

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT
AND
CONCLUSION STATEMENT**

(A) Project Details			
Planning File Ref	Part VIII		
Applicant name	Laois County Council		
Development Location	Rock of Dunamase, Portlaoise, Co. Laois		
Site size	2.5 ha		
Application accompanied by an EIS (Yes/NO)	No		
Distance from Natura 2000 site in km	The River Barrow and River Nore SAC is located 4.5km to the southeast of the proposed development and the Slieve Bloom SPA is located 14.4km to the west.		
Description of the project/proposed development			
<p>The proposed development will include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 44 Car Parking spaces including Disabled Parking spaces. 2. 4 Bus Lane Parking Bays 3. Bicycle Stands 4. Picnic Areas 5. Provision of traffic safety measures and signage to facilitate safe access 6. Associated landscaping 			
(B) Identification of Natura 2000 sites which may be impacted by the proposed development			
			Yes/No
			If answer is yes, identify list name of Natura 2000 site likely to be impacted.
1	Impacts on sites designated for freshwater habitats or species.	<i>Is the development within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include</i>	No

	<p><u>Sites to consider:</u> Slieve Bloom Mountains SAC</p> <p>Mountmellick SAC</p> <p>River Barrow And River Nore SAC</p> <p>Ballyprior Grassland SAC</p>	<p><i>freshwater habitats and/or species, or in the catchment (upstream or downstream) of same?</i></p>	
2	<p>Impacts on sites designated for wetland habitats - bogs, fens, marshes and heath.</p> <p><u>Sites to consider:</u> Slieve Bloom Mountains SAC</p> <p>Mountmellick SAC</p> <p>River Barrow And River Nore SAC</p> <p>Ballyprior Grassland SAC</p>	<p><i>Is the development within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include wetland habitats (bog, marsh, fen or heath)</i></p>	No
3	<p>Impacts on designated terrestrial habitats.</p> <p><u>Sites to consider:</u> Slieve Bloom Mountains SAC</p> <p>Mountmellick SAC</p> <p>River Barrow And River Nore SAC</p> <p>Ballyprior Grassland SAC</p> <p>Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA</p> <p>River Nore SPA</p>	<p><i>Is the development within a Special Area of Conservation whose qualifying interests include woodlands, dunes or grasslands, or within 100m of same?</i></p>	No
4	<p>Impacts on birds in SPAs</p> <p><u>Sites to consider:</u> River Nore SPA</p> <p>Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA</p>	<p><i>Is the development within a Special Protection Area?</i></p>	No

Conclusion:

If the answer to all of the above is **No**, significant impacts can be ruled out for habitats and bird species.

No further assessment in relation to habitats or birds is required.

If the answer is **Yes** refer to the relevant sections of **C**.

(G) SCREENING CONCLUSION STATEMENT		
<i>Selected relevant category for project assessed by ticking box.</i>		
1	AA is not required because the project is directly connected with/necessary to the conservation management of the site	
2	No potential significant affects/AA is not required	X
3	Significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain. Seek a Natura Impact Statement Reject proposal. (Reject if potentially damaging/inappropriate)	
Justify why it falls into relevant category above (based on information in above tables)		
Based on the distance and lack of pathways the proposed works will not impact on any designated sites.		
Based on the above it is considered that there is no need to proceed to a stage 2 NIS. The Planning Authority concludes that the works proposed, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will not have a significant effect on any European Site.		
Name:	Olive O'Donnell	
Position:	Executive Planner	
Date:	24/03/2023	

Appendix 1

European Sites located within the potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development.

Site Code	Site name	Distance (km)
000412	Slieve Bloom Mountains SAC	8.3
002141	Mountmellick SAC	9.5
002162	River Barrow And River Nore SAC	8.0
002256	Ballyprior Grassland SAC	10.5
004160	Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA	8.3
004233	River Nore SPA	12

The nearest European sites to the Proposed Development are River Barrow and River Nore SAC located c.8km to the north of the Proposed Development, and Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA located c. 8.3km to the northwest of the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development is located within the hydrological catchment of the Triogue River, approximately 600m to the east of the site. A review of aerial photography, Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) mapping and OSI Geographical Information System (GIS) data for rivers and streams indicates that the development site has no direct hydrological connection with the Triogue. There is therefore no direct connectivity to any watercourse within or outside the potential zone of influence.

Identification of relevant European sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model and compilation of information QIs and conservation objectives.

European site name & Site code	Location Relative to the Proposed Development Site	Connectivity – Source-Pathway-Receptor	Considered further in Screening –Y/N
<p>Slieve Bloom Mountains SAC (000412)</p> <p>3 Qualifying Interests</p> <p>Including Priority Habitats: Blanket bogs (* if active bog) 7130, Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) 91E0 https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000412.pdf</p>	<p>8.3km to the north west of the Proposed Development</p>	<p>No</p> <p>There are no pathways or connectivity to the habitats or species of this site.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Mountmellick SAC (002141)</p> <p>1 Qualifying Interest</p> <p>https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002141.pdf</p>	<p>9.5km to the north of the Proposed Development</p>	<p>No</p> <p>There are no pathways or connectivity to the habitats or species of this site.</p>	<p>N</p>

<p>River Barrow And River Nore SAC (002162)</p> <p>23 Qualifying Interests</p> <p>Including Priority Habitats: Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) 7220, Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno- Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) 91E0</p> <p>https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002162.pdf</p>	<p>8km to the north of the Proposed Development</p>	<p>No</p> <p>There are no pathways or connectivity to the habitats or species of this site.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Ballyprior Grassland SAC (002256)</p> <p>1 Qualifying Interest</p> <p>Including Priority Habitat: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)* 6210</p> <p>https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002256.pdf</p>	<p>10.5 km to the east of the Proposed Development</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Due to distance and the lack of any relevant ex-situ factors of significance to these species or habitat.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA (004160)</p>	<p>8.3km to the northwest</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>1 Species of Conservation Interest : Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i></p> <p>https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004160.pdf</p>	<p>the Proposed Development</p>	<p>Due to distance and the lack of any relevant ex-situ factors of significance to these species or habitat.</p>	

<p>River Nore SPA (004233)</p> <p>1 Qualifying Interest</p> <p>https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004233.pdf</p>	<p>12km to the southwest of the Proposed Development</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Due to distance and the lack of any relevant ex-situ factors of significance to these species or habitat.</p>	<p>N</p>
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