





# APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

FOR  
PROPOSED  
TOWN RENEWAL MASTERPLAN  
AT  
ARDCLOUGH, Co. KILDARE

ON BEHALF OF  
Kildare County Council

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## DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

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

## 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) and 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 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

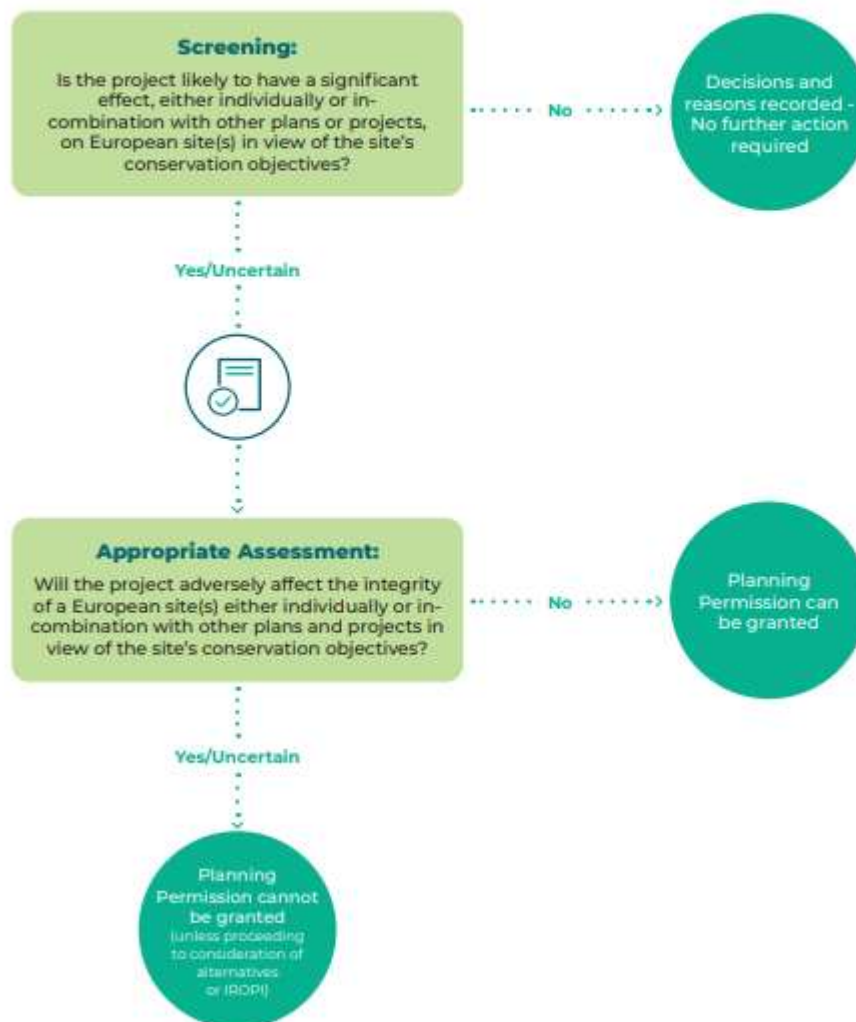


FIGURE 1. OVERVIEW OF SCREENING AND APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT (OPR, 2021).

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 AA 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 March 2021.*



## 2.2 Screening Steps

This AA 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;
- Assessment of the likely significance of the effects identified on the European site; 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](http://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](http://www.npws.ie);
- Information on waterbodies, catchment areas and hydrological connections obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at [www.gis.epa.ie](http://www.gis.epa.ie);
- Information on bedrock, groundwater, aquifers and their statuses, obtained from Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) at [www.gsi.ie](http://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 Development from Kildare County Council.

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 Assessment of Significant Effects**

The potential for significant effects that may arise from the Proposed Development was considered through the use of 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 the 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 Ardclough is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European sites.

### **3.2 Ardclough Town Renewal Masterplan (TRMP)**

#### **3.2.1 Village Location and Description**

Ardclough is a small rural settlement located in the north-east part of County Kildare, approximately 20kms to the west of Dublin City (Figure 2). It occupies an attractive setting beside the Grand Canal. It is located in an area of high landscape value.

From the mid-1930's onwards the village of Ardclough has largely moved away from the canal and shifted northwest to its current location on the Tipperstown side of the canal. Saint Anne's National School was constructed in 1949 and the adjoining GAA pitch beside it was established in the mid 1930's. Recently, the new St. Anne's Primary School was constructed to the west of the village centre along L2008 with the old school decommissioned and turned into a community centre. Today, Ardclough village has a population of over 400 people (Census 2016). Ardclough is situated close to the larger towns of Celbridge (5km), Maynooth (12km), Clane (11km) and Naas (13km).

The primary land use within the Ardclough is residential, with some educational (St Anne's National School), commercial (small shop east of the church), sport (Ardclough GAA) and religious land uses (St. Bridget's Church and St Anne's Church), which represent the key destinations to and within the village.

In addition, outside the village centre is the Grand Canal Way, Lyons Estate and Lyons Village (15min walk) and Oughterard Round Tower and Cemetery, destinations which also attract people to the village of Ardclough. The settlement is located on the local road, the L2008,

which connects the study area Celbridge in the north-east and to the wider road network to the east and west of the village.

The L2008 is a two-way road, comprising a single carriageway (one lane in each direction) through the village. The local road providing a connection over the Grand Canal narrows from two lanes to one-lane over the bridge. Ardclough is not served by public transport services.

### **3.2.2 TRMP Main Objectives**

The central aim of the Proposed Masterplan is to support the renewal of Ardclough in order to improve the living environment of its communities with growth levels to cater for local needs at an appropriate scale (Figure 3 & Figure 4). The overall intention is to:

- Increase the attractiveness of the village, and as a result increase its sustainability as a place in which to live and work.
- Enhance the village environment and amenities in the interests of residents and visitors.
- Promote the village 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 the asset base of Ardclough, to ensure it retains its strong identity, to contribute to its enhancement, and to create opportunities which are unique to Ardclough for its citizens to identify with. As a rural settlement, it needs to ensure that its current and future growth areas stitch into the village 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 Kildare County Council can support and sustain for the future development of the village.
2. Enhance the vitality and vibrancy of Ardclough through ensuring future growth areas are woven into the village and the urban structure is consolidated.
3. Create an enhanced environment for people living, working, and visiting the village 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, prioritizing public over private transport, and creating safe connections and places for people.
5. Enhance landscape quality and positive 'sense of place' in the village which in turn will not only help combat the effects of climate change but also improve character and attractiveness.
6. Create a Compact Low-Carbon Climate Resilient Village 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 village through blue and green infrastructure developments.

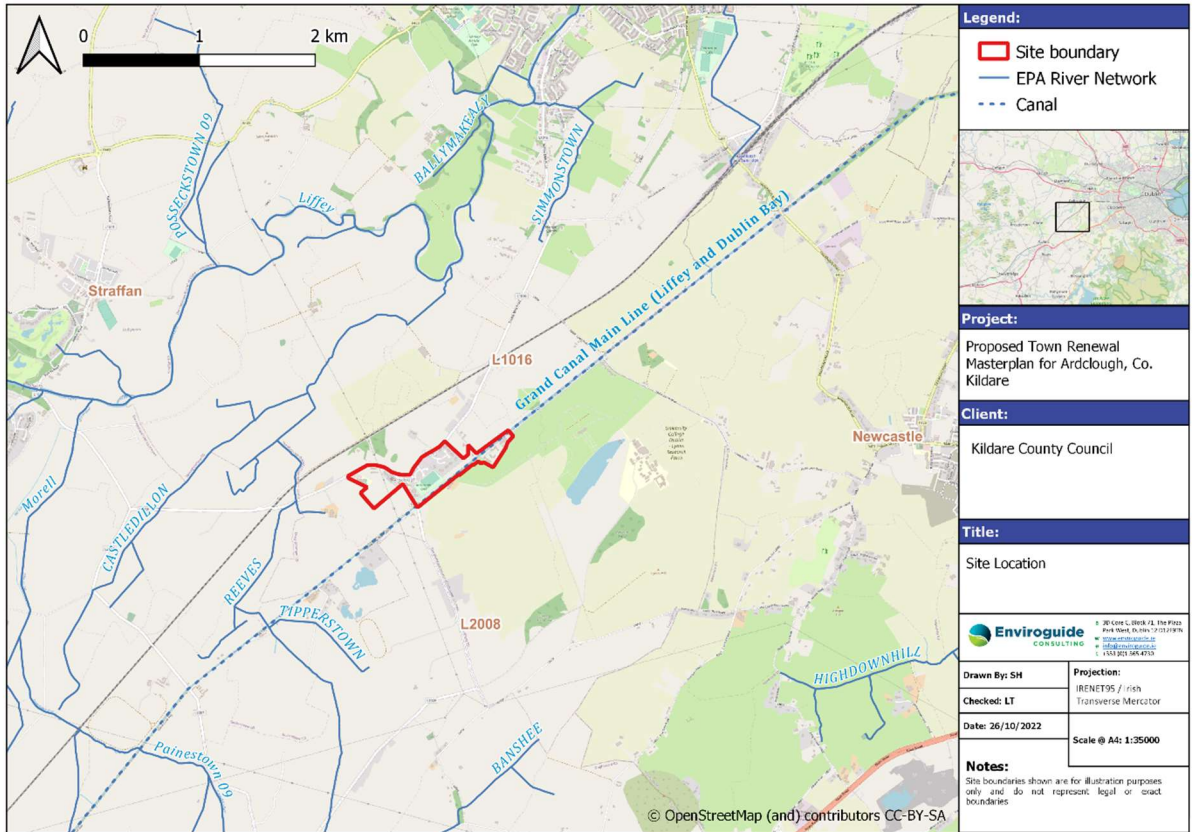


FIGURE 2. SITE LOCATION



FIGURE 3. ARDCLOUGH VILLAGE EXISTING LAYOUT (SOURCE: ARDCLOUGH TRMP (KCC 2022))



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

### 3.3 Existing Environment

#### 3.3.1 Hydrology

The village has been mapped by the EPA (EPA, 2022b) to be within the Liffey and Dublin Bay WFD Catchment (ID: 09), the Liffey\_SC\_070 Sub-Catchment, (Sub-catchment ID: 09\_14) and the REEVES\_010 WFD River Sub Basin (European Code: IE\_EA\_09R140550).

The closest surface water feature to the village is the Grand Canal Main Line (European Code: IE\_09\_AWB\_GCMLE), which is located adjacent to the existing GAA pitches of the village. The L2008 road crosses over the canal just south of the village. The Grand Canal has been assigned a *Good* ecological status based on monitoring, and it is *Not At Risk* of not achieving its WFD objectives (EPA, 2022).

The nearest natural stream to the village is the REEVES\_010 (European Code: IE\_EA\_09R140550), located approx. 640 m to the southwest, and which flows north to join the River Liffey approx. 3.4 river km downstream. This stream has been assigned a *Good* ecological status based on expert judgement, and its risk projection is currently under review (EPA, 2022).

#### 3.3.1 Geology and Hydrogeology

The village is situated on the Dublin (IE\_EA\_G\_008) groundwater body. The WFD status of the Trim GWB is *Good* and its risk projection is currently under review (EPA, 2022). 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 southeast parts of the village are classified as Dinantian Lower Impure Limestones, while the northwest areas are underlain by Dinantian Upper Impure Limestones (GSI, 2022).

The majority of the village sits on ground with *Moderate* vulnerability to groundwater contamination from human activities, however the northern part of the GAA pitch and parts of the existing settlement areas in the northeast of the village range from *High* to *Extreme* vulnerability to groundwater contamination (GSI, 2022) (FIG).

### 3.4 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](http://www.npws.ie)) and the EPA website ([www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)) to identify European sites which could potentially be affected by the Proposed Development; and
- Identification of potential pathways between the Proposed Masterplan and the European sites identified in the preceding step. The catchment data were used to establish or discount potential hydrological connectivity between the Project Boundary and any European sites.

European sites within a 10km radius of the Proposed Masterplan are shown in Figure 5 for information purposes.

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

### **3.4.1 Potential Sources of Effects**

The Proposed Masterplan will act as a non-statutory framework for the enhancement of the Ardclough Village, including recommendations for road and flow improvements, addition of green spaces and footpaths and exploring the potential for increased connectivity via public transport to and from the village.

Therefore, potential sources of effects do not directly relate to development proposals 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 Grand Canal 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.

### **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 as per the OPR Practice Note PN01 (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 3.4.1.

### **3.4.2.1 Direct Pathways**

#### Hydrological pathways

The Site is located adjacent to the Grand Canal, which is a slow flowing man-made waterway. This canal eventually flows into 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 to the downstream European sites within Dublin Bay is more than 25 river km, over which any potential pollutants that may enter the Grand Canal at the Proposed Masterplan Site would become diluted to indiscernible levels. Thus, the hydrological pathway via the Grand Canal is deemed to be insignificant.

No other European sites are linked to the Site via hydrological means.

#### 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 Reeves. The Reeves eventually discharges to the Liffey, which flows into Dublin Bay after more than 30 river km. Considering the combined distance from the Site via groundwater and the riverine system 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.

#### Air and land pathways

No air and land pathways from the Proposed Masterplan to any European sites were identified, as the distance between the Site and the nearest designated site (Rye Water Valley/Carlton SAC 001398, approx. 9 km north of the Site) is deemed sufficient to exclude any potential for impacts from increases in noise, lighting and/or dust or other airborne pollutants.

### **3.4.2.2 Indirect Pathways**

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

### **3.4.3 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 Development Site and the European site. The preceding steps did not identify any S-P-R links of note, and therefore no further assessment is required. European sites within a 10 km radius of the Proposed Masterplan is shown in Figure 5 for information purposes.



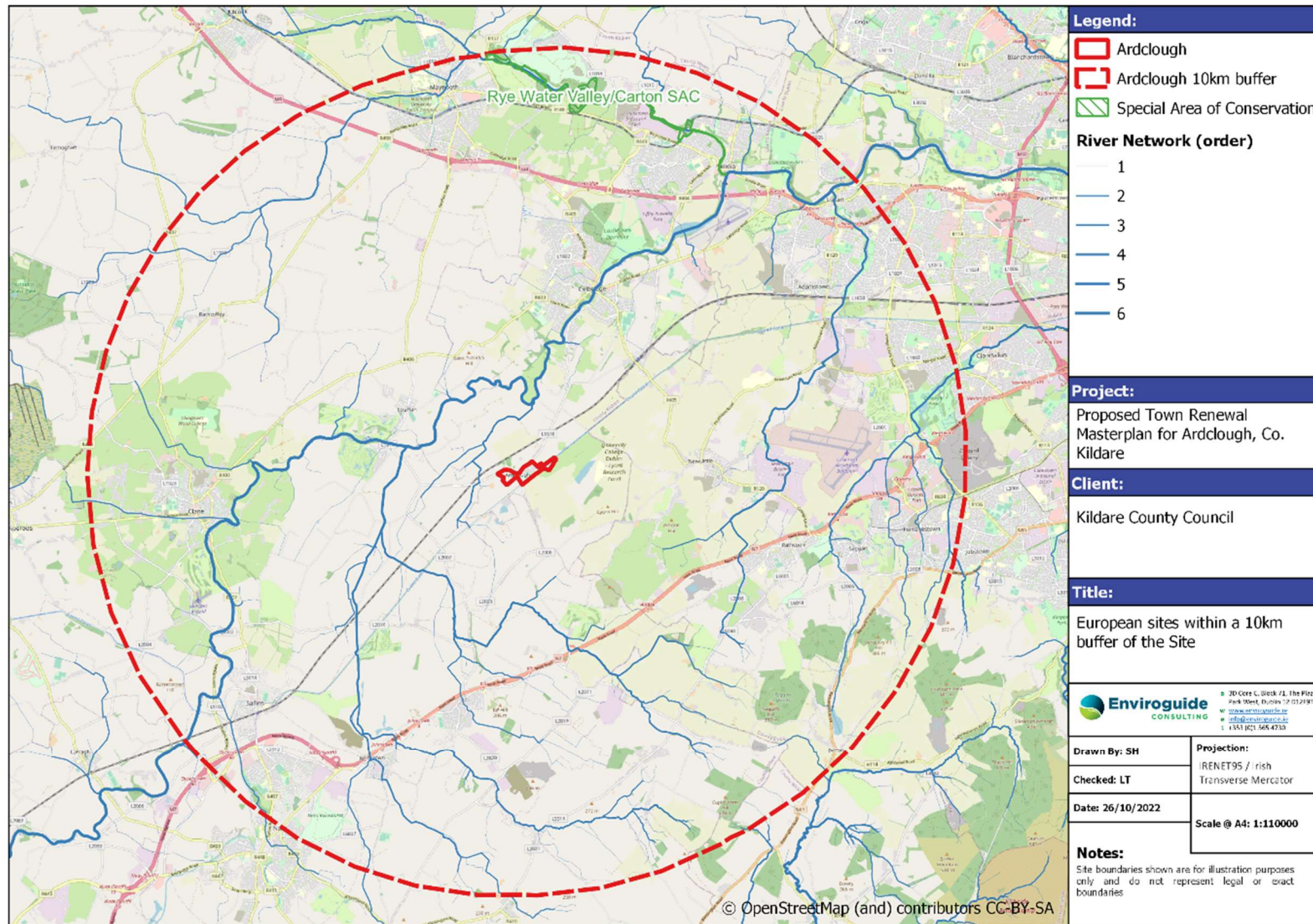


FIGURE 5. EUROPEAN SITES WITHIN A 10KM RADIUS OF PROPOSED MASTERPLAN

### 3.4.4 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.

#### 3.4.4.1 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 Development 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 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. 20396**, *Within Proposed Masterplan Site area, Granted (21 conditions) on 20/08/20*: Permission Consequent to Outline planning permission under planning file 06/2925, extended by planning file 13/317 and further extended by planning file 18/214 for a development at sites 43-51 William's Grove, Ardclough. The development consists of: (a) Construction of 9 No. detached two storey dwellings; (b) Amendment to condition 2 of planning permission 06/2925 relating to occupancy clauses schedule 6.1 and 6.2 under the County Development Plan 2005-2011, to comply with the current County Development Plan 2017-2023 Village Plans and Settlement Policies VRS3, also relating to occupancy clauses, and (c) All associated ancillary site-works.

**Reg. Ref. 20119**, *Within Proposed Masterplan Site area, Granted (7 conditions) on 01/07/20*: Permission for (a) alterations to layout of houses on sites 18-42, granted under planning permission 06/2925, extended by planning file 13/317 and further extended by planning file 18/214, to comply with current Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 guidelines (b) amendment to condition 2 of planning permission 06/2925 relating to occupancy clauses schedule 6.1 & 6.2 under the County Development Plan 2005-2011, to comply with the current County Development Plan 2017-2023 Village Plans and Settlement Policies VRS3, also relating to occupancy clauses, and (c) all associated ancillary site-works.

**Reg. Ref. 21578**, *Within Proposed Masterplan Site area, Granted (8 conditions) on 10/09/21*: Permission for (a) Replacement of juvenile training pitch to all weather pitch with a 2.6m high ball stop netting to top a 2.4m high perimeter fencing with an overall height of 5m. (b) Erection of 2 No. 15.2m high Floodlighting Columns & 6no. 21.3m high Floodlighting columns to the

existing main playing pitch with associated light fittings previously granted under planning file 20/487, (c) Installation of bunded diesel tank & generator; all located within a new 2.5m high fenced compound with associated site development and facilitating works previously granted under planning file 20/487.

**Reg. Ref. 211286**, approx. 0.8 km south of Proposed Masterplan Site area, Granted (32 conditions) on 30/03/2022:

Permission for use of the site as a therapeutic farm for the provision of a healthcare facility for up to 40 guests to operate as a step down mental health facility. The therapeutic farm will provide therapeutic services with the farm as an essential element of the overall programme of healing and recovery. The application proposes the demolition of an existing farm building on site and other structures. The new build elements will comprise: A new two storey communal building (c. 1,564 m<sup>2</sup>) centrally within the farm comprising of kitchen/dining, office, therapy, meeting, yoga and meditation and various other rooms. Erection of eight single storey residential buildings to the west of the communal building to provide accommodation for up to 40 guests. These will comprise 4 x 4 bedroom buildings and 4 x 6 bedroom buildings. Erection of a single storey reception building (c. 318 m<sup>2</sup>) to the west of the site, adjacent to the existing farm buildings, to provide reception and ancillary facilities associated with the proposed use. Erection of a single storey shop/café building (c. 327 m<sup>2</sup>) to provide a small scale shop and café which will be linked to the overall use of the site. The proposed buildings will be clad in vertical timber cladding at regular spacing; the roofs will be vertical timber cladding at regular spacing or dark grey/black zinc roofs. 41 car parking spaces are proposed for the therapeutic farm use and 20 car parking spaces are proposed for the shop/café. The remainder of the site will be used as agriculture, with which the therapeutic use will be intrinsically linked. This will include general planting and laying out of the farm and informal landscaping, including the provision of a lake for irrigation and ecology, internal farm tracks and roads, fencing and planting. On site wastewater treatment is proposed. Revised by Significant Further Information.

#### **3.4.4.2 Relevant Policies and Plans**

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

- 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 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 Ardclough, 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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