



AA Screening Determination

Repair & rehabilitation of Passlands Bridge (KE-R424-B-010), Monasterevin, County Kildare.

Description of the Proposed Development

Pursuant to the requirements of the above, Kildare County Council is proposing to carry out masonry repairs on the damaged section of the upstream parapet and stitching repairs on the adjacent cutwater on Passlands bridge at Monasterevin in Co. Kildare.

A detailed description of the proposed bridge rehabilitation works has been provided in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

Legislative Context & AA Screening Report

Having regard to Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended, the Transport, Mobility & Open Spaces Department of Kildare County Council has commissioned an AA Screening Report.

The AA Screening Report prepared by Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants is based on the best scientific knowledge and has utilised ecological and hydrological expertise. In addition, a detailed online review of published datasets and reports was conducted.

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information, including in particular, the nature of the works and the potential relationship with European sites and their conservation objectives, as well as considering other plans and projects, and applying the precautionary principle, it is the professional opinion of the authors of the AA Screening Report that there is the potential for likely significant effects on the following European site **The River Barrow and River Nore SAC (site code 002162)**, for the reasons set out below:

- Releases of any sediment/fines to the watercourse could negatively impact gravel spawning beds and water quality that are important to Freshwater Pearl Mussels, fish species, and the Otter that feeds on them. No Otter holts or evidence thereof was found during the survey, though they are likely present in the river system.
- The Crayfish plague is a highly infectious disease caused by the water mould *Aphanomyces astaci*, which severely affects the native white-clawed crayfish. The spread of crayfish plague can lead to a significant decline in native white-clawed crayfish populations and create over-competition with non-native crayfish species. The disease can further spread downstream and to other water bodies if equipment that comes into contact with infected water is not properly disinfected.

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- Habitat loss and fragmentation, caused by activities such as the movement of soil and damage to riverbanks, can significantly impact the white-clawed crayfish (QI). These actions could lead to the loss of adequate burrowing areas within the footprint of the maintenance works. Moreover, silt and pollutants runoff into the River Barrow can degrade surface water quality, which can affect the white-clawed crayfish, which rely on clean, well-oxygenated waters. The effects of such runoff are especially concerning for local watercourses or surface water bodies, given the sensitivity of the river barrow to both pollutants and silt overload and its poor water quality (WDF Q-value: 3)

Therefore, it is the conclusion of the authors of the report that the proposed development **would** have a significant effect on European Designated Sites and progression to a Stage II appropriate assessment is **required**.

Determination

On the basis of the information contained in the AA Screening Report and supporting documentation and having regard to:

- The location of the site within **The River Barrow and River Nore SAC (site code 002162)**
- The likelihood that significant impacts could be predicted as a result of the development due to the site's sensitivity to pollution and silt runoff and the possible spreading of infectious diseases (Crayfish plague).

it is concluded that the proposed development, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on the above listed European Sites, in view of the sites' conservation objectives. An appropriate assessment is, therefore, required to determine if adverse effects on site integrity can be excluded in view of the conservation objectives of **The River Barrow and River Nore SAC (site code 002162)**.

It is concluded that significant effects are likely and that a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is required.

Signed:

Daragh Conlan, Acting Senior Engineer, Transport, Mobility & Open Spaces, Kildare County Council.

Date:

18/11/24.