI (2017) River Roe and Tributaries SAC Conservation Objectives. Available at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/Conservation%20Objectives%20%282017%29.%20%20River%20Roe%20%26%20Tributaries%20SAC.%20%20Version%203....pdf

	▪ Maintain and if possible, expand existing population numbers and distribution (preferably through natural recruitment), and improve age structure of population. ▪ Maintain and if possible, enhance the extent and quality of suitable Salmon habitat - particularly the chemical and biological quality of the water and the condition of the river channel and substrate.		
Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site[22]	**Negative Impacts**	**Positive Impacts**	
	Mining and quarrying Pollution to surface waters (limnic, terrestrial, marine & brackish) Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources Renewable abiotic energy use Invasive, non-native species Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Changes in biotic conditions Forest and plantation management and use	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources Forest and plantation management and use Interpretative centres	
Qualifying Features	**Impact Pathway**	**Screening Assessment**	**Potential for LSE**
Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Atlantic salmon	**Land take**	River Roe and Tributaries SAC is located approximately 3.78 km south of the Proposed Scheme and no land will be lost from River Roe and Tributaries SAC as a result of any of the Proposed Scheme.	**No**
	Noise	The Proposed Scheme is unlikely to generate underwater noise at sufficient levels to result in temporary or permanent damage to Atlantic salmon.	**No**
	Vibration	Some temporary, localised vibration can be expected from excavator movements but are not predicted to result in an LSE to qualifying features.	**No**
	Water pollution	Salmon spawning usually occurs in November or December and smolts return to the sea generally in May or June. Salmon associated with this European site are therefore most vulnerable to water pollution as they pass the Proposed Scheme to spawn or as they return to sea.	**Yes**

[22] JNCC Standard Data Form – River Roe and Tributaries SAC. Available at: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030360.pdf

		Marine processes are predicted to quickly dilute and disperse pollutants and contaminants generated during the Proposed Scheme; however, pollution events have the potential to have a LSE if not mitigated for appropriately.	

TABLE 6: SKERRIES AND CAUSEWAY SAC (SITE CODE: UK0030383)

Location of European Sites	Skerries and Causeway SAC is a 30km wide embayment on the North Coast of Northern Ireland comprising an area of 10,862ha. The site is bordering the coastline, which the towns of Portrush, Portstewart, Bushmills and the Giants Causeway World Heritage site reside. Within the SAC lies the Skerries Islands, located off Portrush.	
Brief Description of the European Site[23]	The site is influenced oceanographically and biologically both by the warming gulf stream and by the strong tidal currents that flow through the North Channel to and from the Irish Sea. It is subject to considerable wave action being open to the Atlantic to the northwest, but is relatively sheltered from other prevailing swells and includes areas of relative shelter such as behind the Skerries islands. The site is predominantly marine although there are significant influxes of freshwater, from the River Bann to the west and the River Bush to the east, which can influence the immediate coastal areas.	
Conservation Objectives[23]	To maintain (or restore where appropriate) harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) to favourable condition. The objective requirements for harbour porpouse are to: ▪ Ensure the species is a viable component of the site. ▪ Ensure there is no significant disturbance of the species. ▪ Ensure the supporting habitats and processes relevant to harbour porpoises and their prey are maintained.	
Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site[24]	**Negative Impacts**	**Positive Impacts**
	Renewable abiotic energy use Exploration and extraction of oil and gas Changes in abiotic conditions	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities

[23] DAERA-NI (2017) Skerries and Causeway Conservation Objectives. Available at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/Skerries%20and%20Causeway%20SAC%20Conservation%20Objectives%202017.PDF

[24] JNCC Standard Data Form – Skerries and Causeway SAC. Available at: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030383.pdf

	Invasive, non-native species Shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources Marine water pollution Pollution to surface waters (limnic, terrestrial, marine & brackish)		
Qualifying Features	**Impact Pathway**	**Screening Assessment**	**Potential for LSE**
Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Harbour porpoise	**Land take**	Skerries and Causeway SAC is located approximately 15.9 km east of the Proposed Scheme and no land will be lost from Skerries and Causeway SAC as a result of any of the Proposed Scheme.	**No**
	Noise	Qualifying species are susceptible to noise disturbance; however, the presence of the airfield means baseline noise levels can be high. Work timescales have not been determined; however, works are not predicted to last longer than one week and are very localised. The Proposed Scheme may cause temporary, localised displacement of individual harbour porpoise; however, the Zone of Influence is predicted to be limited to circa 50 m, representing a small fraction of the available harbour porpoise habitat; therefore, no LSE is predicted.	**No**
	Vibration	Some temporary, localised vibration can be expected from excavator movements but are not predicted to result in an LSE to qualifying features.	**No**
	Water pollution	Marine processes are predicted to quickly dilute and disperse pollutants and contaminants generated during the Proposed Scheme; however, pollution to surface waters and marine water pollution are listed as threats to this European Site. Pollution events have the potential to have a LSE if not mitigated for appropriately.	**Yes**
	Air pollution	Only low-level, localised vehicle emissions will be produced, for a short duration, during the removal of the concrete blocks; therefore, no LSE is predicted.	**No**
	Dust	Qualifying species are not sensitive to the small levels of dust deposition expected from the Proposed Scheme; therefore, no LSE is predicted.	**No**

	Introduction of invasive species	The Proposed Scheme is unlikely to result in the spread of invasive, non-native species considered to be a threat to harbour porpoise i.e. marine invasive, non-native species.	**No**

TABLE 7: RIVER FINN SAC (SITE CODE: 002301)

Location of European Sites[25]	The site comprises almost the entire freshwater element of the River Finn and its tributaries the Corlacky, the Reelan sub-catchment, the Sruhamboy, Elatagh, Cummirk and Glashagh, and also includes Lough Finn, where the river rises. The spawning grounds at the headwaters of the Mourne and Derg Rivers, Loughs Derg and Belshade and the tidal stretch of the Foyle north of Lifford to the border are also part of the site. The Finn and Reelan, rising in the Bluestack Mountains, drain a catchment area of 195 square miles.		
Brief Description of the European Site	The Finn system is one of Ireland's premier salmon waters. The Finn is important in an international context in that its populations of spring salmon appear to be stable, while they are declining in many areas of Ireland and Europe.		
Conservation Objectives[26]	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic Salmon in River Finn SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets: ▪ Distribution – 100% of river channels down to second order accessible from estuary. ▪ Adult spawning fish – Conservation limit for each system consistently exceeded. ▪ Salmon fry abundance – Maintain or exceed 0+ fry mean catchment-wide abundance threshold value. ▪ Out-migrating smolt abundance – no significant decline ▪ Number and distribution of redds – no decline in number and distribution of spawning redds due to anthropogenic causes. ▪ Water quality – At least Q4 at all sites sampled by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).		
Qualifying Features	**Impact Pathway**	**Screening Assessment**	**Potential for LSE**

[25] Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (2014) River Finn SAC Site Synopsis. Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY002301.pdf

[26] NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: River Finn SAC 002301. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Atlantic salmon	**Land take**	River Finn SAC is located approximately 34.54 km south-west of the Proposed Scheme and no land will be lost from River Finn SAC as a result of any of the Proposed Scheme.	**No**
	Noise	The Proposed Scheme is unlikely to generate underwater noise at sufficient levels to result in temporary or permanent damage to Atlantic salmon.	**No**
	Vibration	Some temporary, localised vibration can be expected from excavator movements but are not predicted to result in an LSE to qualifying features.	**No**
	Water pollution	Salmon associated with the River Finn SAC are unlikely to enter Lough Foyle in sufficient numbers to be affected by the Proposed Scheme. Marine processes are predicted to quickly dilute and disperse pollutants and contaminants generated during the Proposed Scheme.	**No**

TABLE 8: RIVER FAUGHAN AND TRIBUTARIES SAC (SITE CODE: UK0030361)

Location of European Sites	The River Faughan and Tributaries includes the River Faughan and its tributaries the Burntollet River, Bonds Glen and the Glenrandal River (and its tributary the Inver River).
Brief Description of the European Site[27]	In total, the area encompasses approximately 60km of watercourse and is notable for the physical diversity and naturalness of the banks and channels, especially in the upper reaches, and the richness and naturalness of its plant and animal communities, in particular the population of Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar*, which is of international importance and the widespread and common occurrence of Otter *Lutra lutra* in the catchment. Upland Oak Woodland is also well-developed in places along the valley sides of the River Faughan and its tributaries.
Conservation Objectives[27]	To maintain (or restore where appropriate) Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar* to favourable condition. The objective requirements for Atlantic salmon are to: ▪ Maintain and if possible, expand existing population numbers and distribution (preferably through natural recruitment), and improve age structure of population.

[27] DAERA-NI (2017) River Faughan and Tributaries SAC Conservation Objectives. Available at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/Conservation%20Objectives%20%282017%29.%20%20River%20Faughan%20%26%20Tributaries%20SAC.%20%20Versi....pdf

	▪ Maintain and if possible, enhance the extent and quality of suitable Salmon habitat - particularly the chemical and biological quality of the water and the condition of the river channel and substrate.		
Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site[28]	**Negative Impacts**	**Positive Impacts**	
	Forest and plantation management and use Mining and quarrying Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Changes in abiotic conditions Pollution to surface waters (limnic, terrestrial, marine & brackish) Invasive, non-native species Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources Renewable abiotic energy use	Interpretive centres Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources Forest and plantation management and use Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions	
Qualifying Features	**Impact Pathway**	**Screening Assessment**	**Potential for LSE**
Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Atlantic salmon	**Land take**	River Roe and Tributaries SAC is located approximately 3.78 km south of the Proposed Scheme and no land will be lost from River Roe and Tributaries SAC as a result of any of the Proposed Scheme.	**No**
	Noise	The Proposed Scheme is unlikely to generate underwater noise at sufficient levels to result in temporary or permanent damage to Atlantic salmon.	**No**
	Vibration	Some temporary, localised vibration can be expected from excavator movements but are not predicted to result in an LSE to qualifying features.	**No**
	Water pollution	Salmon spawning usually occurs in November or December and smolts return to the sea generally in May or June. Salmon associated with this European site are therefore most vulnerable to water pollution as they pass the Proposed Scheme to spawn or as they return to sea. Marine processes are predicted to quickly dilute and disperse pollutants and contaminants generated during the Proposed Scheme; however, pollution events have the potential to have a LSE if not mitigated for appropriately.	**Yes**

[28] JNCC Standard Data Form – River Faughan and Tributaries SAC. Available at: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030361.pdf

TABLE 9: RIVER FOYLE AND TRIBUTARIES SAC (SITE CODE: UK0030320)

Location of European Sites	The SAC includes the River Foyle and its tributaries including part of the River Finn which lies within Northern Ireland, the River Mourne and its tributary the River Strule (up to its confluence with the Owenkillew River) and the River Derg, along with two of its sub-tributaries, the Mourne Beg River and the Glendergan River. In total, the area encompasses 120 km of watercourse and is notable for the physical diversity and naturalness of the banks and channels, especially in the upper reaches, and the richness and naturalness of its plant and animal communities.	
Brief Description of the European Site[29]	The area is also important as a river habitat. In their upper catchments, the rivers are all fast-flowing spate rivers with dynamic flow regimes characterised by sequences of rapid, riffle and run. Although the banks may have been modified in the past, the channels are natural and composed of large cobble substrate with scattered boulders and sandy marginal deposits, while cobble side and point bars and discrete sand deposits are common features. At the top end of the River Derg and its two tributaries, the aquatic flora reflect the highly acidic character of the water, with mosses and liverworts dominant. Beds of Stream Water Crowfoot *Ranunculus penicillatus var. penicillatus* occur where the flow is less dynamic. The River Foyle below Strabane is slow-flowing and is influenced by a tidal regime, rising and falling with the tidal cycle. Aquatic plants in the channel are extremely limited, particularly in the more saline areas; here, fucoids make up the main component.	
Conservation Objectives[29]	To maintain (or restore where appropriate) Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar* to favourable condition. The objective requirements for Atlantic salmon are to: ▪ Maintain and if possible, expand existing population numbers and distribution (preferably through natural recruitment), and improve age structure of population. ▪ Maintain and if possible, enhance the extent and quality of suitable Salmon habitat - particularly the chemical and biological quality of the water and the condition of the river channel and substrate.	
	Negative Impacts	**Positive Impacts**

[29] DAERA-NI (2017) River Foyle and Tributaries SAC Conservation Objectives. Available at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/Conservation%20Objectives%20%282017%29.%20%20River%20Foyle%20%26%20Tributaries%20SAC.%20%20Version....pdf

Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site[30]	Forest and plantation management and use Changes in abiotic conditions Renewable abiotic energy use Mining and quarrying Pollution to surface waters (limnic, terrestrial, marine and brackish) Invasive, non-native species Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources	Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources. Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions

Qualifying Features	Impact Pathway	Screening Assessment	Potential for LSE
Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Atlantic salmon	**Land take**	River Foyle and Tributaries SAC is located approximately 34.35 km south-west of the Proposed Scheme and no land will be lost from River Foyle and Tributaries SAC as a result of any of the Proposed Scheme.	**No**
	Noise	The Proposed Scheme is unlikely to generate underwater noise at sufficient levels to result in temporary or permanent damage to Atlantic salmon.	**No**
	Vibration	Some temporary, localised vibration can be expected from excavator movements but are not predicted to result in an LSE to qualifying features.	**No**
	Water pollution	Salmon spawning usually occurs in November or December and smolts return to the sea generally in May or June. Salmon associated with this European site are therefore most vulnerable to water pollution as they pass the Proposed Scheme to spawn or as they return to sea. Marine processes are predicted to quickly dilute and disperse pollutants and contaminants generated during the Proposed Scheme; however, pollution events have the potential to have a LSE if not mitigated for appropriately.	**Yes**

[30] JNCC Standard Data Form – River Foyle and Tributaries SAC. Available at: UK0030320.pdf (jncc.gov.uk)

TABLE 10: LEANNAN RIVER SAC (SITE CODE: 002176)

Location of European Sites[31]	Situated in north Co. Donegal, this site comprises the River Leannan and its main tributaries and lakes, including Loughs Fern, Gartan and Akibbon. The river from source to sea measures 46 km and drains a catchment area of 282 km2. The Bullaba River drains off the Glendowan Mountains and flows into Lough Gartan. The Leannan River flows from Lough Gartan in a north-easterly direction, passes through Lough Fern, and then onwards in an easterly direction through the town of Rathmelton and into Lough Swilly. The main tributaries within the site are the lower Glashagh and Lurgy.		
Brief Description of the European Site	The river has good water quality and its banks are fringed more or less continuously by deciduous woodland. The adjacent habitat is mainly wet grassland which has been improved to varying degrees for grazing. There is also a good scattering of woodland, mostly deciduous, in the surrounding area. The Leannan is a good spring and grilse salmon river with extensive spawning habitats and good water quality.		
Conservation Objectives[32]	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic Salmon in Leannan River SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:: ▪ Distribution – 100% of river channels down to second order accessible from estuary. ▪ Adult spawning fish – Conservation limit for each system consistently exceeded. ▪ Salmon fry abundance – Maintain or exceed 0+ fry mean catchment-wide abundance threshold value. ▪ Out-migrating smolt abundance – no significant decline ▪ Number and distribution of redds – no decline in number and distribution of spawning redds due to anthropogenic causes. ▪ Water quality – At least Q4 at all sites sampled by EPA.		
Qualifying Features	**Impact Pathway**	**Screening Assessment**	**Potential for LSE**
Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this	**Land take**	Leannan River SAC is located approximately 44.87 km west of the Proposed Scheme and no land will be lost from the Leannan River SAC as a result of any of the Proposed Scheme.	**No**
	Noise	The Proposed Scheme is unlikely to generate underwater noise at sufficient levels to result in temporary or permanent damage to Atlantic salmon.	**No**

[31] Department of Arts, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht (2015) River Leannan SAC Site Synopsis. Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY002176.pdf

[32] NPWS (2019) Conservation Objectives: Leannan River SAC 002176. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

site: Atlantic salmon	**Vibration**	Some temporary, localised vibration can be expected from excavator movements but are not predicted to result in an LSE to qualifying features.	**No**
	Water pollution	Salmon associated with the River Finn SAC are unlikely to enter Lough Foyle in sufficient numbers to be affected by the Proposed Scheme. Marine processes are predicted to quickly dilute and disperse pollutants and contaminants generated during the Proposed Scheme; however, pollution events have the potential to have a LSE if not mitigated for appropriately.	**No**

TABLE 11: OWENKILLEW RIVER SAC (SITE CODE: UK0030233)

Location of European Sites	The SAC includes the river (42 km stretch) and its associated riverine flora and fauna and adjacent semi-natural vegetation, primarily woodland flora and fauna.
Brief Description of the European Site[33]	The river rises at an altitude of 415m and flows into the Strule at an altitude of 35m. It is a fast-flowing spate river; notable for the physical diversity and naturalness of the bank and channel, the richness and naturalness of its plant and animal communities, which includes extensive beds of Stream Water Crowfoot *Ranunculus penicillatus* var. *penicillatus* and the largest Northern Ireland population of the now rare Fresh Water Pearl Mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*. In addition, the river is important for Otter *Lutra lutra* and Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar*. Adjacent woodlands which form part of the SAC include Drumlea and Mullan Woods ASSI and the Owenkillew and Glenelly Woods ASSI, two of the largest stands of Oak woodland in Northern Ireland. An area of localised waterlogging in the former woodland has resulted in the development of Bog Woodland. The River Foyle below Strabane is slow-flowing and is influenced by a tidal regime, rising and falling with the tidal cycle. Aquatic plants in the channel are extremely limited, particularly in the more saline areas; here, fucoids make up the main component.
Conservation Objectives	To maintain (or restore where appropriate) Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar* to favourable condition. The objective requirements for Atlantic salmon are to: ▪ Maintain and if possible, expand existing population numbers and distribution,

[33] DAERA-NI (2017) Owenkillew River SAC Conservation Objectives. Available at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/Conservation%20Objectives%20%282017%29.%20Owenkillew%20River%20SAC.%20%20Version%203.%20%20Appro....pdf

	▪ Maintain and where possible, enhance the extent and quality of suitable Salmon habitat, in particular the chemical and biological quality of the water.		
Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site[34]	**Negative Impacts**	**Positive Impacts**	
	Renewable abiotic energy use. Mining and quarrying. Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources. Pollution to surface waters (limnic, terrestrial, marine and brackish). Forest and plantation management and use. Invasive, non-native species. Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions. Changes in abiotic conditions.	Forest and plantation management and use. Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources. Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions.	
Qualifying Features	**Impact Pathway**	**Screening Assessment**	**Potential for LSE**
Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Atlantic salmon	**Land take**	Owenkillew River SAC is located approximately 46.5 km south of the Proposed Scheme and no land will be lost from Owenkillew River SAC as a result of any of the Proposed Scheme.	**No**
	Noise	The Proposed Scheme is unlikely to generate underwater noise at sufficient levels to result in temporary or permanent damage to Atlantic salmon.	**No**
	Vibration	Some temporary, localised vibration can be expected from excavator movements but are not predicted to result in an LSE to qualifying features.	**No**
	Water pollution	Salmon spawning usually occurs in November or December and smolts return to the sea generally in May or June. Salmon associated with this European site are therefore most vulnerable to water pollution as they pass the Proposed Scheme to spawn or as they return to sea. Marine processes are predicted to quickly dilute and disperse pollutants and contaminants generated during the Proposed Scheme; however, pollution events have the potential to have a LSE if not mitigated for appropriately.	**Yes**

[34] JNCC Standard Data Form – River Foyle and Tributaries SAC. Available at: UK0030320.pdf (jncc.gov.uk)

TABLE 12: LOUGH FOYLE RAMSAR SITE (SITE CODE: UK12014)

Location of European Sites	Lough Foyle Ramsar site is situated on the north coast of Northern Ireland in County Londonderry, extending northeast of the city of Derry. This includes the whole of the Lough Foyle ASSI, the intertidal area of the Magilligan ASSI in Lough Foyle extending south of Magilligan Point and all of Lough Foyle Special Protection Area.		
Brief Description of the European Site	The site is comprised of a large shallow sea lough which includes the estuaries of the rivers Foyle, Faughan and Roe. The site contains extensive intertidal areas of mudflats and sandflats, saltmarsh and associated brackish ditches.		
Qualifying Features[35]	**Impact Pathway**	**Screening Assessment**	**Potential for LSE**
Criterion 1 This is a particularly good representative example of a wetland complex including intertidal sand and mudflats with extensive seagrass beds, saltmarsh, estuaries and associated brackish ditches.	**Land take**	The concrete blocks to be removed are located adjacent to Lough Foyle Ramsar site; however, the access route for the excavator may include land within the boundaries of Lough Foyle Ramsar site. There is therefore the potential for some temporary habitat loss/disturbance. The access route is yet to be defined but is unlikely to be more than 150m, impacting a maximum area of circa 300m^2. This represents 0.001% of the total Lough Foyle Ramsar site area (2,204.36 ha) and is unlikely to result in an LSE. Potential for LSE cannot be ruled out until the access route is fully defined	**Yes**
	Water pollution	Marine processes are predicted to quickly dilute and disperse pollutants and contaminants generated during the Proposed Scheme; however, pollution events have the potential to have a LSE if not mitigated for appropriately.	**Yes**
	Air pollution	Only low-level, localised vehicle emissions will be produced, for a short duration, during the removal of the concrete blocks.	**No**
	Dust	Qualifying species are not sensitive to the small levels of dust deposition expected from the Proposed Scheme; therefore, no LSE is predicted.	**No**

[35] Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands: Lough Foyle (2005) Available at https://rsis.ramsar.org/RISapp/files/RISrep/GB974RIS.pdf

	Introduction of invasive species	There is a risk that invasive non-native species will be transported from other sites on the tracks/wheels etc of equipment, or existing invasive non-native invasive species will be further spread by the proposed activities.	**Yes**
Criterion 2 The site supports an appreciable assemblage of rare, vulnerable or endangered species or sub-species of plant and animal.	**All pathways**	**As above for 'Criterion 1'**	**Yes**
	Noise	Qualifying species are susceptible to noise disturbance; however, the presence of the airfield and associated activities (e.g. weekly grass mowing) and Magilligan MotoX track located circa 1 km south of the Proposed Scheme means baseline noise levels can be high. The Proposed Scheme is scheduled to take place between mid-March and mid-April, and works are not predicted to last longer than one week and are very localised. Noise is therefore unlikely to result in a LSE upon over-wintering qualifying bird species.	**No**
	Vibration	Some temporary, localised vibration can be expected from excavator movements but are not predicted to result in an LSE to qualifying features.	**No**
Criterion 3 The site supports a diverse assemblage of wintering waterfowl which are indicative of wetland values, productivity and diversity.	**All pathways**	**As above for 'Criterion 1 and Criterion 2'**	**Yes**
Criterion 5 The site supports about 29,000 migrating birds.	**All pathways**	**As above for 'Criterion 1 and Criterion 2'**	**Yes**

Criterion 6 Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.	**All pathways**	**As above for 'Criterion 1 and Criterion 2'**	**Yes**

5. In-combination Assessment

5.1.1. The majority of planning applications within 2 km of the Proposed Scheme were single dwellings and no HRA had been prepared or was available for these applications.

5.1.2. As part of assessment for adverse effects, a review of other relevant projects and plans subject to HRA has been completed to identify potential cumulative effects with the Proposed Scheme and is summarised in Table 13 below.

TABLE 13: IN-COMBINATION ASSESSMENT OF PROJECTS

Planning Reference: LA01/2018/0883/F			
Proposal Description	**Location**	**Potential for LSE alone**	**Potential for in-combination effects**
Proposed development to comprise of a new Wastewater Pumping Station (WwPS) which will include 1 No. wet well, 1 No. valve chamber and 1 No. flow meter chamber (all chambers to be constructed below ground and fitted with manhole covers at ground level). Also included 1No. control panel kiosk and 1 No. wash water kiosk, both kiosks are mounted above ground on a concrete plinth and finished in green, 1No. 5m high site lighting column and telemetry aerial. Site surfacing to be finished in concrete. Access to site via existing hard standing entrance and new vehicle turning area to be constructed	Lands adjacent to Seacoast Road Limavady and South of 680 Seacoast Road. Townland: Benone	Shared Environmental Services (SES) can advise Planning that HRA Stage 1 screening has been carried out appropriately and having considered the nature, scale, timing, duration and location of the project concluded that further assessment is not required because it would not have a likely significant effect on the selection features, conservation objectives or status of any European site.	As no LSE predicted from the project, there is no likelihood of in-combination effects with the Proposed Scheme.

TABLE 14: IN-COMBINATION ASSESSMENT OF PLANS

Plan	Potential for LSE alone	Potential for in-combination effects
Northern Area Plan 2016[36]	Habitats Regulations Assessment on the Northern Area Plan 2016[37] It has been ascertained that the NAP would not adversely affect the key species and key habitats or the integrity (structure and function and conservation objectives) of any European site.	As no LSE predicted from the Plan, there is no likelihood of in-combination effects with the Proposed Scheme.

[36] The Department of the Environment Northern Ireland (2016) Northern Area Plan 2016

[37] The Department of the Environment Northern Ireland (2016) Habitats Regulations Assessment on the Northern Area Plan 2016

6. Conclusion

6.1.1. With due consideration, given the information provided above for the Stage 1 – Screening, it is considered that the Proposed Scheme has the potential to lead to significant effects 'alone' on seven European sites, as summarised in Table 15 below:

TABLE 15: SUMMARY OF SCREENING ASSESSMENT

European Sites	Potential for LSE						
	Land Take	Noise	Vibration	Water Pollution	Air Pollution	Dust	Introduction of Invasive Species
Lough Foyle SPA	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Magilligan SAC	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
River Roe and Tibutaries SAC	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Skerries and Causeway SAC	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
River Finn (RoI)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
River Faughan and Tributaries SAC	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
River Foyle and Tributaries SAC	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Leannan River (RoI)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Owenkillew River SAC	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Lough Foyle Ramsar	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

6.1.2. A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required to determine whether the Proposed Scheme would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European Sites and whether they can be negated through mitigation.

6.1.3. It was concluded that the Proposed Scheme will not result in a LSE to the qualifying features of Magilligan SAC, River Finn SAC and Leannan River SAC; therefore, these European sites can be excluded from further assessment.

6.1.4. An assessment of in-combination effect concluded that the Proposed Scheme was unlikely to have an effect on any European site when considered in-combination with other plans and projects.

6.1.5. Reference should also be made to Appendix C and the requirement to submit a notice of a proposal to carry out an operation or activity specified by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs as likely to damage an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI).

Appendix A - Site Location Plan

Figure 1: Site Location Plan

Legend

0 50 100 m

Original scale: 1:1,000 | Version: 1.0

Base Mapping: © OpenStreetMaps and its contributers

Appendix B – European Sites

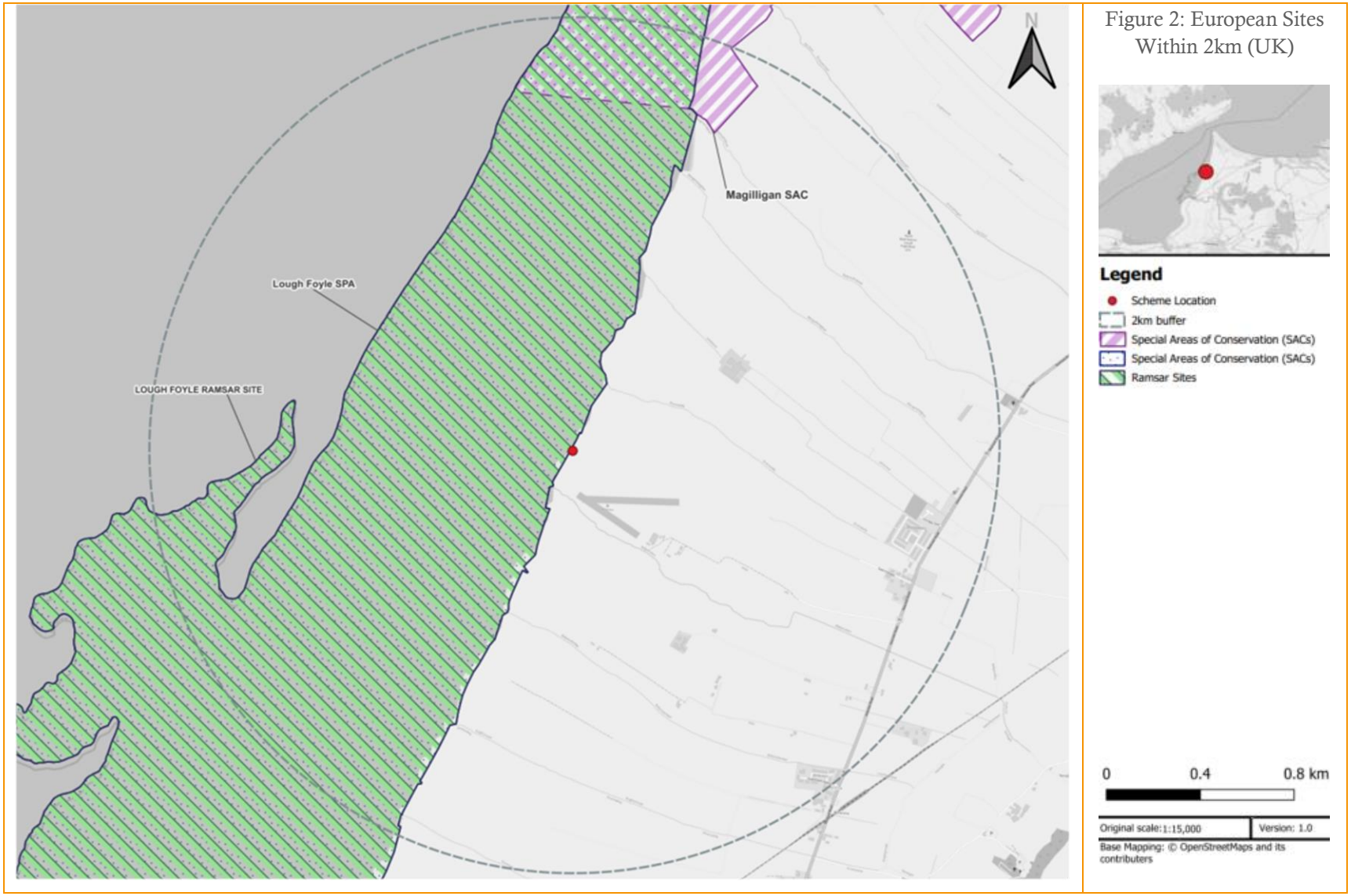

Figure 2: European Sites Within 2km (UK)

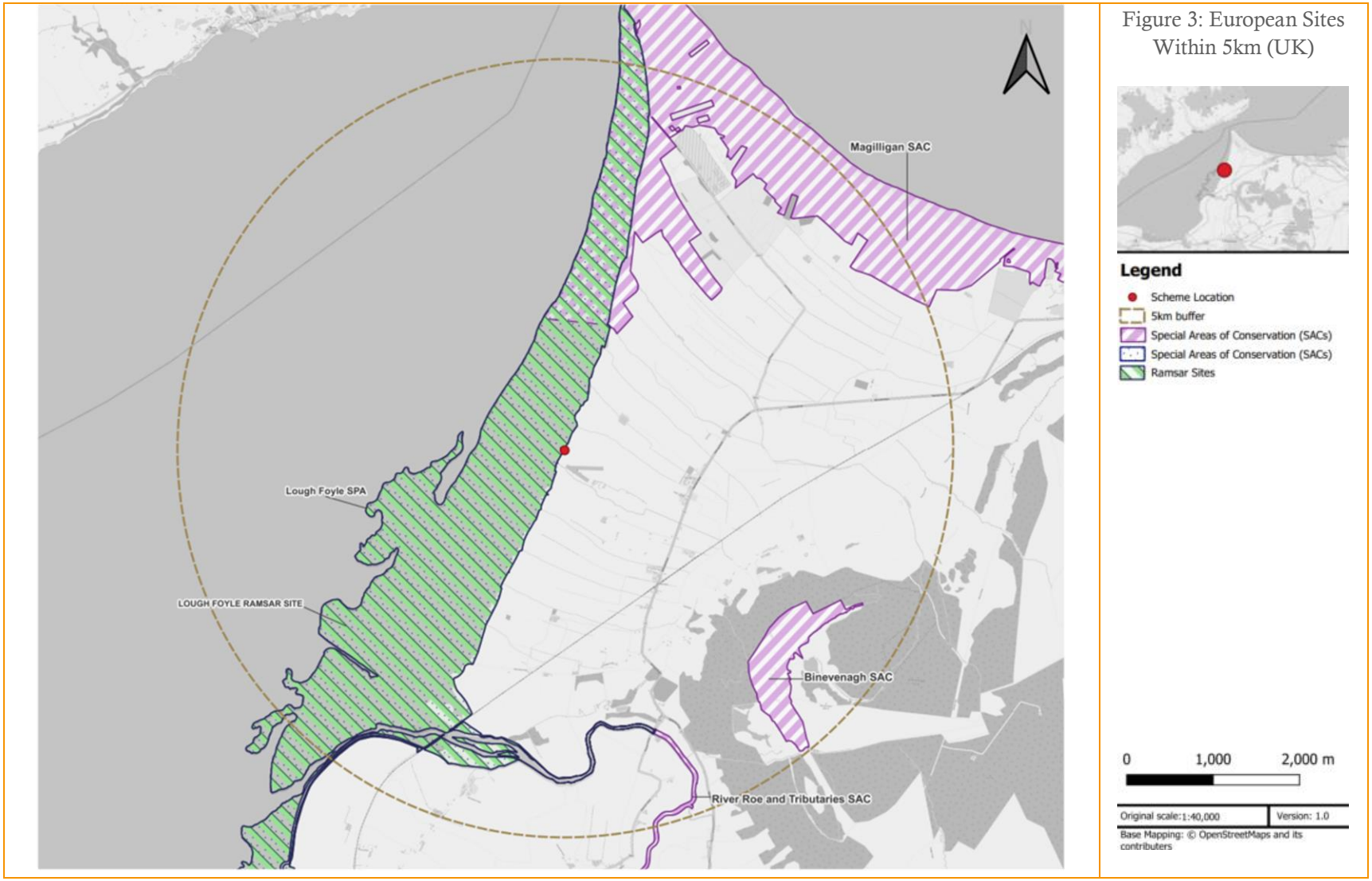

Figure 3: European Sites Within 5km (UK)

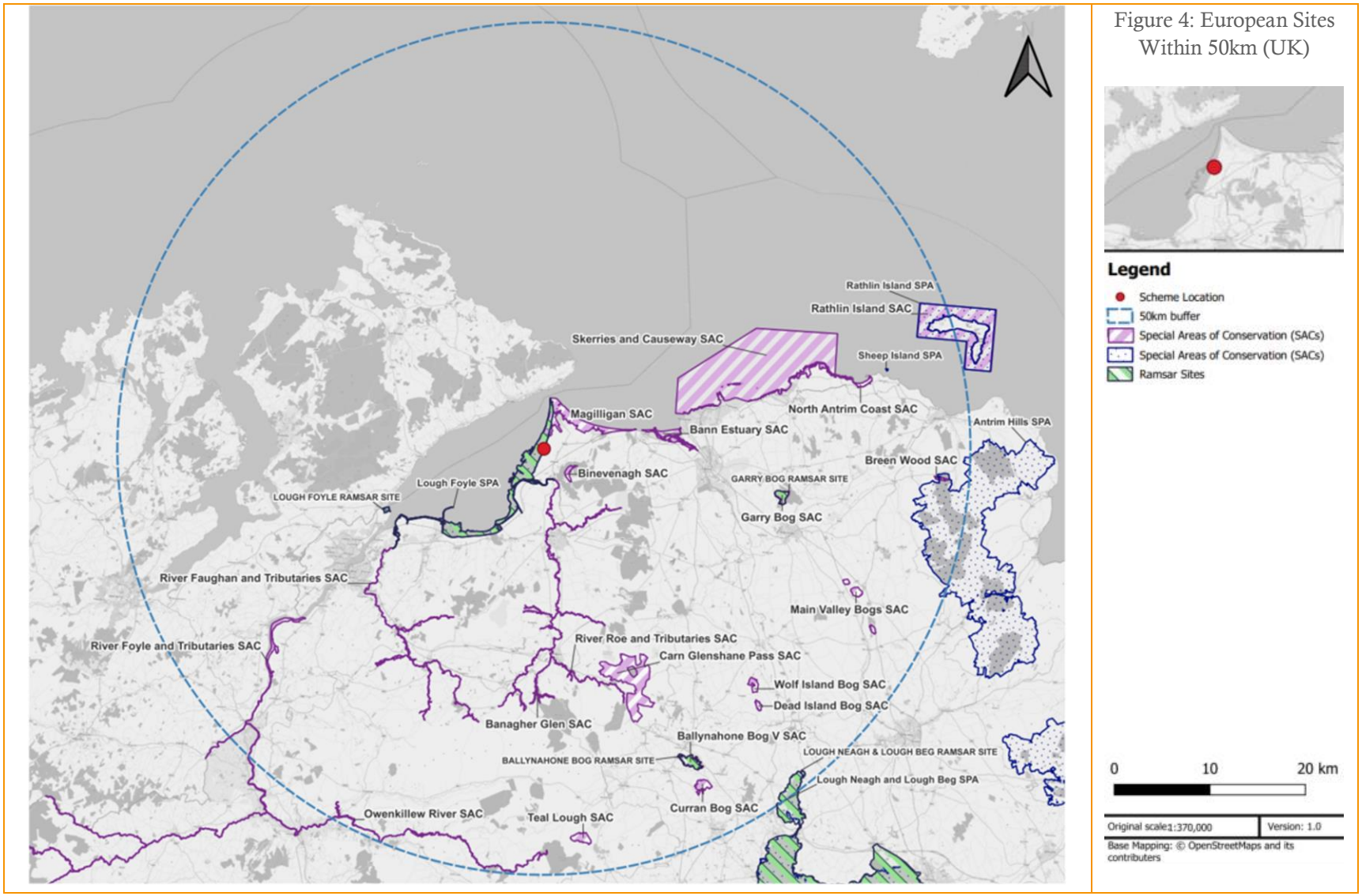

Figure 4: European Sites Within 50km (UK)

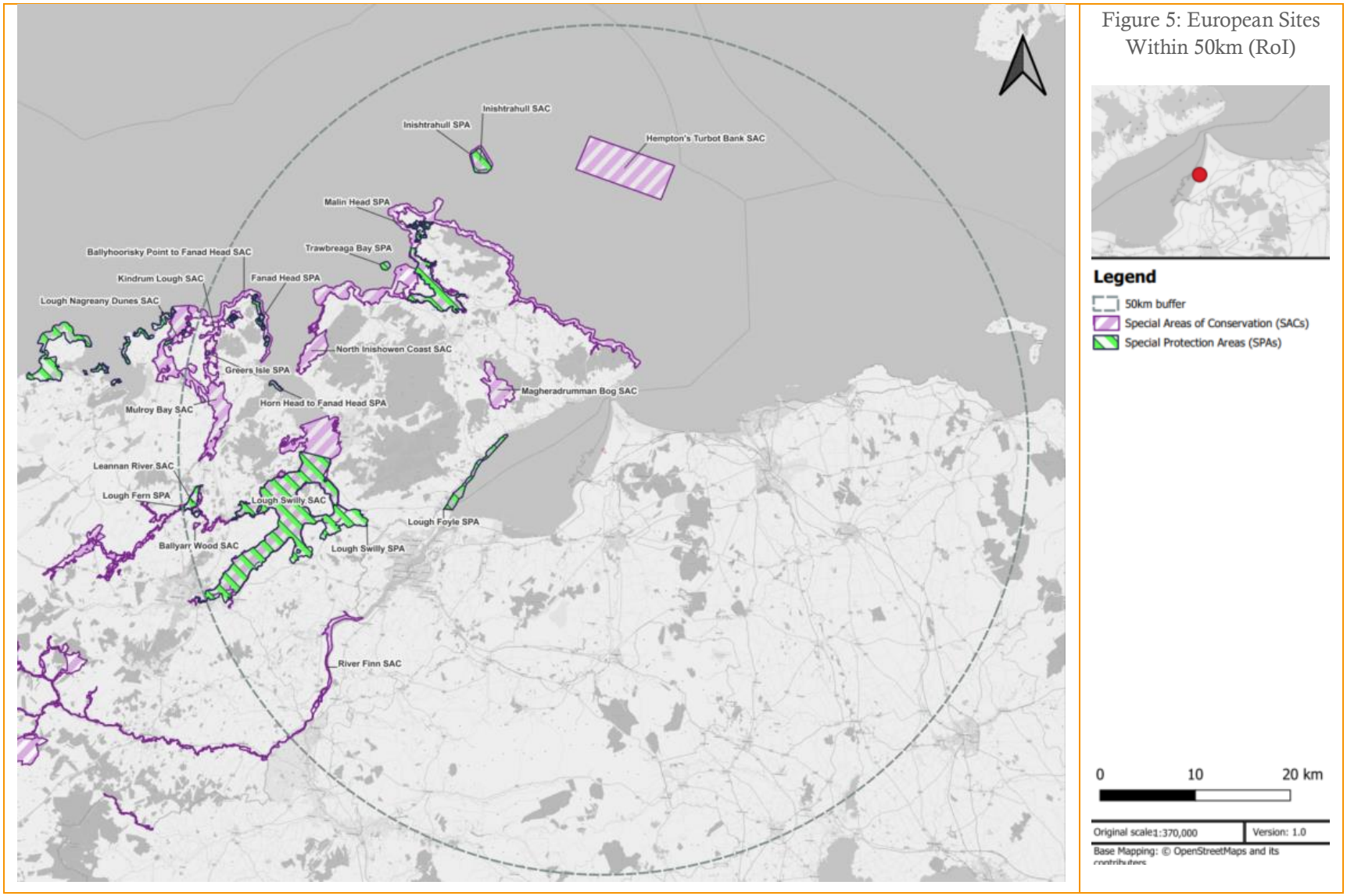

Figure 5: European Sites Within 50km (RoI)

Appendix C – ASSI Assessment

Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI's) were originally designated under The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, subsequently replaced by the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002.

Owners and occupiers of land within an ASSI will need to apply for written consent from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to carry out certain works or activities. Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) representatives will then consider in detail the potential impacts of the proposed operation and, if necessary, give guidance on how it may be carried out in a way that protects the designated features of the ASSI. A response from the Department will be issued within 28 days as required under legislation. [38]

The Proposed Scheme is located within the site boundary of Lough Foyle ASSI and the following Notifiable Activities are proposed (or may inadvertently occur) as part of the Proposed Scheme:

- Activity or operation which involves the damage or disturbance by any means of the surface and subsurface of the land;
- The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains;
- Construction, removal or disturbance of any permanent or temporary structure including building, engineering or other operations;
- Alteration of natural or man-made features, the clearance of boulders or large stones and grading of rock faces; and,
- Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage the wildlife or physiographical features of the area.

As such a Notice of a proposal to carry out an operation or activity specified by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs as likely to damage an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI).

Site Name	**Lough Foyle ASSI**[39]
Reasons for Designation	The physiographical interest relates to various active coastal processes which occur on both the intertidal and upper beach areas of the shore, in the river and in the saltmarsh environments. These processes include the development of shell and gravel ridges, saltmarsh pans, drainage creeks and sand spits. The fauna of Lough Foyle includes a large and diverse population of waders and other bird species and regularly supports a wintering bird assemblage of over 5,000 waterfowl. Four over wintering species of bird occur in sufficient numbers within the proposed ASSI which qualifies them as internationally important. They are whooper swan, light-bellied Brent goose, wigeon and bar-tailed godwit. Overwintering species whose numbers are sufficient to qualify the species as important in an all-Ireland context include the following: mallard, teal, red-breasted merganser, shelduck, greylag goose, mute swan, Bewicks

[38] Available: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/request-consent-carry-out-notifiable-operation-assi

[39] Lough Foyle ASSI Declaration. Available at: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/lough%20foyle-citation-documents-map.pdf

	swan, oystercatcher, dunlin, great crested greb, knot, curlew, redshank and greenshank. Three other species which have been recorded in numbers large enough to qualify them as significant in an all-Ireland context are eider, golden plover and pintail.
Schedule of operations and activities	Any activity or operation which involves the damage or disturbance by any means of the surface and subsurface of the land, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing, reclamation and extraction of minerals, including sand, shingle, shell, gravel and peat. *Any change in the present annual pattern and intensity of grazing, including any change in the type of livestock used or in supplementary feeding practice.* *Any change in the established method or frequency of rolling, mowing or cutting.* *Any change in the annual pattern of application of manure, slurry or artificial fertiliser.* *The application of herbicides, fungicides or other chemicals deployed to kill any form of wild plant, other than plants listed as being noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.* *The storage or dumping, spreading or discharge of any material not specified under paragraphs 4 or 5.* The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains, other than for:- (i) plants listed as noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977; (ii) normal cutting or mowing regimes for which a consent is not required under paragraph 3. *The release into the area of any animal (other than in connection with normal grazing practice) or plant. 'Animal' includes birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates; 'Plant' includes seed, fruit or spore.* *Burning.* *Changes in tree or woodland management, including afforestation, planting, clearing and felling.* Construction, removal or disturbance of any permanent or temporary structure including building, engineering or other operations.

	Alteration of natural or man-made features, the clearance of boulders or large stones and grading of rock faces. *Operations or activities which would affect wetlands (including marsh, fen, rivers, streams and open water), e.g.* *(i) change in the methods or frequency of routine drainage maintenance;* *(ii) modification to the structure of any watercourse;* *(iii) lowering of the water-table, permanently or temporarily;* *(iv) change in the management of bank-side vegetation.* *The disturbance, killing or taking of any wild animal except where such killing or taking is treated as an exception in Articles 5, 11, 17, 20, 21 and 22 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.* *The following activities undertaken in a manner likely to damage or disturb the wildlife of the area:* *(i) educational activities;* *(ii) research activities;* *(iii) recreational activities;* *(iv) exercising of animals.* *Changes in game, waterfowl or fisheries management or fishing or hunting practices.* *Sampling of rocks, minerals, fossils or any other material forming a part of the site, undertaken in a manner likely to damage the scientific interest.* Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage the wildlife or physiographical features of the area.
Mitigation	Appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented to protect the qualifying interests associated with European sites within 50km of the Proposed Scheme. Mitigation measures will include: ▪ To be updated following Stage 2: AA as detailed within the Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment report.

SAC

Environmental Assessments