

APPENDIX A:

Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

1. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND LOCAL SITE

Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the following:

- Alterations to the single-storey toilet block side extension (42 m²) which comprised Phase 1 of the previously permitted Community Hub extension. (Laois County Council Planning Register Ref. 18/639 and An Bord Pleanála Appeal Ref. 303848-19),
- Construction of new two-storey Community Hub side extension with single-storey link element to/from the protected structure (486 m²) and associated site works & service connections,
- Hard and soft landscaping of the Patrick Street forecourts to enhance the setting of the protected structure and to facilitate drop-off/deliveries and a variety of outdoor community activities.

Site Location

The development site is at an urban brownfield location at Patrick Street, Durrow, c. 190 metres south-west of the town square.

The site is zoned “Town Centre” in the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.

The site is outside the flood risk zone.

Site Size

The site area is 0.072 hectares [0.177 acres].

Floor area of proposed development

The floor area of the proposed development is 528 m².

Identification of nearby Natura 2000 site(s)

The nearest such site is the River Barrow and River Nore SAC [site code 2162] which is c. 120 ms distant to the north.

The characteristics of existing, proposed or other approved projects which may cause interactive/cumulative impacts with the project being assessed and which may affect the Natura 2000 site

None.

Is the application accompanied by a NIS?

No.

B. IDENTIFICATION OF THE RELEVANT NATURA 2000 SITE(S)

The reasons for the designation of the Natura 2000 site

A site synopsis is attached to this report (sourced on www.npws.ie).

The conservation objectives/qualifying interests of the site and the factors that contributes to the conservation value of the site

A site synopsis is attached to this report (sourced on www.npws.ie).

C. NPWS ADVICE

Summary of advice received from NPWS in written form

None received.

D. ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

(Purpose of this is to identify if the effect(s) identified could be significant – if uncertain assume the effect(s) are significant).

If answer yes to any of the questions, below then the effect is significant.

Would there be any impact on an Annex 1 habitat? (Annex 1 habitats are listed in Appendix 1 of AA Guidance)

No. The development is not located within or adjacent to a Natura 2000 site.

Would there be a reduction in habitat area on a Natura 2000 site?

No. The development is not located within or adjacent to a Natura 2000 site.

Would there be direct/indirect damage to the physical quality of the environment (e.g. water quality and supply, soil compaction) in the Natura 2000 site?

No. There is a very low level of potential for connectivity of the development site with sites designated for environmental protection.

Would there be serious/ongoing disturbance to species/habitats for which the Natura 2000 site is selected (e.g. because of increased noise, illumination and human activity)?

No. There is a very low level of potential for connectivity of the development site with sites designated for environmental protection.

Would there be direct/indirect damage to the size, characteristics or reproductive ability of populations on the Natura 2000 site?

No. The development is not located within or adjacent to a Natura 2000 site and there is a very low level of potential for connectivity of the development site with sites designated for environmental protection.

Would the project interfere with mitigation measures put in place for other plans/projects. (Look at in-combination effects with completed, approved but not completed, and proposed plans/projects. Look at projects/plans within and adjacent to Natura 2000 sites and identify them).

No.

E. SCREENING CONCLUSION

Taking account of the following:

[i] the distance between the development site and the nearest Natura 2000 site,

[ii] the availability of municipal drainage infrastructure,

[iii] the nature and extent of the proposed development and of the site curtilage including the very low level of potential for connectivity of the development site with water bodies or with sites designated for environmental protection,

[iv] the characteristics of the conservation objectives involved and

[v] best scientific knowledge,

it can be concluded with reasonable certainty that the development in itself, or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on the Natura 2000 sites network and therefore an appropriate assessment is not required.

Donal Kiely, SEP, 21st February 2024