

## APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING

### CONCLUSION STATEMENT

**Ref: OPR (2021) AA Screening for Development Management: Practice Note PN01**

| <b>APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING:</b>  |                                 |  |  |
|---|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Author:   |                                 | Stage I Appropriate Assessment Screening report prepared by Logika Group and dated 20 <sup>th</sup> December 2024.   |  |
| <b>STEP 1. Description of the project/proposal and local site characteristics:</b>  |                                 |  |  |
| Planning file reference   |                                 | Carlow County Council Noise Action Plan 2024-2028  |  |
| Project Details:  |                                 | <p>Carlow County Council (CCC), the Action Planning Authority (APA) has undertaken screening of the Carlow County Council Noise Action Plan 2024-2028 (Ref: 16068A-20-R01-02-F02) for Appropriate Assessment (AA) pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directives. The assessment for screening is set out in the AA Screening Report (Ref: 13354A-20-R035-01-F02) dated 20th December 2024 prepared by Logika Consultants Ltd. on behalf of Noise Consultants Ltd for CCC.</p> <p>Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) determines the requirement for public authorities to conduct a screening for Appropriate Assessment on a plan or project which the authority wishes to adopt. The screening assessment was carried out using criteria for determining whether the CCC NAP would adversely affect the integrity of a European site and could result in likely significant effects on any European site in view of the conservation objectives. Furthermore, the screening assessment was undertaken to determine if the NAP could result in likely significant effects on any European site in view of the conservation objectives in combination with other plans and projects.</p> |  |
| Project location:   |                                 | Carlow County  |  |
| Site Characteristics:   |                                 | See Section 4.1.5 Description of Carlow County   |  |
| Relevant prescribed bodies consulted: DHLGH (NPWS), EPA, OPW etc.   |                                 | Noise Mapping Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EPA</li> <li>- TII</li> <li>- DECC</li> <li>- Public Consultation</li> </ul>  |  |
| Response to consultation:   |                                 | See NAP Section 11, Consultation Responses   |  |
| <b>STEP 2. Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model and compilation of information on Qualifying Interests and conservation objectives.</b> |                                 |  |  |
| Code:   | European Site:                  | Distance from proposed development:  | List of Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest: |
| (002162)  | River Barrow and River Nore SAC | Within ZOI   | See NPWS (2016) Site synopsis                              |
| (001757)  | Holdenstown Bog SAC             | Within ZOI   | NPWS (2019) Conservation Objectives                        |

|  |   |             |                                     |
|--|---|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| (000781)   | Slaney River Valley SAC   | Within ZOI  | NPWS (2015) Site Synopsis           |
| (002122)   | Wicklow Mountains SAC   | Within ZOI  | NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives |
| (000770)   | Blackstairs Mountains SAC   | Within ZOI  | NPWS (2019) Conservation Objectives |
| (002252)   | Thomastown Quarry SAC   | Within ZOI  | NPWS (2019) Conservation Objectives |
| (004233)   | River Nore SPA  |             | NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives |
| (004040)   | Wicklow Mountains SPA   | Within 15km | NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives |
| <b>Code:</b>   | <b>Connections (Source- Pathway- Receptor):</b>   |             | <b>Further screening:</b>           |
| (002162)   | Located within the ZOI. Hydrological connection.  |             | Yes                                 |
| (001757)   | Located within the ZOI. Hydrological connection.  |             | Yes                                 |
| (000781)   | Located within the ZOI. Hydrological connection.  |             | Yes                                 |
| (002122)   | Located within the ZOI. Hydrological connection.  |             | Yes                                 |
| (000770)   | Located within the ZOI. Hydrological connection.  |             | Yes                                 |
| (002252)   | Located within the ZOI. Hydrological connection.  |             | Yes                                 |
| (004233)   | Located within the ZOI. Hydrological connection.  |             | Yes                                 |
| (004040)   | Located within the ZOI. Hydrological connection.  |             | Yes                                 |
| Relevant Protected site/s possibly impacted via a SPR pathway:         | All identified SAC and SPA within ZOI   |             |                                     |
| Site investigations and scientific examinations:                       | <p>See Section 3.1.1 Baseline Data Collection, A desk-based assessment of the Carlow County Council NAP was undertaken, focussing on its potential to have effects on habitats and species that are listed as QIs (for SACs) and SCIs (for SPAs) in the designations for the European sites.</p> <p>The following other Plans have been considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028.</li> <li>• Regional, Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region.</li> <li>• The N80 Leagh Bends Safety Scheme.</li> <li>• Road Pavement Projects on the N81 at Ballyoliver; N80 at Whitemills; N80 Carlow Town; and N81 Bough Rathvilly to County Boundary.</li> <li>• Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030.</li> <li>• Carlow Graiguecullen Local Transport Plan.</li> <li>• Tullow Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA).</li> <li>• Muine Bheag Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA).</li> <li>• Carlow County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy 2024 – 2029.</li> </ul> |             |                                     |
| Baseline ecological conditions   | <p>See Section 4.1.5 Description of Carlow County; Carlow County covers an area of 896km<sup>2</sup>, as shown in Figure 4-1. As detailed in the NAP, the total population of the Carlow County is approximately 61,968. In terms of noise sources, there are approximately 62.6 km of major road. There are no major railways or aircraft sources. There are also a total of 30 noise sensitive buildings (schools and hospitals) located within Carlow County.</p>  |             |                                     |
| Conservation Objectives which are relevant to the development proposal | <p>All the QI's included in the conservation objectives of River Barrow and River Nore SAC, Holdenstown Bog SAC, Slaney River Valley SAC, Wicklow Mountains SAC, Blackstairs Mountains SAC, Thomastown Quarry SAC, River Nore SPA and Wicklow Mountains SPA.</p>  |             |                                     |

### STEP 3. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

**(a) Identify all potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the project under the following headings:**

| <b>Impacts:</b>   | <b>Possible Significance of Impacts:<br/>(duration/magnitude etc.)</b>   |
|---|--|
| <b>Construction phase:</b>  | <b>None</b> – the NAP does not provide a specific framework for development; they provide a strategy to reduce noise emissions and identify Quiet Areas in open country where either baseline noise emissions will be protected, therefore there is no pathway for potential Likely Significant Effects on Natura 2000 sites in view of their conservation objectives. |
| <b>Operational Phase:</b><br><b>Changes to water / groundwater due to drainage or abstraction: to</b> | <b>None</b> – the NAP does not provide a specific framework for development; they provide a strategy to reduce noise emissions and identify Quiet Areas in open country where either baseline noise emissions will be protected, therefore there is no pathway for potential Likely Significant Effects on Natura 2000 sites in view of their conservation objectives. |
| <b>In-combination/Other:</b>  | <b>None</b> - The effects of the NAPs are considered to be beneficial, however no pathway for Likely Significant Effects is identified.  |

**(b) Describe any likely changes to the European site:**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| • Habitat reduction:   | None  |
| • Habitat fragmentation:   | None  |
| • Disturbance to QI species:   | None  |
| • Species fragmentation:   | None  |
| • Species density reduction  | None  |
| • Species reduction  | None  |
| • Changes in key indicators of conservation status value:  |   |
| ○ Water quality:   | None  |
| ○ Air quality:   | None  |
| ○ Noise:   | None  |
| • Changes to areas of sensitivity or threats to QI   | None  |
| • Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site | None  |
| <b>Flood Issues:</b>   | n/a   |
| <b>Screening conclusion:</b>   | Stage 1 Screening concludes the following:<br>The NAP is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site.<br>The NAP establishes a framework for identifying and mitigating noise pollution sources within CCC. Any project resulting from the NAP must adhere to relevant levels within the National Planning Framework, such as the Carlow |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>County Development Plan 2022-2028, along with other applicable legislation and policy requirements.</p> <p>The potential noise impact of development is overseen through the Planning and Licensing processes, encompassing Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Environmental Assessments, Appropriate Assessments and adherence to pertinent guidance on noise.</p> <p>The primary trigger for AA would be if the NAP was likely to significantly affect a Natura 2000 site. However, the NAP elements are not identified as having any direct or indirect impacts on Natura 2000 sites. The actions contained within the NAP do not constitute a source of impact to any identified Natura 2000 site. Stage 1 Screening has concluded that the NAP and its associated actions is not predicted, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, to have Likely Significant Effects upon the 8 Natura 2000 sites identified in Section 4.2. Therefore, in alignment with the Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, it is determined that the NAP will generate no potential for Likely Significant Effects. Consequently, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.</p> <p>The statement as above is still valid following consultation responses to the NAP and associated SEA and AA screenings. Should there be further changes to the NAP, which may affect the conclusions presented herein, then a further screening of the potential for Likely Significant Effects upon Natura 2000 sites will be required.</p> |
| <p><b>(c) Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening?</b></p> |   |
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>   |   |
| <p>Potential adverse impacts on site integrity without mitigation:</p>   | <p>None identified</p>  |
| <p>Attachments</p>   | <p><b>Carlow County Council – Noise Action Plan 2024-2028</b> report prepared by Logika Group and dated 20th December 2024.</p> <p><b>SEA Screening</b> report prepared by Logika Group and dated 20th December 2024.</p>   |
| <p>Third-party submissions</p>   | <p>See Section 11 of Carlow County Council – Noise Action Plan 2024-2028.</p>   |
| <p>References:</p>   | <p>Carlow County Council (2022) <i>Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028</i>. Available at: <a href="https://consult.carlow.ie/en/consultation/carlow-county-development-plan-2022-2028/chapter/volume-1-written-statement">https://consult.carlow.ie/en/consultation/carlow-county-development-plan-2022-2028/chapter/volume-1-written-statement</a></p> <p>DEHLG (2009) <i>Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities</i>. (2nd edition) amended Feb. 2010.</p> <p>DEHLG (2010a) (Circular NPWS 1/10 and PSSP 2/10) <i>Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities</i>.</p> <p>Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) geoportal mapping tool <a href="https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/">https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/</a></p> <p>European Commission (2000) <i>Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC</i>. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.</p> <p>European Commission (2002) <i>Assessment of Plans and Projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites, Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and</i></p>  |

6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EC. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.  
 European Commission (2018) Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of 'The Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC. (Commission Notice 2018)  
 Levett-Therivel (2009) *Guidelines for Good Practice Appropriate Assessment of Plans under Article 6(3) Habitats Directive*. Findings of an international workshop on Appropriate Assessment in Oxford, December 2009. Available at <http://www.levett-therivel.co.uk/AAguidelines.htm>.  
 National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) National biodiversity Live Maps. <http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/>  
 National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Online data available on Natura 2000 sites: incl. site synopsis and conservation objectives data.  
 OPR (2021) *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, Practice Note PN01*. Office of the Planning Regulator March 2021.


### Step 4. Screening Determination Statement

**The assessment of significance of effects:**

Describe how the proposed development (alone or in-combination) is/is not likely to have significant effects on European site(s) in view of its conservation objectives.

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, Part XAB of the Planning and Development Acts (as amended), and the relevant case law, this report has examined the details of the project in relation to Natura 2000 sites which are within the zone of impact of the project.

In making the determination, the information contained within the AA Screening Report (Ref: 13354A-20-R035-01-F02) has been taken into account and carefully considered. The APA hereby confirms agreement that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment, in respect of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive is not required for Carlow County Council Noise Action Plan 2024-2028.

| Conclusion:   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | Tick as Appropriate:   | Recommendation:   |
| (i) It is clear that there is <b>no likelihood</b> of significant effects on a European site. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  | The proposal can be screened out:<br>Appropriate Assessment not required.   |
| (ii) It is uncertain whether the proposal will have a significant effect on a European site.  | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> Request further information to complete screening<br><input type="checkbox"/> Request NIS<br><input type="checkbox"/> Refuse planning permission |
| (iii) Significant effects are likely.   | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> Request NIS<br><input type="checkbox"/> Refuse Planning Permission   |
| Signed on behalf of the Carlow County Council:  | Signature:  | Date: 23/02/2025  |