



N51 Park and Ride Bus Facility
Moathill, Navan, Co. Meath

Screening Report for Appropriate
Assessment

Doherty Environmental Consultants Ltd

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N51 Park and Ride Bus Facility
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Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Doherty Environmental Consultants (DEC) Ltd. have been commissioned by Meath County Council to undertake a Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment for the proposed N51 Park and Ride Bus Facility Moathill, Navan (see Figure 1.1 for location and Figure 1.2 for aerial imagery of the project site).

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment forms Stage 1 of the Habitats Directive Assessment process and is being undertaken in order to comply with the requirements of the Habitats Directive Article 6(3). The function of this Screening Report is to identify the potential for the project to result in likely significant effects to European Sites and to provide information so that the competent authority can determine whether a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required for the project.

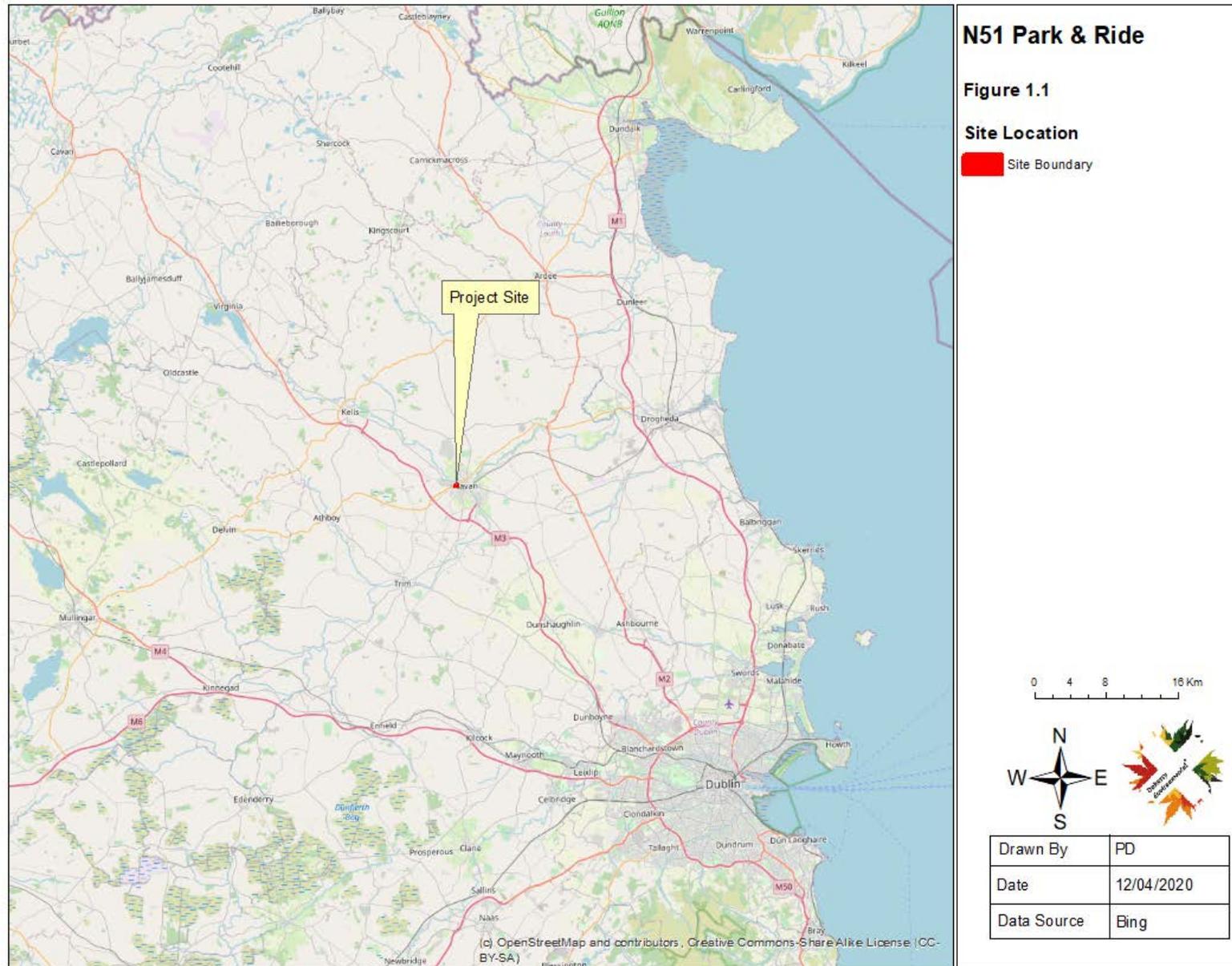
1.1 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment is being prepared in order to enable the competent authority to comply with Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive). It is prepared to assess whether or not the project alone or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect on any European Site in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European Sites and specifically on the habitats and species for which the sites have been designated.

1.1.1 Requirement for an Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive

According to Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 – 2015, the competent authority has a duty to:

- Determine whether the proposed Project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of one of more European Sites; and, if not;
- Determine if the Project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the European Site(s) in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of the site(s).





N51 Park & Ride

Figure 1.2

Aerial View

 Site Boundary

0 0.0275 0.055 0.11 Km



Drawn By	PD
Date	12/04/2020
Data Source	Bing

This Report contains a Screening for Appropriate Assessment and is intended to assess and address all issues regarding the construction and operation of the Project and to inform and allow the competent authority to comply with the Habitats Directive. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive defines the requirements for assessment of projects and plans for which likely significant effects on European Sites may arise. [SEP]The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 – 2015 (the Habitats Regulations) transpose into Irish law Directive 2009/147/EC (the Birds Directive) and Council Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive) lists habitats and species that are of international importance for conservation and require protection. The Habitats legislation requires competent authorities, to carry out a Screening for Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects that, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site’s conservation objectives. This requirement is transposed into Irish Law by Part 5 of the Habitats Regulations and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

1.2 STAGE 1 SCREENING METHOD

This Screening Report has been prepared in order to comply with the legislative requirements outlined in Section 1.1 above and aims to establish whether or not the project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site’s conservation objectives. In this context “likely” refers to the presence of doubt with regard to the absence of significant effects (ECJ case C-127/02) and “significant” means not trivial or inconsequential but an effect that has the potential to undermine the European Site’s conservation objectives (English Nature, 1999; ECJ case C-127/02). In other words any effect that compromises the conservation objectives of a European Site and interferes with achieving the conservation objectives for the site would constitute a significant effect.

The nature of the likely interactions between the project and the conservation objectives of European Sites will depend upon the sensitivity of these sites and their reasons for designation to potential impacts arising from the project; the current conservation status of the features for which European Sites have been designated; and any likely changes to key environmental indicators (e.g. habitat structure; vegetation community) that underpin the conservation status of European Sites, in combination with other plans and projects.

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken with reference to respective National and European guidance documents: Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG 2010) and *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* and recent European and National case law. The following guidance documents were also of relevance during the preparation of this Screening Report:

- A guide for competent authorities. Environment and Heritage Service, Sept 2002. Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010). DEHLG.
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/42/EEC. European Commission (2001).
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European commission (2018).

The EC (2001) guidelines outline the stages involved in undertaking a Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment for projects. The methodology adopted during the preparation of this Screening Report is informed by these guidelines and was undertaken in the following stages:

1. Describe the project and determine whether it is necessary for the conservation management of European Sites;
2. Identify European Sites that could be influenced by the project;
3. Where European Sites are identified as occurring within the zone of influence of the project identify potential effects arising from the project and screen the potential for such effects to negatively affect European Sites identified under Point 2 above; and
4. Identify other plans or projects that, in combination with the project, have the potential to affect European Sites.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The proposed N51 Park & Ride Bus Facility is located on and adjacent to the N51 Athboy Road which is a busy two-way single carriageway located c. 0.5km to the west of Navan Town Centre. The project will provide 4 Bus Stops on the eastern side of the N51 Adjacent to St. Patrick's Classical School and 181 parking spaces within the greenfield site located immediately to the east of the public road. The parking area will be accessed directly from the N51 using a new vehicular access at the southern end of the proposed site. The proposed development will provide public lighting, electric charging points for Electric Vehicles, bus shelters and associated footways/cycleways, drainage and boundary fencing. A site location map showing the proposed location of the site is provided in Appendix B.

2.2 BACKGROUND TO THE N51 PARK AND RIDE BUS FACILITY

The existing regional bus routes through Navan were assessed in 2015 by Meath County Council in consultation with Bus Eireann. During that consultation process, changes to the existing bus routes and timetables for Navan were proposed, including the provision of a proposed new regional bus service for the Navan area. The new bus service for Navan, which would operate with a high frequency (service every 20 minutes), is proposed to depart from and terminate in Navan.

Meath County Council are currently progressing the development of the Navan Town Scheme – Navan 2030 which includes as part of its proposals to:

- Relocate the existing bus stops from Market Square to Kennedy Road in line with the provision of a central, integrated, sustainable transport system
- Encourage greater use of sustainable modes of transport in Navan including walking, cycling, bus and taxi use and discourage reliance on private cars
- Improve access to sustainable transport modes and provide an integrated network of sustainable transport measures

Following the consideration of the proposed new service for Navan, the following objectives were also considered for the project:

- Ensure that buses are not ‘standing’ on Kennedy Road between periods of operation
- Provide a terminating location for buses outside of the town centre

As a result of the consultation process, and the ongoing wider investigation into transport needs in Navan, the potential for benefits associated with the provision of a park and ride bus facility were identified. A park and ride bus facility was considered not only to assist in meeting the above objectives, but also to meet the wider objectives of the town’s transport needs.

2.3 DESCRIPTION OF WORKS

The proposed scheme will commence at a location 50 metres to the north of the existing vehicular entrance to St. Patrick’s Classical School and extend to a location c. 10 metres north of the proposed junction between the N51 and R161 roads. It is noted that this junction is proposed to be upgraded and signalised as part of the construction works currently in progress for the new Moatlands residential development (Planning Application No. NA151301).

The proposed scheme will involve the widening of a section of the existing N51 over a length of 260m to provide for a new ghost island junction entrance to the proposed Park and Ride facility. In addition, the road widening will provide for a new Bus Stop with capacity for 4 No Coaches/Buses. The public footpath and cycleway immediately adjacent to the proposed road widening shall be realigned. The park and ride facility shall be a paved car park facility with spaces for 181 vehicles including 6 disabled spaces and 18 spaces for parking and charging Electric Vehicles. A pedestrian access gate and an emergency vehicular shall be provided to St. Patrick’s Classical School. A pathway shall be provided for pedestrians on the permitted of the car park and a shared space link shall be provided from the gate at St Patrick’s Classical School to the public footpath and Cycleway. Cycle parking shall be provided adjacent to the Pedestrian access to St. Patrick’s Classical School.

In general, the construction works will include earthworks, drainage, pavement works, utility works (ducting etc), traffic signage and road marking and temporary traffic management.

2.4 STORM WATER DRAINAGE

(i) Existing Storm Water Drainage:

Currently the Storm Water Drainage from the N51 carriageway drains into an existing underground storm water drainage network. The existing storm water drainage on the N51 consists of existing 225mm diameter Storm water pipes running along both verges of the N51 carriageway. There is no existing surface water pipelines traversing the site of the proposed car park.

(ii) Proposed Storm Water Drainage:

Within the site of the proposed car park, it is proposed to install 2 no. storm water soakaways/permeable detention tanks to deal with stormwater generated on the site. Runoff from the proposed hardstanding surface of the car park will be transferred to the proposed soakaways one of which shall be located at the lowest point on the site. The second soakaway to be located inside the site boundary line to the car park mid-way between the 2 no. proposed bus stops. A petrol and oil interceptor will be installed immediately upstream of each proposed permeable underground attenuation storage unit in order to remove any petrol or oils that are washed from the surface of the proposed car park into the proposed surface water drainage system.

The storage capacities of the proposed soakaway tanks will be calculated as part of the overall drainage design. To ensure that there is no flooding in the 1 in 100 year rainfall event with a 20% allowance for climate change, capacity for attenuation within the proposed drainage system will be provided.

2.5 FOUL WATER DRAINAGE

There are no known existing Foul Sewers located within the extents of the proposed development or adjacent to it.

2.6 WATERMAIN

There is an existing 180mm diameter HDPE watermain currently in-situ the length of the verge adjacent of the northbound traffic lane of the N51 carriageway. There is no existing watermain infrastructure traversing the site of the proposed car park.

2.7 UTILITIES

There are no known or identifiable existing power supply sub-stations, overhead or underground services located within the extents of the proposed development.

As part of the proposed works new electrical connections will be required to be installed to supply the proposed electric car charging points, proposed public lighting network, the bus shelters and the Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) signs. These will be routed through the public road to the proposed park and ride site subject to agreement with ESB Networks.

There are existing EIR underground fibre cables in-situ located in the verge of the N51 on the opposite side to proposed Park and Ride facility. The E-Net metropolitan Area Network (MAN) infrastructure is located on both sides of the N51 adjacent to the proposed facility.

There is no existing telecommunications infrastructure traversing the site.

Telecoms Connections may be provided to service the Real Time Passenger Information connection to the proposed facility.

2.8 SITE PERSONNEL

At its peak it is expected that there will be between 10 and 20 personnel on site full time. The personnel will consist of general operatives, skilled operatives and tradesmen, apprentice tradesmen, machine operators, truck drivers, engineers, technicians, surveyors and construction managers.

2.9 CONSTRUCTION COMPOUND

The construction compound will be restricted to the extents of the site within which the project is located and will be used for the storage of construction materials and plant during the course of the works.

2.10 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT SITE

A field survey of the project site was completed in January 2020. The habitats occurring at and adjacent to the project include improved agricultural grassland (GA1), hedgerows (WL1), scrub (WS1) and made ground (BL3). No evidence of protected ground dwelling mammals such as badgers were identified as occurring within or bounding the project site. There are no surface watercourses or drains occurring within or bounding the project site. The project site is located within the River Boyne catchment area. The nearest point of the River Boyne to the project site is approximately 290m to the north over land.

The bedrock geology underlying the project site is comprised of dark limestone and shale (calp). The quaternary subsoils occurring within the footprint of the project site are dominated by gravels derived from limestone.

The project site is located within the Trim groundwater catchment. This groundwater catchment has been classified at good status. The hydrogeology occurring at the project site has been described by the GSI as being comprised of highly permeable subsoils consisting of sand and gravels overlain by well drained soils. The groundwater vulnerability at this is classified as high. The main discharge mechanism for the aquifer underlying the project site is via baseflow to the River Boyne.

The nearest designated conservation area to the project site is the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA. The boundary of these European Sites to the project is located approximately 295m to the north.

2.11 OVERVIEW OF THE RIVER BOYNE AND RIVER BLACKWATER SAC & SPA

The River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC is designated for a range of features, which are as follows:

- Alkaline fens [7230]
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]
- *Lampetra fluviatilis* (River Lamprey) [1099]
- *Salmo salar* (Salmon) [1106]
- *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355]

The River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA is designated for its role in supporting the special conservation interest bird species kingfisher.

The qualifying feature of interest of the SAC that are known to occur along the section of river to the north of the project site are Atlantic salmon, river lamprey and otter.

The distribution of the qualifying habitats alkaline fen and alluvial forest occurring within the SAC has yet to be mapped and published by the NPWS. However a review of SAC corridor along the stretch of the river to the north of the project site does not indicate the presence of these habitats.

The River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA is designated for its role in supporting kingfisher. Kingfisher is known to forage along the stretch of the River Boyne to the north of the project site.

2.12 WATER QUALITY

The nearest EPA water quality monitoring station along the River Boyne to the project site is located downstream of the N51 bridge. The latest water quality results reported from this monitoring stations are from 2012, when water quality are classified at moderate status (q-value 3-4). More recent water quality analysis of the River Boyne has been completed at the monitoring station at Slane River Bridge a short distance further downstream of the N51 bridge station. The results of this water quality monitoring, which was completed in 2018, classified water quality in the River Boyne as poor (Q-value 3).

2.13 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Detailed Site-Specific Conservation Objectives have not been published for the River Boyne and River Blackwater European Sites. The generic conservation objectives that have been published for these two European Site aim to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats,
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

3.0 IS THE PROJECT NECESSARY FOR THE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN SITES

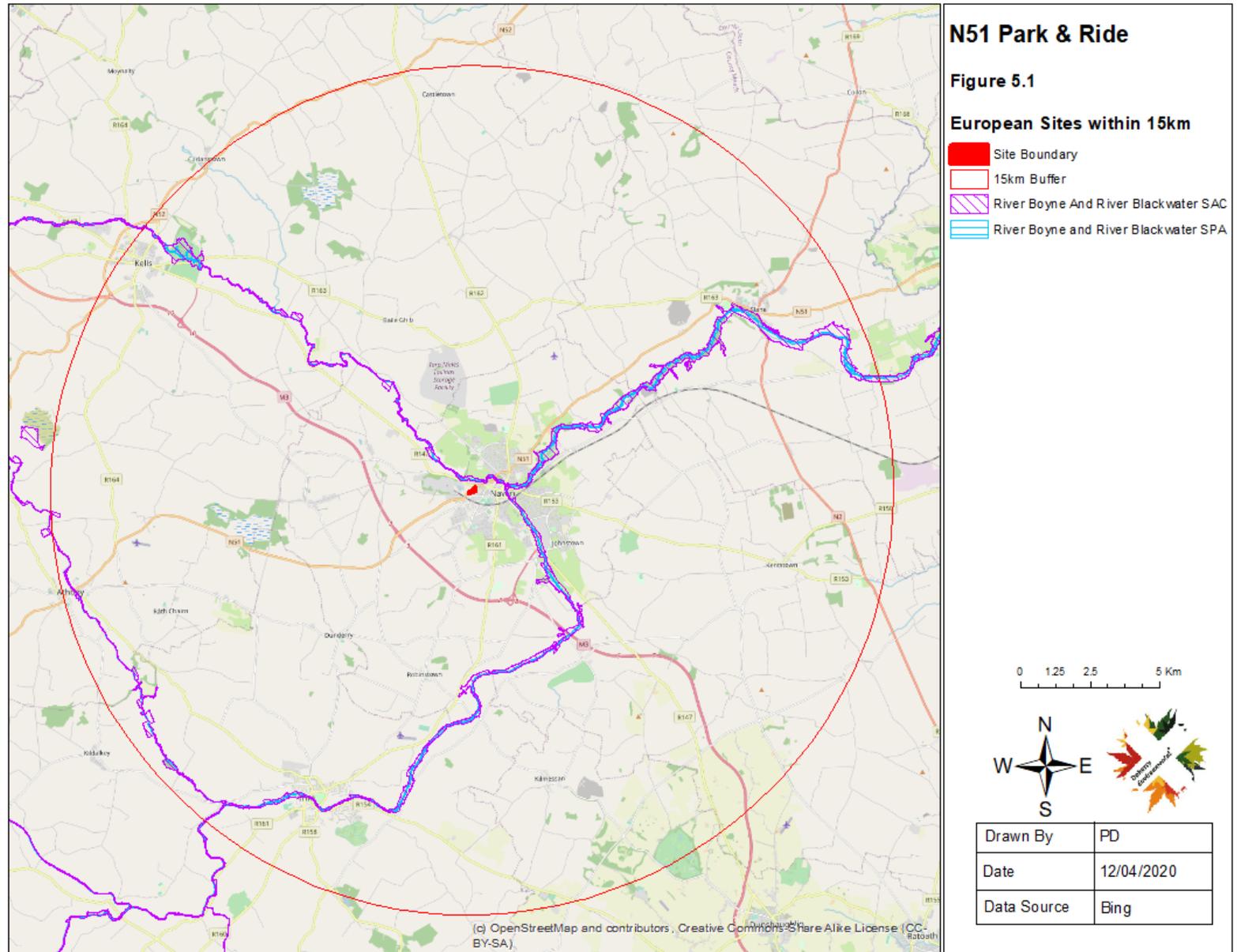
The project has been described in Section 2 of the Screening Report and it is clear from the description provided that the project is not directly connected with or necessary for the future conservation management of any European Sites.

4.0 EUROPEAN SITES WITHIN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PROJECT

Current guidance recommends that all European Sites occurring within 15km of project sites should be identified at the outset of a screening exercise. A total of two European Sites have been identified in the surrounding 15km area. These sites are the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA. The spatial relationship between these sites and the project site are shown on Figure 5.1.

As noted in Section 2.10 above there are no surface water pathways connecting the project site to the River Boyne and the SAC and SPA. Furthermore as it is intended to discharge all surface water generated at the project site during the construction phase and operation phase to ground there will be no potential for surface water generated at the project site to be discharged to the River Boyne.

Given the above the only conceivable pathway that could potentially link the project site to the River Boyne are groundwater base flows. The potential for the discharge of surface water to ground to pollute groundwater base flows which will eventually drain to the River Boyne is examined in Section 5.1 below.



4.1 OTHER EUROPEAN SITE BEYOND A 15KM RADIUS

In addition to the European Sites occurring within a 15km area of the project site the DEHLG 2010 guidelines on Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland also advise that where the potential exists for a hydrological pathway to occur between the project site and European Sites beyond the 15km distance, then these sites should also be included as part of the Screening. Two additional European Site occur further downstream along the River Boyne catchment. These are the River Boyne Estuary SPA and the Boyne Coast and Estuaries SAC. The nearest point of these two European Site to the project site is approximately 26km to the east. Given the distance between the project site and these two European Site and the absence of any direct hydrological pathway linking the project site to the River Boyne these sites are considered to lie outside the zone of influence of the project.

No other European Sites are connected to the project site via hydrological pathways or any other pathways and as such only those sites located within a 15km distance of the project site are included in this Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

5.0 EXAMINATION OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

The consideration of how the project could result in likely significant effects to European Site features of interest within its zone of influence relates to an examination of the project's potential to result in polluted groundwater emissions to the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA. In the event that the project results in the contamination of groundwater and its emission to the River Boyne these emissions could combine with other sources of pollution to exacerbate the poor water quality within River Boyne and further undermine the potential for this stretch of river to support qualifying features of interest, particularly Atlantic salmon, river lamprey and otters, of the SAC. It is also noted that the generic conservation objectives of the SAC and SPA is to maintain and restore the favourable conservation status of the qualifying habitat and species of the SAC and SPA. The qualifying species Atlantic salmon, river lamprey, otter and kingfisher all rely on good water quality for successful breeding, rearing and foraging and any further perturbations to water quality will have the potential to undermine the achievement of these conservation objectives. Section 5.1 below provides an examination of the project's potential to pollute groundwater baseflows that are in turn likely to be discharged to the River Boyne.

5.1 EXAMINATION OF THE PROJECT'S POTENTIAL TO PERTURB GROUNDWATER BASEFLOWS

The project site is located within the Trim groundwater body and as noted in Section 2.10 above the primary groundwater discharge mechanism within this groundwater body is via baseflows to the River Boyne.

The sources of pollution to surface water runoff draining to ground, via permeable underground attenuation storage, include aqueous construction materials such as fuels, oils, lubricants etc. The sources of such pollution during the operation phase will be related to small amounts of hydrocarbons derived from vehicles using the park and ride.

The proposed permeable underground attenuation storage will be constructed above the water table and will be designed to allow the water to infiltrate through the unsaturated zone above the existing water table. According to the Teagasc Soils Map, the site is located within the zone classed as Elton (1000ET) series representative profile description (http://gis.teagasc.ie/soils/rep_profile_sheet.php?series_code=1000ET). The soil associated with the ELTON series is classed as a free draining 'fine loamy drift with limestones' type soil. The infiltration of the water into the unsaturated zone in the soil below and adjacent to the soakaway pits will allow for water collected from the proposed surface water drainage system within the site to be filtered through the unsaturated zone's clay and silt particles. The proposed soakaway pits will be designed to accommodate an additional 20% storage volume over the required design volumes for the facility, in order to ensure that there will be sufficient capacity for rainfall events. A petrol and oil interceptor will be installed immediately upstream of each proposed permeable underground attenuation storage unit in order to remove any petrol or oils that are washed from the surface of the proposed car park into the proposed surface water drainage system.

Other potentially polluting materials associated with construction works such as suspended solids and cements will not pose a threat to groundwaters and they will become entrained on soils and subsoils and be prevented from discharging to groundwater baseflows.

In the absence of the provision of the attenuation storage and hydrocarbon interceptor the potential hydrocarbons (generated during both the construction phase and the operation phase) and other aqueous materials associated with the construction phase to perturb groundwater

baseflows is considered to be negligible. This is based on the small footprint of the project site and the natural attenuation provided by the underlying soils and subsoils.

Furthermore it is considered that even in the event that minor traces of such materials were to discharge to groundwater baseflows, their concentrations would be diluted to a miniscule levels such that they would be entirely attenuated and diluted in baseflows prior to discharge to the River Boyne.

In light of these factors it is considered that the project will not have the potential to result in the pollution of groundwater baseflows and as such no groundwater impact pathway will connect the project site to the River Boyne.

5.2 EXAMINATION OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

A search of the My Plan online planning applications website was completed to identify any other projects in the vicinity of the proposed park and ride, with which this proposal could combine to result in cumulative negative impacts to the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA.

Two adjacent residential development projects have been identified (Planning References NA151301 and NA181543). These are located directly opposite the proposed project on the N51. Both projects which are currently under construction, were subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment. The Screening for Appropriate Assessment concluded that neither project had the potential, alone or in-combination with other projects, to result in negative impacts to the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA. Given the conclusions of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment for these other projects and that of the proposed development, there will be no potential for the proposed project to combine with these other projects to result in cumulative negative impacts to the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA.

5.2.1 *Potential for In-Combination Effects with Other Plans*

The relevant plan with respect to the location of the project is the current Meath Development Plan 2013 – 2019. The Meath CDP has been reviewed in order to identify any other plans or projects that may be facilitated by the CDP within the vicinity of the project site. No such plans

or projects have been identified and it is considered that there will be no potential for the project to combine with the Meath CDP to result in likely significant effects to the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA.

6.0 SCREENING CONCLUSION

During the preparation of this Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment of the proposed N51 Park and Ride it was found that two European Sites occur within a 15km radius of the project site. The River Boyne which is designated as the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA is located approximately 290m to the north of the project site. Two other European Sites, the River Boyne Estuary SPA and the Boyne Coast and Estuaries SAC occurring within the wider 15km surrounding area were not identified as occurring within the zone of influence of the project due to the absence of any functional impact pathways linking the project site to these European Sites.

As such this Screening for Appropriate Assessment has focused on assessing the potential for the project, alone or in combination with other projects, to result in likely significant effects to the conservation objectives of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA. The qualifying features of interest of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA that were identified as occurring within the zone of influence of the project are river lamprey, Atlantic salmon, otters and kingfisher.

An assessment of the project's potential to undermine the status of these qualifying features of interest of the SAC by perturbing the water quality of the River Boyne has been completed and it has been found that the project does not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to these qualifying features of interest and will not have the potential to undermine the conservation objectives for these qualifying feature of interest.

An assessment of the project's potential to combine with other plans or projects has also been completed and it has been found that the project will not have the potential to combine with these other plans or projects to result in likely significant effects to the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA or any other European Sites.

In light of the findings of this report it is the considered view of the authors of this Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment that it can be concluded by Meath County Council that the

project is not likely, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, to have a significant effect on any European Sites in view of their Conservation Objectives and on the basis of best scientific evidence and there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to that conclusion.

REFERENCES

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