





APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

FOR
PROPOSED
TOWN RENEWAL MASTERPLAN
AT
ATHGARVAN
Co. KILDARE

ON BEHALF OF
Kildare County Council

Prepared by
Enviroguide Consulting

 *Dublin*
3D Core C, Block 71, The Plaza,
Park West, Dublin 12

 *Kerry*
19 Henry Street
Kenmare, Co. Kerry

 *Wexford*
M10 Wexford Enterprise
Centre, Strandfield Business
Park, Rosslare Road, Wexford

 www.enviroguide.ie
 info@enviroguide.ie
 +353 1 565 4730



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

REPORT LIMITATIONS	2
LIST OF TABLES	3
LIST OF FIGURES.....	3
1 INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 BACKGROUND	5
1.2 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND	5
1.2.1 <i>Legislative Context</i>	5
1.2.2 <i>Stages of Appropriate Assessment</i>	6
2 METHODOLOGY	8
2.1 GUIDANCE	8
2.2 SCREENING STEPS	9
2.3 DESK STUDY.....	9
2.4 FIELD SURVEYS	10
2.5 IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES	10
2.6 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS	10
3 STAGE 1 SCREENING	12
3.1 MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN SITES	12
3.2 ATHGARVAN TOWN RENEWAL MASTERPLAN.....	12
3.2.1 <i>Athgarvan Town - Location & Description</i>	12
3.2.2 <i>Athgarvan Town Renewal Masterplan- Main Objectives</i>	14
3.3 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT	19
3.3.1 <i>Hydrology</i>	19
3.3.2 <i>Geology and Hydrogeology</i>	19
3.4 IDENTIFICATION OF EUROPEAN SITES.....	20
3.4.1 <i>Potential Sources of Effects</i>	20
3.4.2 <i>Potential Pathways to European Sites</i>	21
3.4.3 <i>Indirect Pathways</i>	22
3.5 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS	26
3.5.1 <i>Potential for In-combination Effects</i>	26
4 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING CONCLUSION	29
5 REFERENCES	30

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. European sites considered with the Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) method to establish notable links between the sources of effects arising from the Proposed Masterplan, and any relevant European sites. Those sites with notable S-P-R links are highlighted in green (if any) 22

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Overview of Screening and Appropriate Assessment (OPR, 2021)..... 7

Figure 2. Site Location 13

Figure 3. Athgarvan Town existing layout (source: Athgarvan TRMP (KCC 2022)). Notable locations included in inset [1 – 9] 16

Figure 4. Proposed opportunity areas (source: Athgarvan TRMP (KCC, 2022)) 17

Figure 5. Proposed Key Priority Projects (source: Athgarvan TRMP (KCC, 2022))..... 18

Figure 6. Groundwater Vulnerability 20

Figure 7. European Sites Within A 10km Radius Of Proposed Masterplan 25

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Enviroguide Consulting was commissioned by Kildare County Council (KCC) to prepare an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report in respect of a Proposed Town Renewal Masterplan, hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Masterplan' or 'Site' (where referring to the area of the Proposed Masterplan) for Athgarvan, Co. Kildare. This report contains information to enable the competent authority to undertake Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening in respect of the Proposed Masterplan.

1.2 Legislative Background

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) seeks to conserve natural habitats and wild fauna and flora by the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). The Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) seeks to protect birds of special importance by the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). It is the responsibility of each Member State to designate SPAs and SACs, both of which will form part of the Natura 2000 Network, a network of protected sites throughout the European Community. These designated sites are referred to as 'Natura 2000 sites' or 'European sites'. SACs are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats (including priority types which are in danger of disappearance) and Annex II species (other than birds). SPAs are selected for the conservation of Annex I birds and other regularly occurring migratory birds and their habitats. The annexed habitats and species for which each site is selected correspond to the Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of the sites; from these the conservation objectives of the site are derived.

An AA is a required assessment to determine the likelihood of significant effects, based on best scientific knowledge, of any plans or projects on European sites. Screening for AA determines whether a plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European site, in view of its conservation objectives.

This AA Screening has been undertaken to determine the potential for significant effects on relevant European sites. The purpose of this assessment is to determine the appropriateness, or otherwise, of the Proposed Masterplan in the context of the conservation objectives of such sites.

1.2.1 Legislative Context

The obligations in relation to AA have been implemented in Ireland under Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended ("the 2000 Act"), and in particular Section 177U and Section 177V thereof. The relevant provisions of Section 177U in relation to AA screening have been set out below:

"177U.— (1) A screening for appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or application for consent for proposed development shall be carried out by the competent authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.

(2)...

(3)...

(4) The competent authority shall determine that an appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or a proposed development, as the case may be, is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the draft Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

(5) The competent authority shall determine that an appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or a proposed development, as the case may be, is not required if it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the draft Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.”

An Appropriate Assessment is required under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive where a project or plan may give rise to significant effects upon a European site. Paragraph 3 states that:

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

1.2.2 Stages of Appropriate Assessment

This AA Screening Report (the 'Screening Report') has been prepared by Enviroguide Consulting. It considers whether the Proposed Masterplan is likely to have a significant effect on any European sites and whether a Stage 2 AA is required.

The AA process is a four-stage process. Each stage requires different considerations, assessments, and tests to ultimately arrive at the relevant conclusion for each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required.

Overview of Screening and Appropriate Assessment

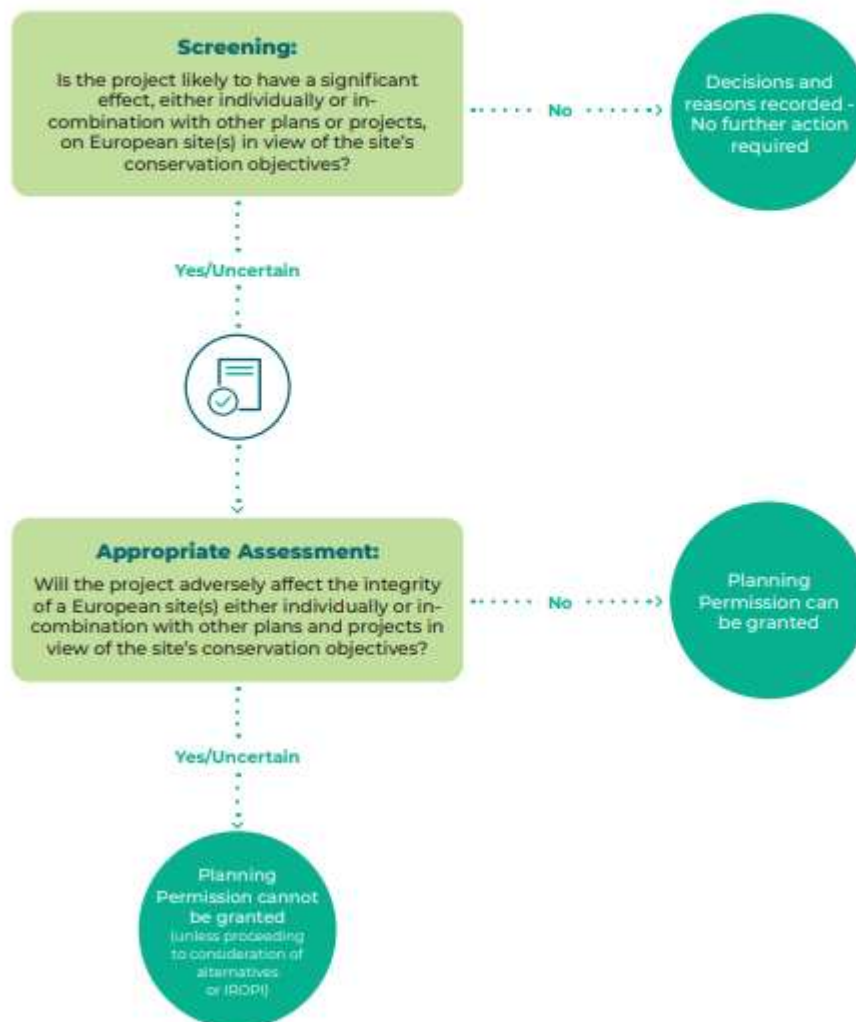


FIGURE 1. OVERVIEW OF SCREENING AND APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT (OPR, 2021).

The four stages of an AA, can be summarised as follows:

- **Stage 1: *Screening*.** The first stage of the AA process is to determine the likelihood of significant effects of the proposal, this addresses:
 - whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the European site, or
 - whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European site in view of its conservation objectives.
- **Stage 2: *Appropriate Assessment*.** The second stage of the AA requires the competent authority to determine whether the project or plan (either alone or in combination with other projects or plans) will have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site, having regard to the conservation objectives of the site and its ecological structure

and function. The developer must provide a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) to the competent authority to inform the AA, which is a statement, for the purposes of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive of the potential impacts of a proposed development, on its own or in combination with other plans or projects, for one or more than one European site, in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites. It must include a report of a scientific examination of evidence and data, carried out by competent persons to identify, and classify any potential impacts for one or more than one European site in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites. The competent authority must consult with the public in relation to any plan or project that requires AA. If the competent authority determines that the plan or project would have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site, it can only grant consent after proceeding through stages 3 and 4.

- **Stage 3: Assessment of alternative solutions.** If the outcome of Stage 2 is negative i.e., adverse impacts to the sites cannot be scientifically ruled out, despite mitigation, the plan or project should proceed to Stage 3 or be abandoned. This stage examines alternative solutions to the proposal.
- **Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.** The final stage is the main derogation process examining whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project to adversely affect a European site, where no less damaging solution exists.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Guidance

This Screening Report has been undertaken in accordance with the following guidance:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance 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.* Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- *Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle* (European Commission, 2000);
- *Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC* (European Commission, 2019);
- *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (European Commission, 2021); and
- *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, OPR Practice Note PN01, Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) March 2021.*

2.2 Screening Steps

This Screening Report has been undertaken in accordance with the European Communities Methodological Guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2002) and the European Commission Guidance 'Managing Natura 2000 sites' (EC, 2000). Screening for AA involves the following steps:

- Establish whether the plan is directly connected with or necessary for the management of a European site;
- Description of the plan or project and the description and characterisation of other projects or plans that in combination have the potential for having significant effects on the European site;
- Identification of European sites potentially affected;
- Identification and description of potential effects on the European site(s);
- Assessment of the likely significance of the effects identified on the European site(s); and
- Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects.

2.3 Desk Study

A desktop study was carried out to collate and review available information, datasets, and documentation sources relevant for the completion of this Screening Report. The desktop study relied on the following sources:

- Information on the network of European sites, boundaries, qualifying interests, and conservation objectives, obtained from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) at www.npws.ie;
- Text summaries of the relevant European sites taken from the respective Standard Data Forms and Site Synopses available at www.npws.ie;
- Information on waterbodies, catchment areas and hydrological connections obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at www.gis.epa.ie;
- Information on bedrock, groundwater, aquifers and their statuses, obtained from Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) at www.gsi.ie;
- Satellite imagery and mapping obtained from various sources and dates including Google, Digital Globe, Bing and Ordnance Survey Ireland; and
- Information on the existence of permitted developments, or developments awaiting decision, in the vicinity of the Proposed Masterplan from KCC.

For a complete list of the specific documents consulted as part of this assessment, see *Section 5 References*.

2.4 Field Surveys

No field surveys were deemed necessary for the preparation of this Screening Report.

2.5 Identification of Relevant European Sites

In order to identify the European sites that potentially lie within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) of the Proposed Masterplan, a Source-Path-Receptor (S-P-R) method was adopted, as described in 'OPR Practice Note PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management' (OPR, 2021), a practice note produced by the Office of the Planning Regulator, Dublin. This note was published to provide guidance on screening for AA during the planning process, and although it focuses on the approach a planning authority should take in screening for AA, the methodology is also readily applied in the preparation of Screening Reports such as this.

The methodology used to identify relevant European sites comprised the following:

- Identification of potential sources of effects based on the Proposed Masterplan description and details;
- Use of up-to-date GIS spatial datasets for European designated sites and water catchments – downloaded from the NPWS website (www.npws.ie) and the EPA website (www.epa.ie) to identify European sites which could potentially be affected by the Proposed Masterplan; and
- Identification of potential pathways between the Proposed Masterplan and any European sites within the ZOI of any of the identified sources of effects.
 - The catchment data were used to establish or discount potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Masterplan and any European sites.
 - Groundwater and bedrock information used to establish or discount potential hydrogeological connectivity between the Proposed Masterplan and any European sites.
 - Air and land connectivity assessed based on Proposed Masterplan details and proximity to European sites.

There is absolutely no reliance placed in this Screening Report on mitigation measures intended to avoid/reduce harmful effects on the European sites.

2.6 Assessment of Significant Effects

The potential for significant effects that may arise from the Proposed Masterplan was considered using key indicators, namely:

- Habitat loss or alteration
- Habitat/species fragmentation
- Disturbance and/or displacement of species
- Changes in population density
- Changes in water quality and resource

In addition, information pertaining to the conservation objectives of the European sites, the ecology of designated habitats and species, and known or perceived sensitivities of the habitats and species were considered.

3 STAGE 1 SCREENING

3.1 Management of European Sites

The Proposed Masterplan at Athgarvan is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European sites.

3.2 Athgarvan Town Renewal Masterplan

3.2.1 Athgarvan Town - Location & Description

Athgarvan is situated in central County Kildare between the town of Newbridge and Kilcullen, and between the Curragh Plains and the River Liffey (Figure 2). The town is situated at an almost equal distance (of approximately 3.5km) from both Kilcullen to the southeast of the M9 and Newbridge to the north of the M7. The town of Athgarvan functions as a small local service centre for the resident population. Athgarvan originally developed in the vicinity of the Mill, between Athgarvan Crossroads, Athgarvan House and the River Liffey. The town has evolved to become a largely residential area, with development taking place to the west of the River towards Curragh, to the north towards Newbridge and to the south towards Kilcullen. The earliest definite reference to a mill at Athgarvan comes from the Noble and Keane map of County Kildare of 1752.

Today, Athgarvan town has a population of 1176 people (Census 2016). The primary land use within the Athgarvan is residential, with some educational (Montessori and primary school), commercial (retail convenience shop) and sport facilities (Athgarvan GAA club and Athgarvan pitch and putt), which represent the key destinations to and within the town.

Athgarvan lies on the R416, which connects the small town with Newbridge and the M7 to the north. The L2032 also runs through the Proposed Masterplan area and connects to the R413, which provides a connection between Athgarvan and the M9 / Kilcullen to the south-east and to the Curragh and the M7 (Junction 12) to the west. Athgarvan is served by bus route 129 (operated by Kenneally's Buses), providing a connection to Newbridge town to the north and Kilcullen to the south-east to Athgarvan. Route 129 stops at the two bus stops on the R416, Athgarvan Inn. The town is also served by a JJ Kavanagh service between Newbridge and Kilcullen, which stops at both the Athgarvan Inn stops and the bus stop on the L2032.

The town extends over a wide area with a distance of approximately 2km between the primary school at the western edge of the town and Athgarvan Bridge at the eastern end of the Proposed Masterplan boundary. Urban development, low-density one-off dwellings and agricultural lands are interspersed between both of these areas. No large public open space or park is provided in Athgarvan.

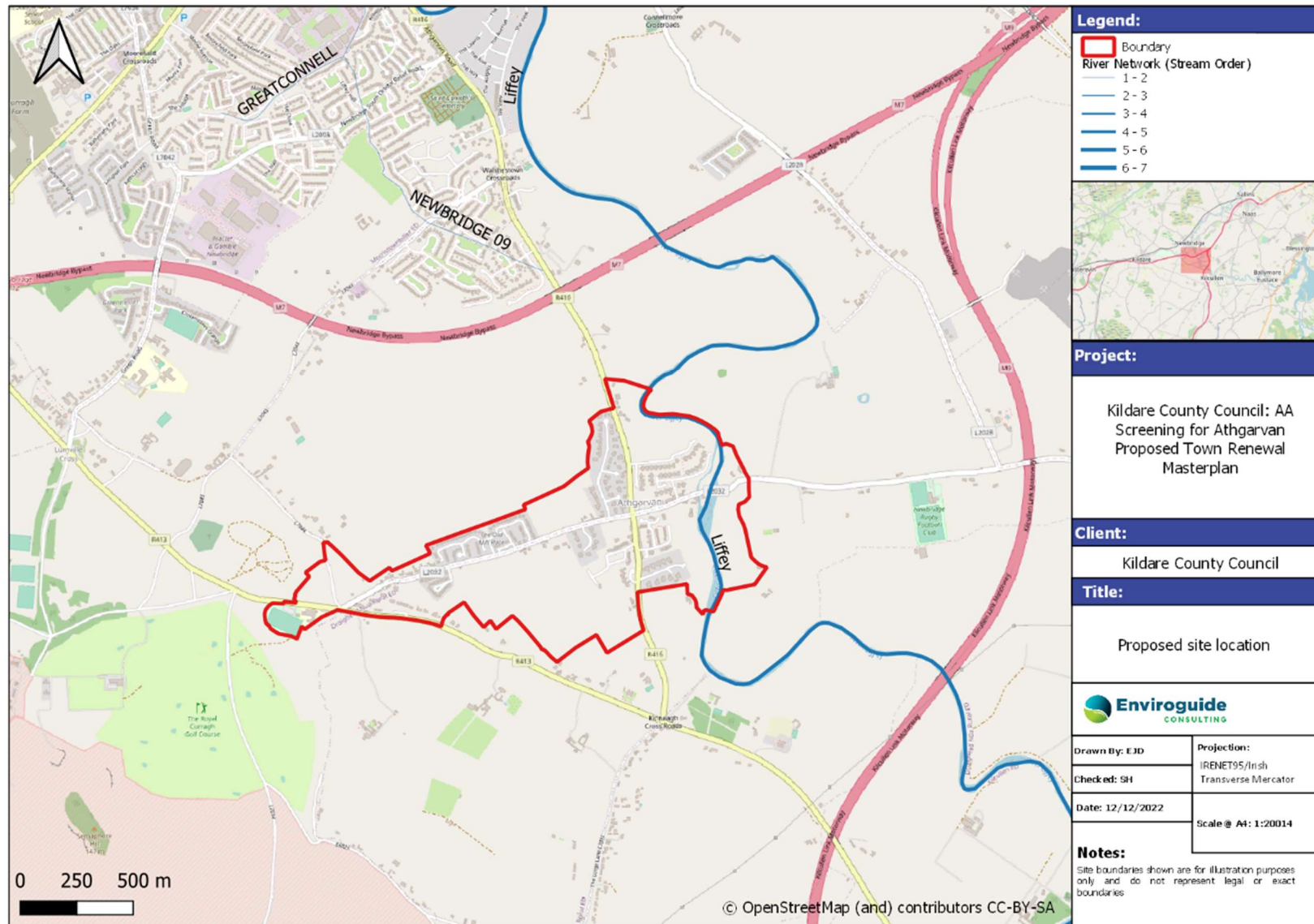


FIGURE 2. SITE LOCATION

3.2.2 Athgarvan Town Renewal Masterplan- Main Objectives

Volume 2 of the Kildare County Development Plan (KCDP) 203-2029 provides a planning framework for the development of small towns and villages. Section 3.8 describes Athgarvan's form, context, and objectives for future development.

The central aim of this study is to support the renewal of Athgarvan in order to improve the living and working environment of its communities and increase its potential to support economic activity into the future (Figure 3 & Figure 4). The overall intention is to:

- Increase the attractiveness of the town as a local commercial and social centre, and as a result increase its sustainability as a place in which to live and work
- Enhance the town environment and amenities in the interests of residents, businesses, and visitors
- Promote the town potential for tourism and as a centre for culture and local heritage, thus enhancing the sense of identity - physically and socially.

The renewal plan seeks to build on the very strong asset base of Athgarvan, to ensure it retains its strong identity, to contribute to its enhancement, and to create opportunities which are unique to Athgarvan for its citizens to identify with. As a town with growth potential, it needs to ensure that its current and future growth areas stitch into the town centre and its community base and draw on its character and sense of place. The objectives of the Renewal Plan are to:

1. Create the opportunities for enabling strategies that the local community, stakeholders, and KCC can support and sustain for the future development of the town.
2. Enhance the vitality and vibrancy of Athgarvan through ensuring future growth areas and underutilised/derelict sites are woven into the town and the urban structure is consolidated.
3. Create an enhanced environment for people living, working, and visiting the town through public realm interventions, encouraging and sustaining economic growth
4. Re-balance the movement network ensuring accessibility for all, to further enhance the walking and cycling environment, prioritising public over private transport and creating safe connections and places for people.
5. Enhance landscape quality and positive 'sense of place' in town which in turn will not only help combat the effects of climate change but also support higher property values and rental yields.
6. Create a Compact Low-Carbon Climate Resilient Town including strategic regeneration proposals incorporating best practice in low-carbon placemaking and design, the promotion of sustainable transport modes and the enhancement of biodiversity in the town through blue and green infrastructure developments.

The Proposed Masterplan identifies six key priority projects for the regeneration of Athgarvan and areas of opportunity (Figure 5):

1. **Public Realm Design Guidelines:** These guidelines would place emphasis on creating a safe and suitable pedestrian environment, with particular attention paid to the design of new and replacement footpaths, pedestrian crossings, use of storefront displays and merchandising to promote pedestrian traffic, and the provision of outdoor dining areas. This effort will ultimately act as an investment catalyst, encouraging private property upgrades and new development.

2. **Town Centre:** The Proposed Masterplan makes recommendations for improving pedestrian crossings, tightening turning radii and reducing road widths, landscaping, footpaths, new bus shelters, improved community space and children's play areas.
3. **R413/ Curragh Rd Junction & National School:** The Proposed Masterplan makes recommendations for improving pedestrian crossings, landscaping, footpaths, new bus shelters, and improvement of the school drop off/pick up area.
4. **R416 To Newbridge:** The Proposed Masterplan makes recommendations for the reduction of carriageway width to reduce speeds and calm traffic, provision of landscaping, footpath widening & tree planting, introducing a change in road surface to high friction within school zone with gateway signage treatment and school branding.
5. **Pedestrian Facilities & Traffic Calming:** Proposed provisions to reduce speed limits in the town to 30kph and introduce more traffic calming along all roads and the town gateways to allow cyclists and pedestrians safely use existing infrastructure. To tighten turning radiuses at the junctions. To introduce/ improve traffic calming in form of raised platforms. To widen existing footpaths, improve footpath quality, and provide a number of legible pedestrian crossings.
6. **Community Park and Other Recreational Amenities:** Proposed provision of playgrounds, outdoor seating, children's play areas, community gardens, and adult recreation areas.



FIGURE 3. ATHGARVAN TOWN EXISTING LAYOUT (SOURCE: ATHGARVAN TRMP (KCC 2022)). NOTABLE LOCATIONS INCLUDED IN INSET [1 – 9]

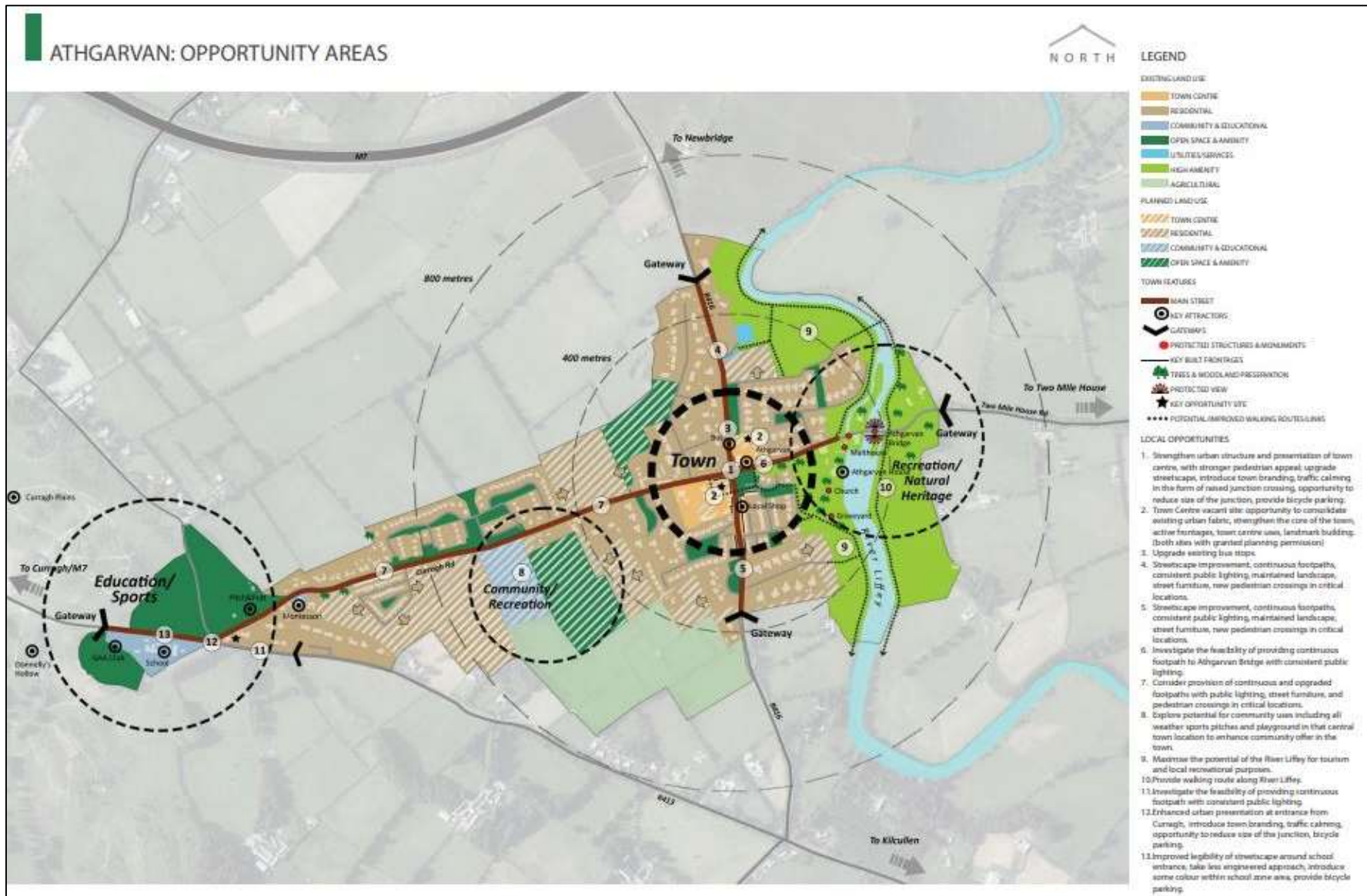


FIGURE 4. PROPOSED OPPORTUNITY AREAS (SOURCE: ATHGARVAN TRMP (KCC, 2022))



FIGURE 5. PROPOSED KEY PRIORITY PROJECTS (SOURCE: ATHGARVAN TRMP (KCC, 2022))

3.3 Existing Environment

3.3.1 Hydrology

The Proposed Masterplan site has been mapped by the EPA (EPA, 2022) to be within:

- The Liffey and Dublin Bay Water Framework Directive (WFD) Catchment (ID: 09), and the Barrow WFD Catchment (ID: 14);
- The Liffey_SC_040 Sub-Catchment, (Sub-catchment ID: 09_11) and the Slate_SC_010 Sub-Catchment (Sub-catchment ID: 14_16); and
- Liffey_070 WFD River Sub Basin (European Code: IE_EA_09L010850).

The closest surface water feature to the town centre is the River Liffey (LIFFEY_070, European Code: IE_EA_09L010850), located partly within the Proposed Masterplan Site. Athgarvan is located between the Curragh Plains and the River Liffey, the river flowing south to north, east of the main town area. The River Liffey has been assigned a *Good* ecological status based on monitoring, and it is *Not At Risk* of not achieving its WFD objectives (EPA, 2022)¹.

3.3.2 Geology and Hydrogeology

The majority of the town is situated on Curragh Gravels East groundwater body (IE_EA_G_017), while the western portion of the Proposed Masterplan area is located on the Curragh Gravels West (IE_SE_G_133) groundwater body. The overall WFD status of the Curragh Gravels East GWB is *Good* and its risk projection is currently 'Not at risk' (EPA, 2022)². The overall WFD status of the Curragh Gravels West GWB is *Good* and its risk projection is currently 'Not at risk' (EPA, 2022)³. The bedrock aquifer in the area is a '*Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones*'. The groundwater rock units underlying the aquifer across the town are classified as 'Dinantian Lower Impure Limestones' (GSI, 2022) for the majority of the town, with the extreme southerly portion of the town being 'Dinantian (early) Sandstones, Shales and Limestones' (GSI, 2022).

The majority of the town sits on ground with *High* vulnerability to groundwater contamination from human activities, however a portion of the western part of the site (traveling west along the L2032) lies on ground with *Moderate* vulnerability to groundwater contamination (GSI, 2022), (Figure 6).

¹ https://www.catchments.ie/data/#/waterbody/IE_EA_09L011700?_k=f134cz [Accessed: December 2022]

² https://www.catchments.ie/data/#/waterbody/IE_EA_G_008?_k=k3z50m [Accessed: December 2022]

³ https://www.catchments.ie/data/#/waterbody/IE_EA_G_008?_k=k3z50m [Accessed: December 2022]

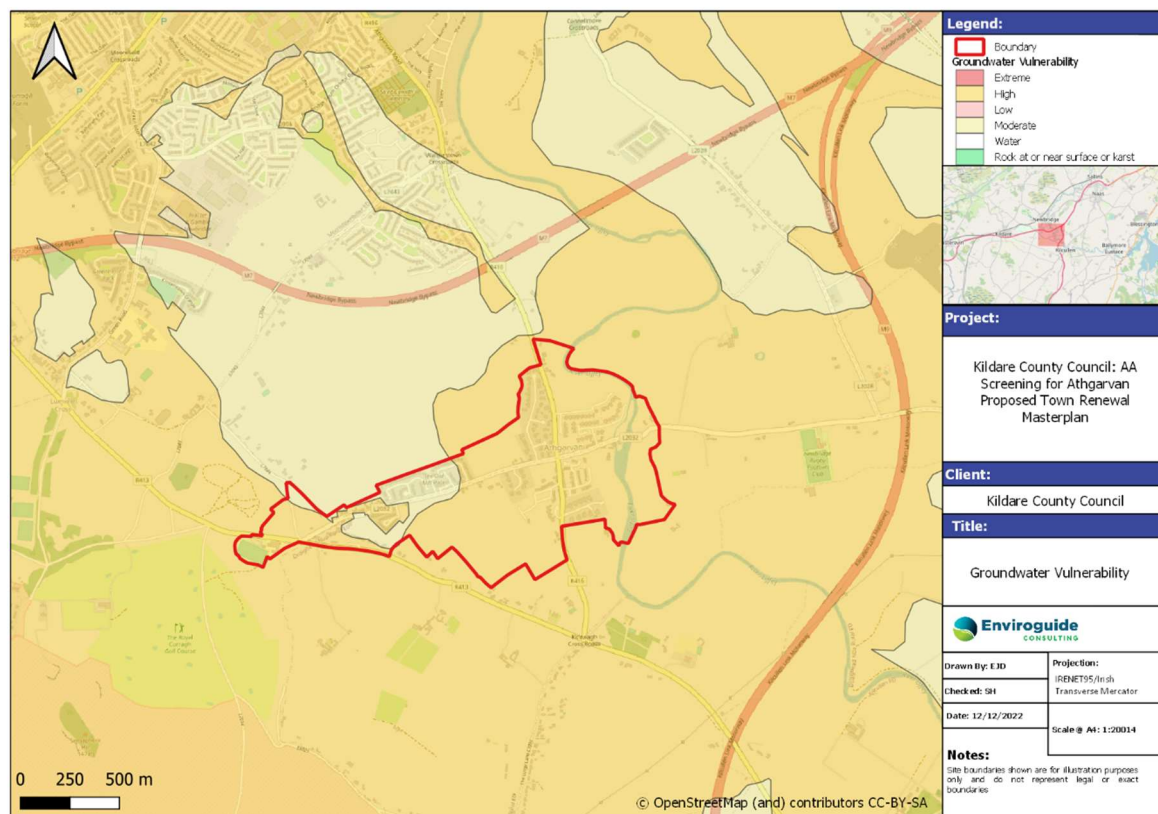


FIGURE 6. GROUNDWATER VULNERABILITY

3.4 Identification of European Sites

The following sections detail the results of the S-P-R method applied as outlined in section 2.5.

3.4.1 Potential Sources of Effects

The Proposed Masterplan will act as a non-statutory framework for the enhancement of Athgarvan Town, including recommendations related to public realm improvements, improved and new public amenities, increased signage, identity building, and exploring the potential for improved movement in the form of an integrated, safe multi-use network connecting Town Centre, Athgarvan GAA, National School, River Liffey, and all residential areas.

Therefore, potential sources of effects do not directly relate to specific development proposals or works but are identified to represent *potential development projects* undertaken under advice from the Proposed Masterplan.

The following elements of the Proposed Masterplan were identified and assessed for their potential to cause likely significant effects on European sites:

- Uncontrolled releases of surface water containing silt/sediments and other pollutants into the River Liffey from potential road improvement projects.
- Uncontrolled releases of surface water containing pollutants into the ground water during road improvement projects.
- Accidental spread of invasive plants during greening projects.
- Increased traffic and associated pollution as a result of increased visitors by private car.

Although assessed here as part of the Proposed Masterplan, any future development projects undertaken with cognisance to the Proposed Masterplan are subject to the appropriate environmental assessments as per the policies set out in the KCDP 2023-2029.

3.4.2 Potential Pathways to European Sites

For the above listed potential sources of effects to have the potential to cause likely significant effects on any European site, a pathway between the source of potential effects (i.e., the Site of the Proposed Masterplan) and the receptor is required. The potential for pathways between European sites and the Proposed Masterplan Site was assessed on a case-by-case basis using the S-P-R framework (OPR, 2021). Pathways considered included:

- a. Direct pathways e.g., proximity/location within a European site, water bodies, air (for both air emissions and noise impacts).
- b. Indirect pathways e.g., disruption to migratory paths, 'Sightlines' where noisy or intrusive activities may result in disturbance to shy species.

Potential impact pathways are discussed in the following sections in the context of the potential impact sources as identified in section 3.4.

3.4.2.1 Direct Pathways

Hydrological pathways

The River Liffey flows through the Proposed Masterplan Site, and is part of the River Liffey catchment, which is an important salmonid system. The River Liffey rises between the mountains of Kippure and Tonduff in County Wicklow. The river flows for a distance of roughly 120km before entering the sea at Dublin Bay, where four European sites are located:

- South Dublin Bay SAC (000210)
- North Dublin Bay SAC (000206)
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024)
- North Bull Island SPA (004006)

The hydrological pathway between the Proposed Masterplan and the downstream European sites within Dublin Bay is more than 60 river km, over which any potential pollutants that may enter the River Liffey at the Site would become diluted to indiscernible levels. Thus, the hydrological pathway via the River Liffey is deemed to be insignificant.

No other European sites are hydrologically linked to the Proposed Masterplan.

Hydrogeological pathways

During groundworks and other construction activities that may result from developments made under the Proposed Masterplan, the ground will be exposed and any potential accidental discharges to ground could potentially migrate vertically downward to the underlying bedrock aquifer and laterally within the aquifer to downgradient receiving surface waterbodies, i.e., the River Liffey.

The River Liffey eventually flows into Dublin Bay after more than 60 river km. Considering the distance from the Site, via groundwater and the riverine system, that any potential pollutants would have to travel prior to reaching the European sites within Dublin Bay, it is considered

the dilution and dispersion potential of the receiving ground and freshwater environments deems the hydrogeological pathway insignificant.

No other European sites are hydrogeologically linked to the Proposed Masterplan.

Air and land pathways

No potential for air and land pathways from the Proposed Masterplan site to any European sites were identified. The nearest European site to the Proposed Masterplan is the Pollardstown Fen SAC (000396) located approx. 3.5km northwest from the Proposed Masterplan Site with no evident land/air/hydrogeological links between the Proposed Masterplan and this SAC. Mouds Bog SAC (002331) is roughly 5 km northwest of the Proposed Masterplan Site with no evident land/air/hydrogeological links between the Proposed Masterplan and this SAC.

3.4.3 Indirect Pathways

No indirect pathways (e.g., disruptions to migratory paths) were identified.

3.4.3.1 Relevant European Sites

A European site will only be at risk from likely significant effects where a S-P-R link exists between the Proposed Masterplan Site and the European site. The preceding steps identified a potential S-P-R link to two European sites; however, these were not considered significant and therefore no further assessment is required. The European sites considered under the various potential pathways are listed in Table 1, and European sites within a 10 km radius of the Proposed Masterplan are shown in Figure 6 for information purposes.

TABLE 1. EUROPEAN SITES CONSIDERED WITH THE SOURCE-PATHWAY-RECEPTOR (S-P-R) METHOD TO ESTABLISH NOTABLE LINKS BETWEEN THE SOURCES OF EFFECTS ARISING FROM THE PROPOSED MASTERPLAN, AND ANY RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES. THOSE SITES WITH NOTABLE S-P-R LINKS ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN GREEN (IF ANY).

European site	QIs / SCIs	Potential Pathways
Special Areas of Conservation		
South Dublin Bay SAC (000210)	Qualifying Interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] – Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] – Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] – Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] 	Hydrological (insignificant due to distance)
North Dublin Bay SAC (000206)	Qualifying Interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] – Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] – Salicornia 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] – Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] - Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] - Humid dune slacks [2190] - <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort) [1395] 	
<p><i>Pollardstown Fen SAC</i> (000396)</p> <p>Linear Distance to Proposed Masterplan: approx. 3.5 km</p>	<p>Qualifying Interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] - Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] - Alkaline fens [7230] - <i>Vertigo geyeri</i> (Geyer's Whorl Snail) [1013] - <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] - <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016] 	<p>Air / Land (insignificant due to distance)</p>
<p><i>Mouds Bog SAC</i> (002331)</p> <p>Linear Distance to Proposed Masterplan: roughly 5km</p>	<p>Qualifying Interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active raised bogs [7110] - Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] - Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] 	<p>Air / Land (insignificant due to distance)</p>
Special Protection Areas		
<p>South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024)</p>	<p>Qualifying Interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] - Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] - Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] - Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] - Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] - Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] - Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] - Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] - Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] - Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] - Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192] - Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] - Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] - Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>Hydrological (insignificant due to distance)</p>
<p>North Bull Island SPA (004006)</p>	<p>Qualifying Interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] - Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] - Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] - Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] - Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] - Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] - Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] - Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] - Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] - Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]- Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]- Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]- Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160]- Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]- Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169]- Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]- Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	
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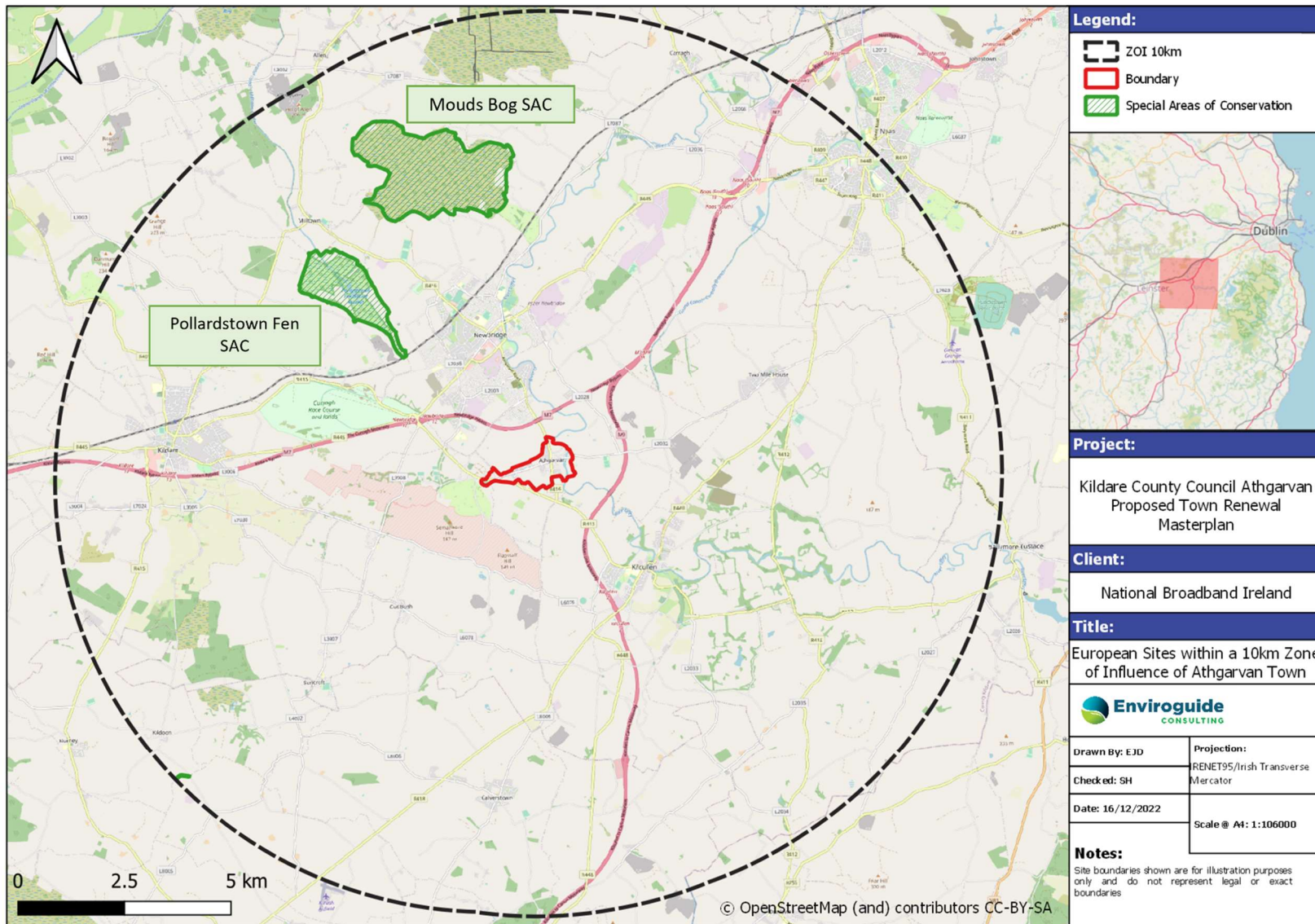


FIGURE 7. EUROPEAN SITES WITHIN A 10KM RADIUS OF PROPOSED MASTERPLAN

3.5 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

As the preceding sections show, no S-P-R links of note were identified. As such there will be no risk of significant effects on any European sites or on their qualifying interests as a result of the Proposed Masterplan alone. Therefore, no further assessment is required.

3.5.1 Potential for In-combination Effects

Although the Proposed Masterplan is not considered to have the capacity to cause significant effects on any European sites alone, it is important to consider the potential for cumulative effects with other plans and/or projects. The following sections outline existing granted or pending planning permissions in the vicinity of the Proposed Masterplan and assess the potential for adverse in-combination effects on any European sites.

3.5.1.1 Existing Granted or Pending Planning Permissions

A search of planning applications located within the Proposed Masterplan area and within a 1 km radius of the Site was undertaken using online planning resources such as the National Planning Application Database (NPAD) (MyPlan.ie) and Kildare County Council's Planning Applications Map Viewer (<http://webgeo.kildarecoco.ie/planningenquiry>). Any planning applications listed as granted or decision pending from within the last five years were assessed for their potential to act in-combination with the Proposed Masterplan and cause likely significant effects on the relevant European sites. Long-term developments granted outside of this time period were also considered where applicable.

It is noted that the majority of developments within the Site of the Proposed Masterplan are applications granted for new build dwellings, renovations or extensions to existing dwellings, and/or changes to designs of dwellings that were permitted as part of larger planning applications. With due consideration of the distance to the nearest European sites, it is considered that no potential exists for significant in-combination effects on any European sites.

The larger existing projects within the Proposed Masterplan area and within a 1 km radius are detailed below.

Reg. Ref. 20151, *Within Proposed Masterplan Site area, Conditional as of 18/04/2017:*

"Planning permission for 7 no. houses as follows, (a) 4 no. 4 bedroom 2 storey semi-detached houses on sites 1, 2, 6, 7. (b) 3 no. 4 bedroom 2-storey detached houses on sites 3, 4, 5. (c) access road, car parking, connection to mains sewer, landscaping, and all associated site development works. Revised by Significant Further Information which consists of a change in site layout, including public open space area and lowering of height of houses to circa 8.3metres."

Reg. Ref. 181305, *Within Proposed Masterplan Site area, Conditional as of 05/02/2019:*

"(a) Planning permission for single storey extension to side (north east) elevation and single storey extension to rear (south west) elevation of existing detached house; (b) Minor internal alterations within the existing house with change of use of existing garage to utility room and extension to kitchen area and inclusion of window to front (north west) elevation and insertion of new window into new back hallway and new windows in kitchen area on the rear (south east) elevation; (c) Retention permission for existing garage for domestic use at rear of existing"

house and (d) Planning permission for extension to side (south west) elevation of existing garage for domestic use.”

Reg. Ref. 1787, Within Proposed Masterplan Site area, Granted as of 13/06/2017:

“Construction of a new four bed two storey detached houses to replace previously approved two semi-detached corner houses as approved under Grant of Permission Reg. Ref. 09/191 (as extended) and for new boundary walls, paths, gates and driveway on a site area of 0.032Ha. This house was previously approved under application Reg. Ref. 11/327 and will be a mirror of 'Avonree' house opposite.”

Reg. Ref. 19117, Within Proposed Masterplan Site area, Granted as of 01/04/2020:

“A new vehicular and pedestrian entrance connecting into a permitted new vehicular and pedestrian entrance onto the L-2032 Curragh Road (granted as part of approved Part 8 housing scheme ref no. P8 2018-010); (b) 95 no. new houses. The proposed houses are detached, semi-detached and terraced over 1 to 3 stories with 17 no. house types as follows: - 2 no 4 bed dual aspect detached 2 storey house type A; - 2 no. 5 bed detached dormer 3 storey house type B; - 6 no. 5 bed semi - detached dormer 3 storey house types B1 + B2; -2 no. 4 bed detached 2 storey house type C; 9 no. 4 bed semi-detached 2 storey house types C1+C2; -1 no. 4 bed dual aspect semi-detached 2 storey house type C3; - 5 no. 4 bed detached dormer 3 storey house type D; -12 no. 4 bed semi-detached dormer 3 storey house types D3 +D4; -14 no. 3 bed semi- detached 2 storey house types E3+E4;- 3no. 3 bed semi-detached 2 storey house type E5;- 8 no. 3 bed terraced 2 storey house types F1+F2+F3+F4;- 6 no. 4 bed detached dormer bungalow house type G2;- 1 no. 4 bed dual aspect detached dormer bungalow house type G3;-10 no. 1 bed maisonette types J1+J2+J3+J4 (1 storey per unit in 2 storey building);-6 no. 3 bed terrace dormer bungalow house types K1+K2+K3+K4+K5+K6 (K3 +K4 dual aspect);-4 no. 3 bed terrace 2 storey house types L1+L2+L3+L4 (L1+L4 dual aspect);-4 no. 2 bed terrace 2 storey house types M1+M2+M3+M4;- (C) A proposed foul holding tank and pumping station for the development; and (d) All associated site development works to include roads, paths, car parking, service connections, boundary treatments, landscaping etc. Revised by significant further information consisting of Revised access arrangements. A stage 3 Flood Risk Assessment has also been carried out to ascertain the risk of flooding within the overall masterplan site area.”

Reg. Ref. 19118, Within Proposed Masterplan Site area, Granted as of 01/04/2020:

“(a) a new vehicular and pedestrian entrance connecting into a permitted new vehicular and pedestrian entrance onto the L-2032 Curragh Road (granted as part of approved Part 8 housing scheme ref; no. P8 2018-010); (b) 18 no. new houses, The proposed houses are detached and semi-detached and single storey in height with 5 no. house types as follows: -8 no. 2 bed semi-detached single storey house types H1 +H2;- 1 no. 2 bed dual aspect semi-detached single storey house types H3; - 1 no. 2 bed dual aspect semi - detached single storey house types H4; - 6 no. 3 bed detached single storey house type G;- 2 no. 3 bed dual aspect detached single storey house type G1; (c) A new pedestrian connection to the west of the site to provide an access and linkage point to and from the adjacent approved Part 8 housing scheme (ref. no.; P8 2018-010); and (d) All associated site development works to include roads, paths, car parking, service connections, boundary treatments, landscaping etc. Revised by significant further information consisting of Revised access arrangements. A stage 3 Flood Risk Assessment has also been carried out to ascertain the risk of flooding within the overall masterplan site area.”

3.5.1.2 Relevant Policies and Plans

The following policies and plans were reviewed and considered for possible in-combination effects with the Proposed Masterplan:

- Kildare County Development Plan (CDP) 2017-2023.
- Kildare County Development Plan (CDP) 2023-2029.

Both County Development Plans have directly addressed the protection of European sites through specific policies and objectives. Additionally, the Natura Impact Report for the Kildare CDP Draft 2023-2029 concludes that *“the Plan itself, subject to it securing the mitigation detailed in this report, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.”*

Therefore, **no in-combination effects are expected** with the relevant policies and plans.

4 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING CONCLUSION

The Proposed Town Renewal Masterplan for Athgarvan, Co. Kildare, has been assessed taking into account:

- The nature, size and location of the proposed works and possible impacts arising from the construction works.
- The qualifying interests and conservation objectives of the European sites.
- The potential for in-combination effects arising from other plans and projects.

In conclusion, upon the examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information and applying the precautionary principle, it is concluded by the authors of this report that, on the basis of objective information; the possibility **may be excluded** that the Proposed Masterplan will have a significant effect on any European sites.

As such, no further assessment is required. In carrying out this AA screening, mitigation measures have not been taken into account. Standard best practice construction measures which could have the effect of mitigating any effects on any European sites have similarly not been taken into account.

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