



Screening for Appropriate Assessment

R445 Newhall Junction Improvement Project Co. Kildare



Date: September 2020

For: KILGALLEN & PARTNERS CONSULTING ENGINEERS

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1 INTRODUCTION

Works are proposed for the Newhall Junction on the R445 south west of Naas Co. Kildare. The development consists of the construction of a roundabout, local access roads, roadside verges and associated works. The following report has been completed to provide information regarding the ecological status of the proposed site of works. The report includes a general ecological assessment of the site and the surrounding area, including designated sites. This report has also been completed to provide the information necessary to allow the competent authority to conduct an Article 6[3] Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening of the proposed development. The legislation and methodology for which is detailed in the following sections below.

1.1 Relevant Legislation and Overall Screening Methodology

The methodology for this screening statement is clearly set out in a document prepared for the Environment DG of the European Commission entitled 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC' (Oxford Brooks University, 2001). This report and any contributory fieldwork were carried out in accordance with guidelines given by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009, amended 2010). The process is given in Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive and is commonly referred to as 'Appropriate Assessments' (which in fact refers to Stage 2 in the sequence under the Habitats Directive Article 6 assessment). Article 6 of the Habitats Directive sets out provisions which govern the conservation and management of Natura 2000 sites. Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment.

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the (Natura2000) site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its

implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implication 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."

Article 6(4) of the same directive states:

"If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest."

It is the responsibility of the proponent of the plan or project to provide the relevant information (ecological surveys, research, analysis etc.) for submission to the 'competent national authority'. Having satisfied itself that the information is complete and objective, the competent authority will use this information to screen the project, i.e. to determine if an AA is required and to carry out the AA, if one is deemed necessary. The competent authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned. The appropriate assessment process has four stages. Each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. If, for example, the conclusions at the end of Stage One are that there will be no significant impacts on the Natura 2000 site, there is no requirement to proceed further. The four stages are:

1. Screening to determine if an appropriate assessment is required
2. Appropriate assessment
3. Consideration of alternative solutions
4. Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest/Derogation

Stage 1. Screening

This is to determine if an appropriate assessment is required. Screening is the technique applied to determine whether a particular plan would be likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site and would thus warrant an Appropriate Assessment. The key indicator that will determine if an Appropriate Assessment is required is the determination of whether the development is likely to have significant environmental effects on a Natura 2000 site or not.

Stage 2. Appropriate Assessment

This step is required if the screening report indicates that the development is likely to have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site. Stage 2 assesses the impact of a plan or project on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, with respect to the site's structure, function and conservation objectives. Where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of these impacts is also required.

Stage 3. Assessment of Alternative Solutions

If it is concluded that, subsequent to the implementation of measures, a plan or project will have an adverse impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, it must be objectively concluded that no alternative solutions exist before the plan or project can proceed.

Stage 4. Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest/Derogation

Where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain but imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist for the implementation of a plan or project, an assessment of compensatory measures that will effectively offset the damage to the Natura 2000 site will be necessary.

Flynn, Furney Environmental Consultants Ltd has been appointed by Kilgallen & Partners Consulting Engineering to undertake the first stage of the above process: a screening exercise to determine whether the proposed development has the potential to have any significant or indeterminate impacts on the conservation objectives and overall integrity of any Natura 2000 sites. This assessment is based upon desk study and fieldwork carried out by suitably qualified ecologists. Sites within 15km of the proposed development are reviewed for potential impacts or pathways for impacts. Section 3 of the report comprises the AA Screening that specifically focuses on the potential for impacts on Natura 2000 sites and their conservation objectives.

1.2 The site: Lands at Newhall Junction

The study site is located on the boundary of the townlands of Ladytown and Newhall Co. Kildare. The site is currently a mixture of existing roads including the R445, L2031 and the L6064. Along with brownfield areas, road verges, treelines and greenfield areas. The site is surrounded on all sides by agricultural land predominantly used for crop production. A small cluster of residential developments is found adjacent to the northwest of the site. Further residential developments were recorded to the south east of the R445 east of the L6064 slip road. This consisted of a small cluster of houses along with yards.

1.3 Description of the Proposed Development

The proposed development will take place over a small area of approximately 2.1 ha of existing roadway, roadway verges, fields and hedgerows generally to allow for appropriate access road alignment and the construction of the roundabout for access roads, realignment and associated works.

1.4 Description of the Works

The area under study can be seen in figure 1. Works are likely to involve the removal and stock piling of surface soil and over burden material. The removal, reinstatement and installation of services, filling as required, capping and road surfacing.

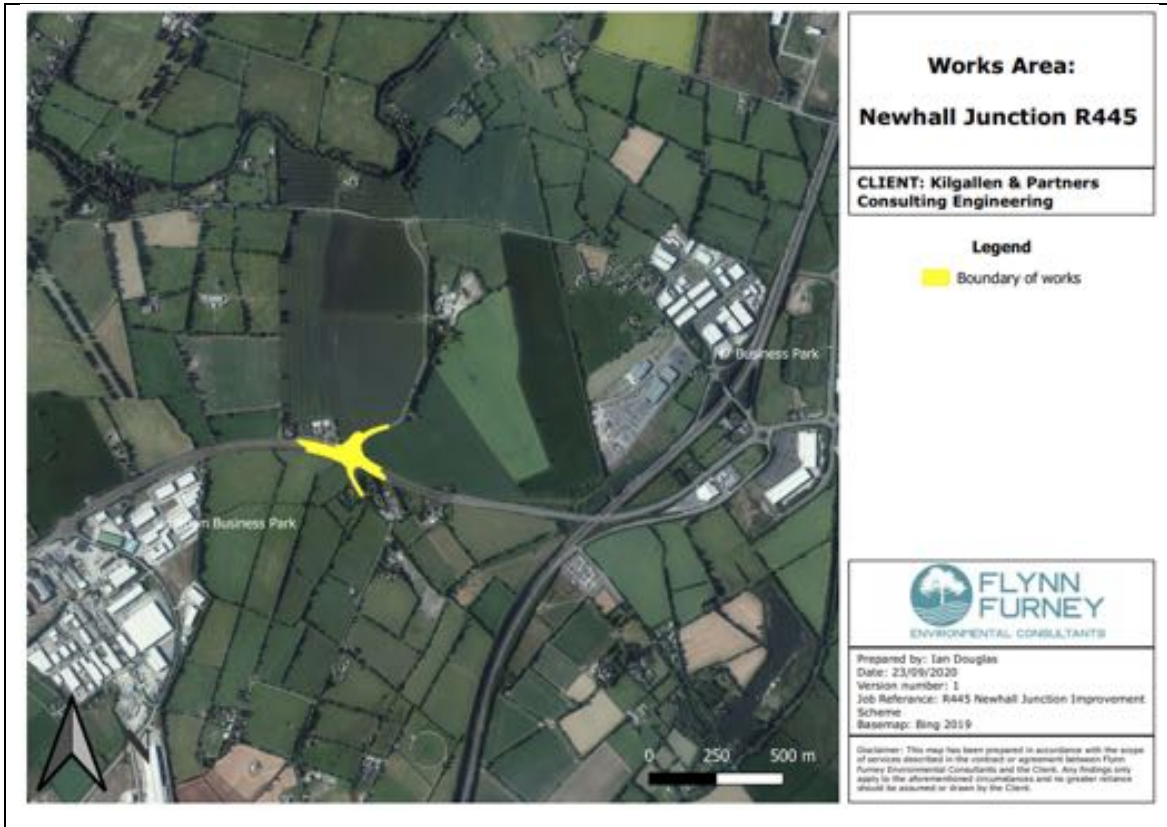
1.5 Stakeholders and Consultation

The consultations carried out to date are summarised below:

Table 1: Summary of Consultations

Stakeholder	Nature of Consultation	Outcome
Kildare County Council	As part of planning application	This report

Figure 1: Works area on the R445 Junction Improvement Scheme



2 ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

2.1 Desktop Study

A desktop study was carried out as part of the screening process. This included a review of available literature on the site and its immediate environs. Sources of information included the National Parks and Wildlife Service and National Biodiversity Data Centre databases on protected sites and species. Additionally, a number of databases on individual protected species and non-native invasive species were consulted.

2.2 Designated Sites

Sites designated for the conservation of nature include Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) which are designated for the protection of species, habitats and geological interests that are of national importance. Sites designated for protection by the EU are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). These form the Natura 2000 network of sites. It is these sites that are of relevance to the screening process for Appropriate Assessment.

All designated sites within 15km of the proposed works were considered during the desktop study stage of the screening assessment in order to assess the potential for significant effects upon their Qualifying Interests / Special Conservation Interests and Conservation Objectives. This stage of the process is used to determine whether any of the designated sites may be 'screened out'. That is, that they can be regarded as not being relevant to the process, having no potential to be significantly affected or impacted upon. This may be due to: a) the distance of the designated sites from the site of proposed works, b) the lack of connectivity such as watercourse or habitat area between the designated sites and the site of the proposed works or c) the nature of the qualifying interests of the designated sites.

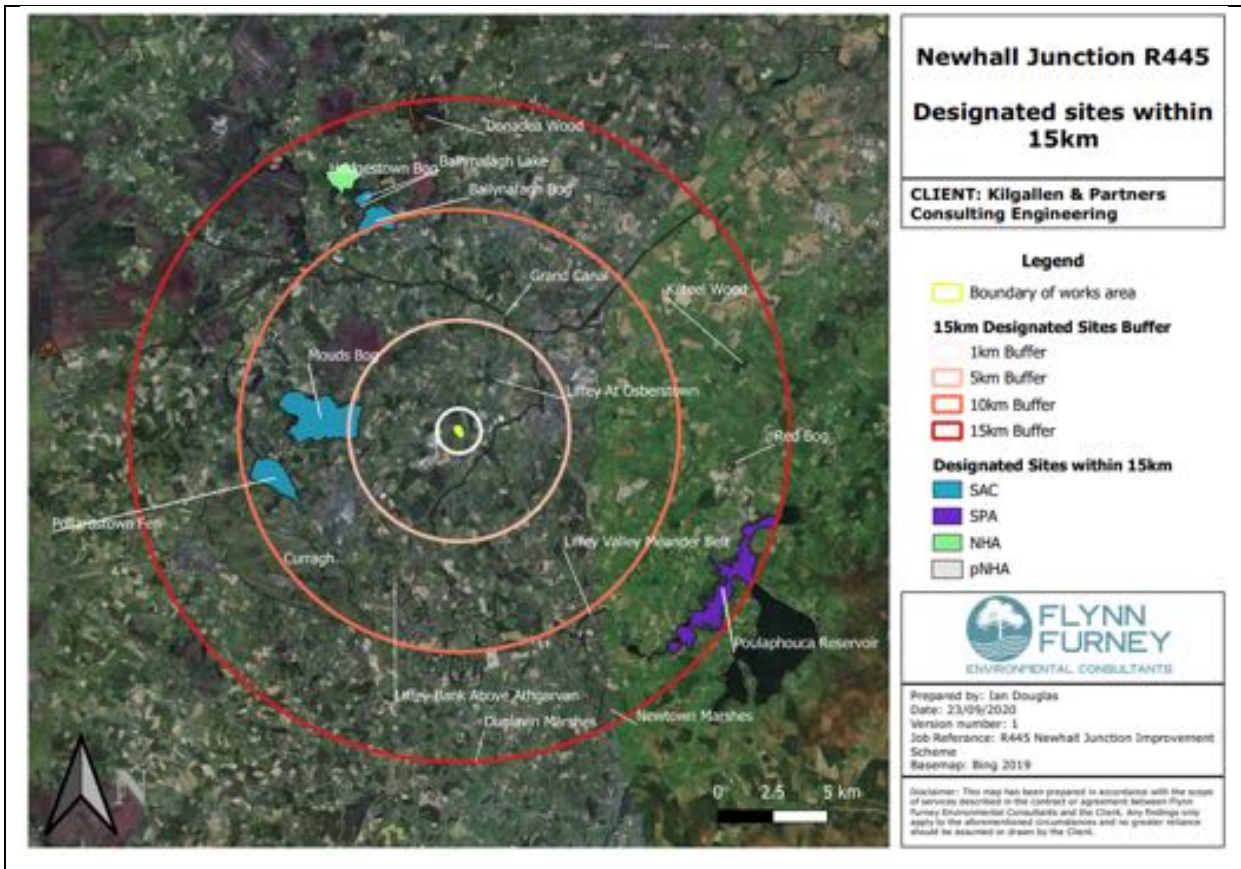
2.3 Designated Sites Within 15km of the Proposed Works

All designated sites as described above within 15km of the proposed works were considered during the screening process for their potential to have significant effects upon their qualifying interests or special qualifying interests or conservation objectives. The site synopses and conservation objectives of the sites (as available) were also examined during this stage of the survey. These sites are given in the table below. The table also gives distance from the proposed site of works and the outcome of the screening.

Table 2: Distances from the proposed developments to the nearest designated sites

Site Code	Site Name	Designation	Distance from designated site	Likelihood of impact
2331	Mouds Bog SAC	SAC	4.2km	None identified
396	Pollardstown Fen SAC	SAC	7.8km	None identified
1387	Ballynafagh Lake SAC	SAC	7.8km	None identified
391	Ballynafagh Bog SAC	SAC	9.2km	None identified
397	Red Bog, Kildare SAC	SAC	12km	None identified
4063	Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA	SPA	13km	None identified
1393	Hodgestown Bog NHA	NHA	12km	None identified
391	Ballynafagh Bog	pNHA	9.7km	None identified
392	Curragh (Kildare)	pNHA	7.7km	None identified
393	Liffey Valley Meander Belt	pNHA	9.8km	None identified
395	Mouds Bog	pNHA	4.2km	None identified
396	Pollardstown Fen	pNHA	7.7km	None identified
397	Red Bog, Kildare	pNHA	12km	None identified
731	Poulaphouca Reservoir	pNHA	13km	None identified
1387	Ballynafagh Lake	pNHA	10.8km	None identified
1391	Donadea Wood	pNHA	13.1km	None identified
1394	Kilteel Wood	pNHA	13km	None identified
1395	Liffey At Osberstown	pNHA	2.4km	None identified
1396	Liffey Bank Above Athgarvan	pNHA	7.1km	None identified
1759	Newtown Marshes	pNHA	13.1km	None identified
1772	Dunlavin Marshes	pNHA	14.7km	None identified
2104	Grand Canal	pNHA	1.3km	None identified

Figure 2: Designated sites within 15km



No risks to the conservation objectives of any other Natura 2000 sites are considered likely due one or more of the following:

- Lack of connectivity between the proposed works areas and the designated area
- Significant buffer between the proposed works area and the designated area
- The nature of the site’s conservation objectives
- No impact or change to the management of the designated area or;
- No change to chemical or physiological condition of the designated site as a result of the proposed development.

A number of proposed/ Natural Heritage Areas occur within 15km of the site proposed for works (as seen in figure 2), these are not considered within this screening process methodology as they are not European designated sites. These have however been considered as part of the

Ecological Impact Assessment for this project that has also been completed by the present authors and accompanies this report.

2.4 Field Surveys

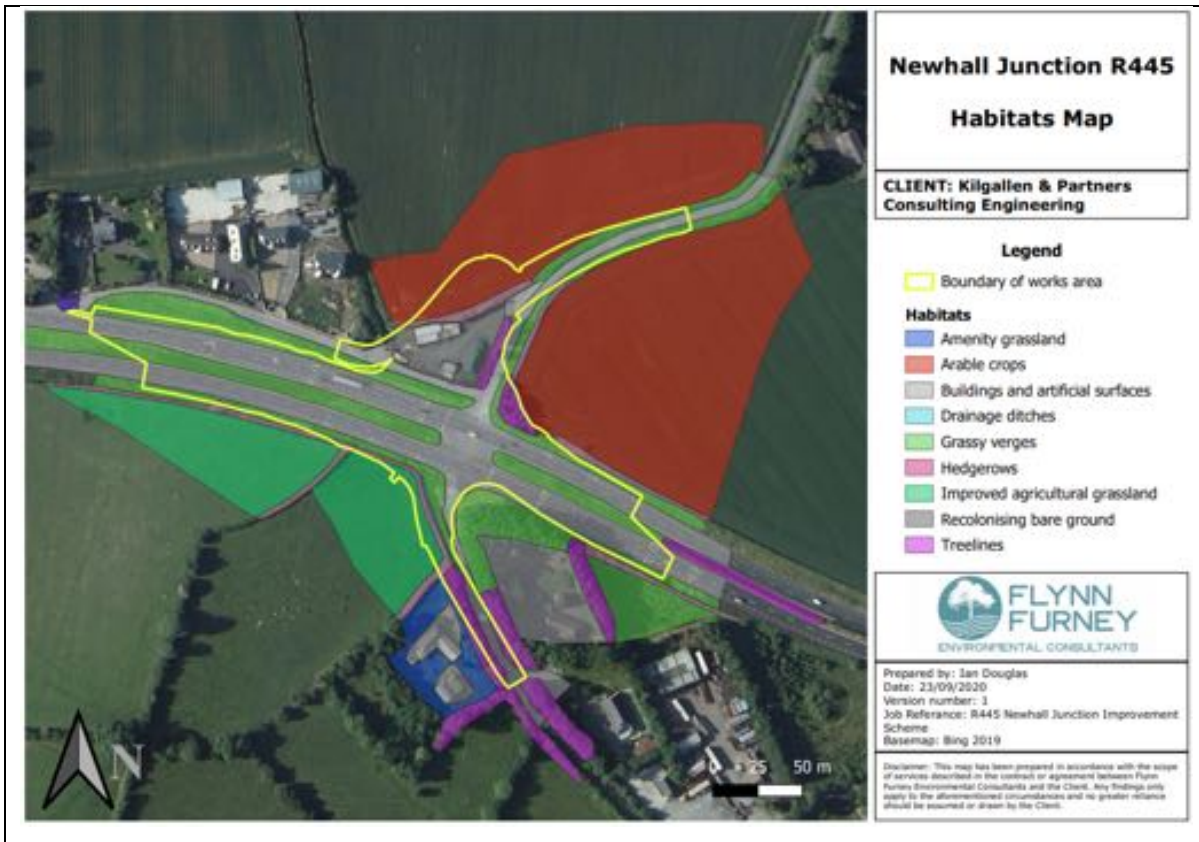
Field survey was carried out in September 2020 and baseline ecological conditions were assessed. Habitats were identified, mapped and classified and dominant plant species noted were conducted according to the guidelines given by the JNCC (2010) and Smith et al. (2011). Any signs of mammals seen were recorded as part of these surveys. A dedicated bird survey was not carried out as part of the survey. However, any species observed were noted and recorded. Any presence of or suitable habitat for amphibian and reptile species were recorded. Habitat classification followed Fossitt (2000) and the floral nomenclature used follows Parnell and Curtis (2012) and Scannell and Synnott (1987).

2.5 Outline Site Description

The study site is located in the townlands of Ladytown and Newhall approximately 10km south west of Naas town centre Co. Kildare along the R445. The proposed site comprises a number of small parcels of land including fields, roads, verges, brown field sites, yards and buildings both north and south of the existing R445. The fields that surround the site are generally tilled lands and permanent pasture. A number of mature hedgerows and treelines also surround the site particularly south of the R445 along the L6064.

2.6 Detailed Description of Habitat Areas

A detailed description of habitat areas recorded within or adjacent to the survey area is given below. A map showing the habitats recorded on the site can be seen in figure 3.

Figure 3: Habitat Map

The flowing habitat types were recorded within or surrounding the site during field work in September 2020. The habitat assessment was carried out according to guidelines given by the Heritage Council (2011) and the JNCC (2010). Maps of all habitat types found within and surrounding the site can be seen in Appendix 1.

2.6.1 Dry meadow and grassy verges (GS2)

Grassy verges primarily occurred along the road side and between the lanes of the R445. These areas of grass looked to be unmanaged or infrequently managed. These grasslands were overgrown and were dominated by False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) with occasional Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and Bents (*Agrostis spp.*). The herb layer varied considerably around these patches of grass. The most diverse were west of the junction in front of the row of houses and in front of the field of improved grassland. Here Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium*), Sow thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Plantains (*Plantago spp.*), Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*), Common

Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Ragworts (*Senecio spp.*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) and Red Clover (*Trifolium spp*) were recorded.

Other areas of Grassy verge including those around the L2031 were less species diverse and also dominated by False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) but also included Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Rape (*Brassica napus*), Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*).

2.6.2 Improved Grassland GA1

The dominant habitat surrounding much of the south west side of the junction. Improved grassland dominated by Rye grass (*Lolium spp*), Meadow-grasses (*Poa spp.*) and Fescues (*Festuca spp.*). The field appear to have been primarily used for grazing by cattle and sheep. Species of agricultural herbs identified included Dandelion (*Taraxacum spp.*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Plantains (*Plantago spp.*), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Thistles (*Cirsium arvense, C. vulgare*) and Docks (*Rumex spp.*).

2.6.3 Hedgerows (WL1)

Hedgerows formed continuous bands around the south western edge of the study area and continued into the surrounding fields. Hedgerows generally contained Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) interspersed Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Elms (*Ulmus spp.*) and Brambles (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*).

The invasive species Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*) was recorded within hedgerows along the western side of the L6064.

Other patchy non-continuous hedgerows were recorded across the site.

2.6.4 Treelines (WL2)

Treelines and small groups of trees were recorded throughout the site. Along the boundary of the property west of the L6064 a treeline dominated by Mature Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) was

recorded. The remains of an Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) treeline was recorded east of the L6064. This originally wrapped around the property at the junction but much this has recently been removed.

North of the junction a small stand of trees approximately 15 years old has been planted these included Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) and Lime (*Tilia Cordata*). Opposite a linear strip of trees was recorded that included Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) and the non-native Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), a North American species.

2.6.5 Recolonising bare ground (ED3)

This habitat was recorded within a yard on the north west of the junction. Access to the yard was restricted. Vegetation cover was less than 50% and contained typical primary colonising generalist species including Colt's Foot (*Tussilago farfara*), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum spp.*), Willow-herbs (*Epilobium spp.*) and ragwort (*Senecio spp.*), Herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) and Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*). Brambles (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*) were recorded coming over the fence from neighbouring properties.

2.6.6 Drainage ditches (FW4)

Drainage ditches were recorded running along the northern boundary with the property on the L6064. This drain then continued north along the L6064 and then disappeared into a culvert. The only aquatic plant recorded within this ditch was Fool's Water-cress (*Apium nodiflorum*). All other plant species recorded were associated with the surrounding hedgerows and grassy verges.

2.6.7 Amenity grassland (GA2)

This type of grassland was recorded within or in front of a number of residential properties surrounding the site. Rye-grasses (*Lolium spp.*) or other cultivated grass varieties dominated these areas. Broadleaved herbs such as Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum spp.*), clovers (*Trifolium spp.*) and plantains (*Plantago spp.*) were common.

2.6.8 Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)

This broad category incorporates all the houses, roadways, hard stands around houses, driveways and the access roads to the small cluster of houses north of the R445. Species were limited to a few small clumps of coarse grasses like False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and 'weed' species including Dandelion (*Taraxacum spp.*) and Ragworts (*Senecio spp.*).

2.6.9 Arable Land (BC1)

Agricultural land that is cultivated and managed for the production of cereals (wheat, barley, oats, maize), were recorded along the eastern and western side of the L2031. These had recently been harvested and the fields were in stubble at the time of surveying.

2.6.10 Significance of Habitats

None of the habitats occurring within the site are of high sensitivity, most of the area having been modified from its natural state by agricultural activities. There is no Annex I habitat occurring within the area proposed for works. The most widely occurring habitat type is Dry Meadow/Grassy Verge (GS2). This is also widely occurring within the area under survey and wider area. No rare, threatened or protected species of plants as per the Red Data List (Wyse Jackson et al 2016) were found. No species listed in the Flora Protection Order (2015) were found to be growing within the site. No such species were recorded within the area of works. There are no records for protected species within this area on the NBDC or the National Parks and Wildlife Service databases.

2.7 Fauna

2.7.1 Mammal Activity

No otter holts or any other signs of otter were recorded during the course of this survey. No badger setts, scat, scratching or latrines were identified within study area. However, the site may form part of the home range of some badger communities. Works are not considered likely to cause the splitting of the home range of any badger communities. No mammal tracks

or trails were recorded that indicate that this area is being used by any mammal species on a regular basis.

No signs of Red Squirrel or Pine Martin were recorded within or surrounding the site. These would be unlikely to occur here given the lack of woodland cover locally.

2.7.2 Bats

A dedicated bat survey employing bat detectors after dusk was not carried out as part of this survey. However, included in the site survey was any habitat suitable for bat roosts (e.g. mature woody vegetation, buildings or sub-terrain areas). Potential Bat roosting habitat was recorded within the building associated with the radio tower. These were corrugated roofed sheds with some small spaces recorded that may allow bats to enter into these buildings. This habitat was be considered of low potential for bats given they generally prefer tiled roofs to corrugated iron roofing, the degree of local light and noise pollution and the lack of suitable feeding/foraging habitat locally.

2.7.3 Breeding Birds

A dedicated bird survey was not carried out as part of the ecological surveys. However, birds seen and heard during the site survey were recorded. All of the birds recorded were species typical of this kind of farmland. These included Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), Starling(*Sturnus vulgaris*), Wood pigeon(*Columba palumbus*), Rook(*Corvus frugilegus*) and Magpie(*Pica pica*). None of these species are of high conservation concern.

2.7.4 Freshwater Species, Reptiles and Amphibians

It was noted that no suitable breeding habitat for the Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) and Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) exists within the site with the exception of the small drain which is sub-optimal for amphibian species. Suitable habitat for the Common or Viviparous Lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*) was not recorded.

2.7.5 Invasive Species

No invasive species listed on the Schedule 3 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 were found during the survey.

3 ARTICLE 6(3) SCREENING ASSESSMENT

This section of the report focuses solely on the potential for the proposed works to impact upon Natura 2000 sites. Section 2.1.2 of this report excluded any direct impacts or pathways for impacts on any Natura 2000 sites. This was based upon the distance of the designated sites from the proposed works. The potential for impacts on the Natura 2000 sites is considered below.

3.1 Article 6(3) Assessment Criteria

3.1.1 Description of the individual elements of the project likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site.

None of the individual elements of the proposed development as planned are likely to give rise to significant impacts on the Natura 2000 sites, given the limited scale of the works and the nature and location of the works as planned.

3.1.2 Description of any Likely Direct, Indirect or Secondary Impacts of the Project on the Natura 2000 Site.

Any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the proposed development, both alone and in combination with other plans or projects, on any Natura 2000 sites by virtue of the following criteria: size and scale, land take, distance from the Natura 2000 site or key feature thereof, resource requirements, emissions, excavation requirements, transportation requirements and duration of construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the works are detailed in the table below.

Table 3: Assessment of Likely Impacts

ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY IMPACTS	
Size and scale	The proposed works site of approximately 2.1 hectares will occupy a small area. There will be no impact on any Natura 2000 Sites owing

	to size or scale of the proposed works.
Land-take	Works will not alter the size of any designated sites. Therefore land-take is nil.
Distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site;	Mounds Bogs SAC is the nearest designated site 4km away
Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.);	No materials for construction will be sourced from within any Natura 2000 Site. No water will be abstracted from the site during the construction or operation of the site. Therefore there will be no impact on the Natura site as a result of resource requirements.
Emissions (disposal to land, water or air);	There will be no additional emissions of water from the site. No emissions are predicted that will impact upon any Natura 2000 site.
Excavation requirements;	No excavations will take place within any Natura 2000 Site. Construction works will be entirely within area as identified in this report.
Transportation requirements;	Site has existing access via local road. No other means of access will be required during any phase of the project.
Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.;	Duration of works not known at time of writing. However, these works are expected to be completed within 6 months.
Timing of works	Works shall be timed to minimise disturbance to native species. No woody vegetation is to be cleared or otherwise impacted upon during the bird nesting season (March-August inclusive).
Cumulative or In-combination Impacts with other Projects and Plans	A number of other projects have been considered as part of the screening process. A search of the planning website of Kildare County Council was carried out as part of the desktop study. A number of planning applications were reviewed. The greater majority of the schemes were for the construction or alteration of private dwellings. Or the construction or alternation of commercial facilities within nearby business parks. No cumulative or in-

	combination impacts are therefore predicted.
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3.2 Description of any Likely Changes to the Natura 2000 Sites

Any likely changes to the Natura 2000 site are described in the table below with reference to the following criteria: reduction of habitat area, disturbance to key species, habitat or species fragmentation, reduction in species density, changes in key indicators of conservation value and climate change.

Table 4: Likely changes to the Nature 2000 site

Likely Changes to the Natura 2000 Site	
Reduction of habitat area	No works will take place within the boundary of any Natura 2000 sites. There will be no loss of habitat within any Natura 2000 site as a result of the proposed works.
Disturbance to key species	All works associated with the proposed development will take place outside the boundaries of the Natura 2000 sites. None of the qualifying interests of the Natura 2000 sites were recorded during survey. No loss of or impacts upon habitats of the qualifying interests of the nearest Natura 2000 site is predicted. No significant impacts on any key species have therefore been considered likely.
Habitat or species fragmentation	There will be no works within any SAC or SPA. No impacts on any qualifying species are predicted. Therefore, there will be no impact within the Natura 2000 sites with regard to habitat or species fragmentation.
Reduction in species density	No reduction in species density is considered likely within any SAC or SPA as a result of the proposed works.
Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.);	Habitat integrity is the most relevant of the key indicators of conservation value with regard to the nearest Natura 2000 site. However, the risk of any significant impacts on any key hydrological or morphological aspects of this site are considered unlikely due to construction or operation phase of the proposed

	development. There will be no impacts on any habitat areas outside the site. As stated above, there will be no loss or reduction in habitat areas or quality within any designated site.
Climate change	No damage to any Natura 2000 site as a result of or in combination with enhanced climate change is predicted as a result of the proposed development.

3.2.1 Likelihood of Interference with the key relationships that define the structure and function of the Natura 2000 Site as a whole:

It is considered that there will be no long-term residual impacts from the proposed works upon the key relationships that define any Natura 2000 sites.

3.2.2 Indicators of Significance as a Result of the Identification of Effects

Indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects as set out below in terms of loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance and changes to the key elements of site.

Table 5: Indicators of significance

Indicators of Significance	
Loss	There will be no loss of habitat within any Natura 2000 site as a result of the proposed works. It is not anticipated that the loss of any species of conservation interest will occur as a result of the proposed works due to injury or mortality.
Fragmentation	No habitat fragmentation to any Natura 2000 site is predicted.
Disruption	No significant risk of disruption to any Natura 2000 sites are likely during this project.
Disturbance	As above
change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.)	No long-term changes to any key elements of any Natura 2000 site are predicted as a result of the proposed development.

Description of any Likely Significant Impacts or Indeterminate Impacts of the Project on the Natura 2000 Site

Based on a consideration of the likely impacts arising from the proposed works and a review of their significance in terms of the conservation interests and objectives of the Natura 2000 Sites screened, no significant impacts have been identified on the Natura 2000 sites as a result of the proposed development.

3.3 FINDINGS OF ARTICLE 6(3) SCREENING ASSESSMENT

Name of project or plan: R445 Newhall Junction Improvement Scheme

Name and location of Natura 2000 Site: Works will take place on the outskirts of Naas Co. Kildare. The nearest designated site is Mounds Bog SAC.

Description of project or plan: The proposed works involve the construction of a roundabout on the R445 at the same location as Newhall Crossroads. The Local Roads L6064 and L2031 will receive minor realignment required for the entry and exit geometry at the roundabout. Significant verge widening will be required on the realigned local roads to provide appropriate forward visibility on the local roads.

Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?: The project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any Natura 2000 sites.

Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)? On the basis that the proposed project will have no impacts on any Natura 2000 sites, no cumulative or in combination impacts are predicted.

3.3.1 Assessment of Significance of Effects

Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site:

The proposed project will not significantly affect any Natura 2000 sites.

Explain why these effects are not considered significant

There will be no direct impacts upon the Natura 2000 Sites as:

- No works will take place within any Natura 2000 Site.
- No resources of any Natura 2000 site will be affected by works. There will be no indirect impacts upon the Natura 2000 Sites as:
 - The project is small in scale and limited in duration.
 - There is no hydrological connectivity between the site and designated sites.

Indirect impacts upon the Natura 2000 Site:

- None.

Consultation with Agencies

- Pending completion of this report.

3.4 Data collected to carry out the assessment

The following sources of data were employed:

- Environmental Protection Agency Envision Database
- NPWS protected species database and online mapping
- Historical OSI Maps
- NPWS protected species database and online mapping.
- Kildare County Council Planning Database

Level of assessment completed

- Desk Study

- Survey and site visit in September 2020
- JNCC Phase 1 Habitat Assessment
- Fossitt Level III Habitat Recording

Overall Conclusions

In conclusion, no impacts are likely as a result of the proposed works on the conservation objectives or overall integrity of any Natura 2000 Site. Therefore, Appropriate Assessment is not required.

4 Reference

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Appendix A: Site Photos

<p>Area of recolonising bare ground and buildings inside yard</p>	<p>Area of verge grassland and arable land along the L2031</p>
	
<p>Treeline of birch and elm south of junction</p>	<p>Area of cleared treeline south of junction along the L6064</p>
	

<p>Area of grassy verge and hedgerow along the south of the R445</p>	<p>Grassy verge along R445, east of junction</p>
	

<p>Grassy verge to south of junction</p>	<p>Drainage ditch adjacent side road</p>
	

<p>Improved grassland to south of junction</p>	<p>Grassy median strip</p>
 A photograph showing a well-maintained green grassy field. A wooden fence runs along the right side of the field. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.	 A photograph of a grassy median strip between two road lanes. The grass is green and appears to be a mix of species. Trees are visible in the background under a bright sky.

<p>Grass verge to north of R445</p>	<p>Access road for dwellings and local authority yard</p>
 A photograph of a grassy verge area. The grass is green and somewhat overgrown. In the background, there are trees and a utility pole under a blue sky with clouds.	 A photograph of a paved access road. The road is flanked by a stone wall on the left and a grassy area on the right. The sky is blue with clouds.