



Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

County Clare Noise Action Plan

Doherty Environmental Consultants Ltd.

August
2024

Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

County Clare Noise Action Plan

Document Stage	Document Version	Prepared by
Final	1	Pat Doherty MSc, MCIEEM

This report has been prepared by Doherty Environmental Consultants Ltd. with all reasonable skill, care and diligence. Information report herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

This report is prepared for Clare County Council and we accept no responsibility to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

Table of Contents

<u>1.0 INTRODUCTION</u>	5
1.1 STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY	5
1.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT	6
1.2.1 REQUIREMENT FOR AN ASSESSMENT UNDER ARTICLE 6 OF THE HABITATS DIRECTIVE	6
1.3 SCREENING METHODOLOGY	7
1.4 SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS	9
<u>2.0 NOISE ACTION PLAN DESCRIPTION</u>	11
2.1 BACKGROUND	11
2.2 NOISE ACTION PLAN COMMITMENTS	12
2.3 NOISE POLICY STATEMENT	13
2.4 IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	13
<u>3.0 IS THE NOISE ACTION PLAN NECESSARY FOR THE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN SITES</u>	19
<u>4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF EUROPEAN SITES WITHIN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PLAN</u>	19
4.1 EXAMINATION OF DIRECT EFFECTS	22
4.2 EXAMINATION OF INDIRECT EFFECTS	22
4.2.1 HYDROLOGICAL PATHWAYS	23
4.2.2 AIR PATHWAY	23
4.2.3 NOISE & VIBRATION	23
4.2.4 LIGHT	23
4.2.5 VISUAL DISTURBANCE	23
4.2.6 MOBILE SPECIES PATHWAY	23
4.2.7 SUMMARY OF PATHWAYS & ZONE OF INFLUENCE	24
<u>5.0 EXAMINATION OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS</u>	24
<u>6.0 CONCLUSION</u>	27
<u>REFERENCES</u>	28
<u>APPENDIX 1: EUROPEAN SITES IN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PLAN</u>	29

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Doherty Environmental Consultants (DEC) Ltd. have been commissioned by Clare County Council to undertake a Screening Report in support of an Appropriate Assessment (AA), under Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive, in respect of the County Clare Noise Action Plan,

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment forms Stage 1 of the Habitats Directive Assessment process and is being undertaken in order to comply with the requirements of the Habitats Directive Article 6(3). The function of this Screening Report is to identify the potential for the Noise Action Plan to result in likely significant effects to European Sites and to provide information so that the competent authority can determine whether a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required for the Noise Action Plan.

1.1 STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Mr. Pat Doherty BSc., MSc, MCIEEM, of DEC Ltd. Mr. Doherty is a consultant ecologist with over 20 years' experience in completing ecological impact assessments and environmental impact assessments. Pat has been involved in the completion of assessment reports for proposed developments and land use activities under the EIA Directive and Article 6 of the Habitats Directive since 2003 and 2006 respectively. He has extensive experience completing such reporting for projects located in a variety of environments and has a thorough understanding of the biodiversity issues that may arise from proposed land use activities. Pat was responsible for completing one of the first Appropriate Assessment reports for large scale infrastructure developments in Ireland when he prepared the Appropriate Assessment for the N25 New Ross Bypass in 2006/07. Since then, Pat has completed multiple examinations of both plans and projects in Ireland. He has completed Natura Impact Statements for national scale plans such as Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan and National Seafood Development Plan and regional and county scale plans including County Development Plans, Local Area Plans, Tourism Strategies and Climate Action Plans. Pat has completed multiple Natura Impact Statements for a range of development types that include large scale

infrastructure developments in sectors such as transport and energy as well as industrial, commercial and residential developments.

Pat has completed focused certified professional development training in Appropriate Assessment as well as in a range of ecological survey techniques and assessment processes. Training has been completed for National Vegetation Classification (NVC) and Irish Vegetation Classification (IVC) surveying, bryophyte survey for habitat assessment and identification, professional bat survey and assessment training, mammal surveying and specific training for bird and bat survey techniques. Ongoing training has been completed by approved training providers such as CIEEM, British Trust for Ornithology, the Botanic Gardens and the Field Studies Council

1.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment is being prepared in order to enable the competent authority to comply with Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive). It is prepared to assess whether or not the project alone or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect on any European Site in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European Sites and specifically on the habitats and species for which the sites have been designated.

1.2.1 Requirement for an Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive

According to Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, as amended, the competent Authority has a duty to:

- Determine whether the proposed Project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of one of more European Sites; and, if not,
- Determine if the Project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the European Site(s)

in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of the site(s).

This Report contains a Screening for Appropriate Assessment and is intended to assess and address the likely significant effects of the Noise Action Plan to inform and allow the competent authority to comply with the Habitats Directive. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive defines the requirements for assessment of projects and plans for which likely significant effects on European Sites may arise. The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 – 2015 (the Habitats Regulations) transpose into Irish law Directive 2009/147/EC (the Birds Directive) and Council Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive) lists habitats and species that are of international importance for conservation and require protection. The Habitats legislation requires competent authorities, to carry out a Screening for Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects that, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site’s conservation objectives. This requirement is transposed into Irish Law by Part 5 of the Habitats Regulations and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

1.3 SCREENING METHODOLOGY

This Screening Report has been prepared in order to comply with the legislative requirements outlined in Section 1.2 above and aims to establish whether or not the Noise Action Plan, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site’s conservation objectives. In this context “likely” means a risk or possibility of effects occurring that **cannot** be ruled out based on objective information and “significant” means an effect that would undermine the conservation objectives of the European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects (Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR), 2021) .

The nature of the likely interactions between the Plan and the Conservation Objectives of European Sites will depend upon the:

- the ecological characteristics of the species or habitat, including their structure, function, conservation status and sensitivity to change; *and/or*
- the character, magnitude, duration, consequences and probability of the impacts arising from land use activities associated with the plan, in combination with other plans and projects.

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken with reference to respective National and European guidance documents: Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG 2010) and *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*; Office of the Planning Regulator – OPR Practice Note PN01: *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*, and recent European and National case law. The following guidance documents were also of relevance during the preparation of this Screening Report:

- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/42/EEC. European Commission (2001).
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European commission (2018).

The EC (2021) guidelines outline the stages involved in undertaking a Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment for plans and projects. The methodology adopted during the preparation of this Screening Report is informed by these guidelines and was undertaken in the following stages:

1. Describe the plan/project and determine whether it is necessary for the conservation management of European Sites;
2. Identify European Sites that could be influenced by the plan/project;

3. Where European Sites are identified as occurring within the zone of influence of the plan/project identify potential effects arising from the project and screen the potential for such effects to negatively affect European Sites identified under Point 2 above; and
4. Identify other plans or projects that, in combination with the plan/project, have the potential to affect European Sites.

1.4 SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS

A range of scientific site investigations have been completed for the lands occurring within and adjacent to the Noise Action Plan Area. These are relied upon in this Screening Report. The primary investigations include ecological desk-based investigations and field surveys.

Desk-based investigations were completed to identify pathways connecting the proposed development to European Sites. Datasets used to assist with the desk-based investigations include:

- NPWS European Sites and site-specific conservation objectives datasets;
- EPA Rivers and Lakes dataset;
- EPA surface water catchment and sub-catchment datasets;
- NPWS Article 17 Habitats and Species datasets;
- OSI Geohive and OSI Historic townlands online mapping portal; and
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) online mapping portal for records of all rare, threatened or protected occurring within and surrounding the Noise Action Plan Area.
- Review of the Clare County Council County Development Plan 2023 – 2029

2.0 NOISE ACTION PLAN DESCRIPTION

2.1 BACKGROUND

The Environmental Noise Directive (“END”) (2002/49/EC) is a European Union legal instrument vital for protecting public health and the environment by addressing the adverse effects of environmental noise. The Directive’s main aim is to put in place a European-wide system for identifying sources of environmental noise pollution, informing the public about relevant noise data and then taking the necessary steps to avoid, prevent or reduce noise exposure.

The END was transposed into Irish Law by the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2006 (S.I. 140/2006)¹ (the “Regulations”). The Regulations were revised by the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018² (S.I. 549/2018) and amended through the European Communities (Environmental Noise) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (S.I. 663/2021). These regulations are commonly referred to as the Environmental Noise Regulations.

The END does not set any limit values or prescribe noise management measures to fulfil its aims. Through the establishment of noise regulations, the preparation of Strategic Noise Maps and implementation of Noise Action Plans (herein termed “NAPs”), the END strives to raise public awareness, prevent and reduce environmental noise, and preserve environmental noise quality in areas where it is good.

¹ <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2006/si/140/made/en/print> [Accessed March 2024]

² <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2018/si/549/made/en/print> [Accessed March 2024]

In Ireland, it is recommended that the NAPs support Policy Objective 65 (NPO 65) from the National Planning Framework 2040³, which states:

“Promote the pro-active management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life and support the aims of the Environmental Noise Regulations through national planning guidance and Noise Action Plans.”

The County Clare NAP, and its subsequent implementation, is critical to ensuring that Clare County Council (herein termed the “Council”) achieves the aims and objectives of the END, compliance with national policy and to address local environmental noise issues.

2.2 NOISE ACTION PLAN COMMITMENTS

It is the goal of the Council to adopt a strategic approach to the management of environmental noise with a view to preventing and reducing environmental noise where practicable, particularly where exposure levels may induce harmful effects on human health. The Council will also aim to preserve desirable noise environments where these are of amenity value to the public.

The NAP 2024-2028 is supported by a four-year programme for implementation (2024-2028), with progress reported to the EPA on an annual basis.

³ National Planning Framework 2040: <http://www.gov.ie/en/project-ireland-2040/>
[Accessed March 2024]

2.3 NOISE POLICY STATEMENT

Clare County Council will adopt a strategic approach to managing environmental noise, within its administrative area, and will aim to:

Mitigation – identify appropriate mitigation measures to reduce noise levels where they are potentially harmful to the health of communities.

Prevention - prevent additional members of the community being exposed to undesirable noise levels where it is likely to have a significant adverse impact on health and quality of life, and where practicable, improve or maintain the quality of sound in the public realm.

Protection - protect areas which are desirably quiet, or which offer a sense of tranquillity through a process of identification and validation followed by formal designation of “Quiet Areas”.

2.4 IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The implementation of the NAP spans a four-year time frame, beginning in 2024. Clare County Council (CCC) commits to a series of Implementation Actions during current and future noise action planning. The environmental noise management measures within the framework are presented across the three policy principle categories covered by the Noise Policy Statement, together with a fourth supporting ‘General’ category as follows:

- General – Noise Management Measures;
- Mitigation – Noise Management Measures
- Prevention – Noise Management Measures;
- Protection – Noise Management Measures.

The General noise management measures cover a range of activities to support the implementation of the NAP including other measures across the three policy principle categories. Mitigation measures relate to activities to support the investigation of noise abatement measures in the Priority Important Areas and engagement with the relevant stakeholders with influence to implement them. Prevention measures relate to activities to support planning where there may be proposals to bring people to noise from major road sources or there is a material consideration of environmental noise required in the development of plans, strategies, policies and objectives. They also relate to maintaining or improving the acoustic environment for new public realm where feasible. Protection measures relate to the protecting the acoustic environment where environmental noise does not dominate.

In some instances measures do not necessarily stand in isolation and may be relevant, or overlap, with other categories. When considering the broader framework of measures and actions aimed at mitigating exposure to environmental noise from the roads, it is important to emphasise that Clare County Council, in some instances, does not have exclusive ownership or influence over certain noise sources, areas, and the measures presented in this NAP.

In addition to third-party collaboration, the successful implementation of this NAP will also depend on the availability of adequate resources to execute the proposed measures and actions.

The measures across each of the four categories are summarised in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Noise Management Framework – Summary of measures.

Measures		Summary Actions	Time Scale
Noise Action Plan 2024-2028 Preparation			
	Noise Action Plan Finalised		18 th July 2024
General - Noise Management Measures			
CCC1.1	Noise Action Plan Working Group(s) – Action Planning Authorities and Noise Mapping Bodies	Support the establishment, terms of reference and membership for a Noise Action Plan Implementation Working Group. Hold meetings twice yearly or more frequently as matters require.	Short-term
CCC1.2	Support the development of national and other related policy and guidance	Support the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications and other government departments and bodies in the development of national noise and other related policies and guidance, and assist in their implementation once in place.	Short-term
CCC1.3	Report to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Prepare an annual progress report regarding the implementation of the NAP and submit it to the EPA.	Annual

CCC1.4	Continued investigation and management of complaints	Review and investigate all noise complaints received in line with Clare County Council Customer Charter and in accordance with national and international best practice.	Ongoing
CCC1.5	Stakeholder collaboration	Liaise and collaborate with a range of key stakeholders to address noise-related issues to ensure the effective management of noise from related infrastructure.	Ongoing
CCC1.6	Community engagement	Publish the final NAP and provide updates on the progress made with its implementation.	Ongoing
Mitigation - Noise Management Measures			
CCC2.1	Existing plans, projects and strategies	Collaborate with relevant internal CCC sections and third party organisations to support the implementation of the following: Active Travel Programmes; LSMATS; Climate Action Plans.	Short- to Long-term
CCC2.2	Noise sensitive buildings	For relevant plans, projects and strategies liaise with appropriate internal Council Sections and/or third party organisations to ensure consideration given to good acoustic design principles to mitigate noise at noise sensitive buildings	Medium- to Long-term

CCC2.3	Review assumptions used for Priority Important Areas (PIAs)	Undertake a review of the Strategic Noise Maps for the PIAs and the assumptions used in the calculation models.	Short-term
CCC2.4	Appraise noise mitigation measures for PIAs	Where the PIA relates to infrastructure that is exclusively the responsibility of and managed by CCC, then the evaluation will be completed by CCC. Where the PIAs relate to infrastructure for which a third-party organisation has overall responsibility, then the evaluation will require liaising and collaborating with the relevant infrastructure owner. Appraisals should review the potential reduction in harmful effects (as required under the Environmental Noise Regulations, 2018)	Short- to Long-term
CCC2.5	Implementation of recommended noise mitigation measures	Liaise with relevant internal CCC Sections, third-party organisations, and government departments to explore all funding opportunities for noise mitigation measures. Implement the measures for which CCC has responsibility and where infrastructure is the responsibility of a third-party organisation, liaise and collaborate with that organisation to identify opportunities to implement an appropriate measure/s.	Short- to Long-term
Prevention – Noise Management Measures			
CCC3.1	Planning referrals	Report on planning applications and enforcement of planning conditions in relation	Ongoing

		to noise emissions in the context of Strategic Noise Maps and the NAP.	
CCC3.2	Support the development of local authority policies and objectives	In preparation of plans, strategies, local policies and objectives give due consideration to the NAP to support them.	Ongoing
CCC3.3	Support the development of new public realm and green and blue infrastructure	Support the implementation of new public realm and green and blue infrastructure where feasible to provide appropriate acoustic environments for citizens health and well-being.	Short- to Long-term
Protection - Noise Management Measures			
CCC4.1	Evaluation of Potential Candidate Quiet Areas (PCQAs)	For each PCQA carry out an investigation of the area and make a recommendation on whether to designate each area as a Quiet Area or not.	Ongoing
CCC4.2	Proposal for Quiet Areas(s) designation	For all CQAs recommended for designation, prepare proposal for EPA consultation and Ministerial Approval.	Annual

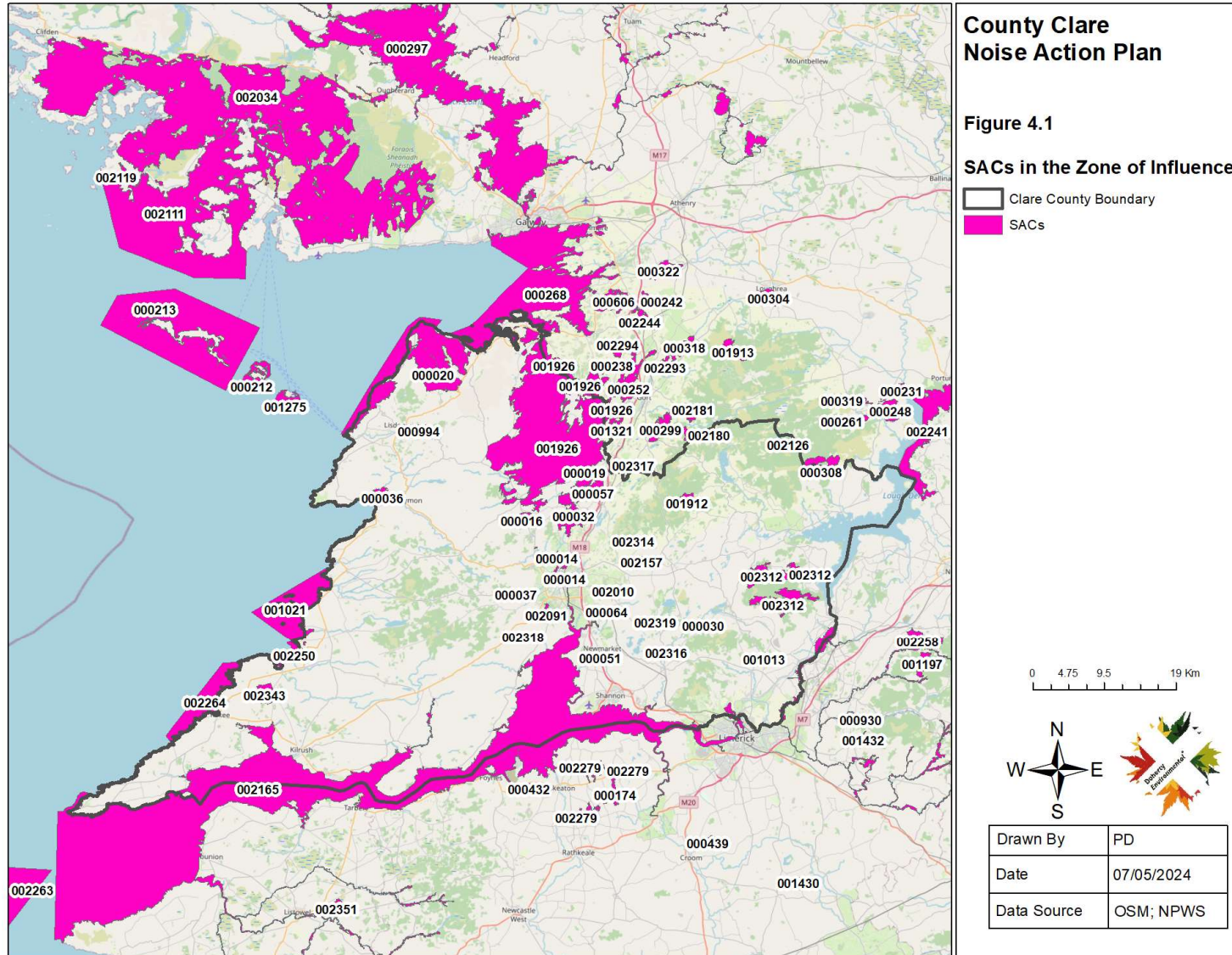
3.0 IS THE NOISE ACTION PLAN NECESSARY FOR THE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN SITES

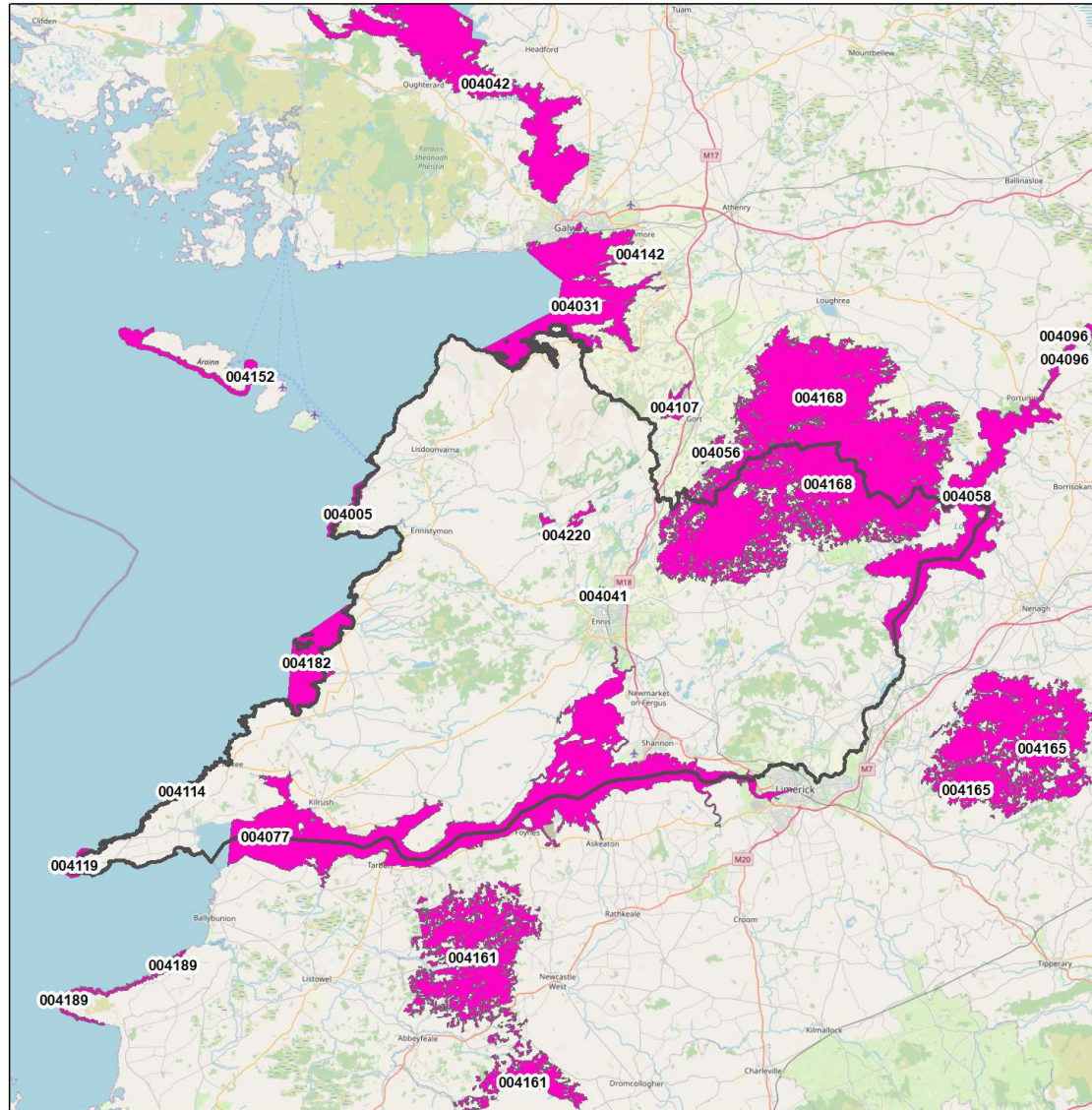
The Noise Action Plan has been described in Section 2 of the Screening Report and it is clear from the description provided that the Noise Action Plan is not directly connected with or necessary for the future conservation management of any European Sites.

4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF EUROPEAN SITES WITHIN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PLAN

Current guidance (OPR, 2021) informing the approach to screening for Appropriate Assessment defines the zone of influence of a plan or project as the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. For the purposes of this screening exercise a Source-Pathway-Receptor Model has been used to identify the European Sites occurring within the zone of influence of the Noise Action Plan. This approach follows the approach adopted for the recently published Clare County Development Plan and is considered to provide a robust approach that ensures all European Sites that could be conceivably influenced by the Noise Action Plan are included for in this screening exercise.

The European Sites occurring within the zone of influence of the Noise Action Plan are identified on Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 below. A total of 78 SACs and 20 SPAs occur within the zone of influence of the Noise Action Plan. A complete list of the 98 European Sites occurring within the zone of influence of the project is provided as Appendix 1 to this report.



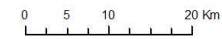


County Clare Noise Action Plan

Figure 4.2

SPAs in the Zone of Influence

- Clare County Boundary
- SPAs



Drawn By	PD
Date	07/05/2024
Data Source	OSM; NPWS

4.1 EXAMINATION OF DIRECT EFFECTS

The EC Guidelines (2021) for screening for Appropriate Assessment list a number of impact types to be considered during the screening of a plan or projects. The impacts that are considered to be representative of direct impacts comprise loss of habitat; degradation; disturbance; and fragmentation.

The Noise Action Plan does not specify any land use activities that could result in such direct impacts. The Noise Action Plan provides a framework of measures that will reduce noise emissions within County Clare. These measures as set out under Section 2.4 above will not have the potential to result in direct impacts to European Sites, such as those outlined above.

4.2 EXAMINATION OF INDIRECT EFFECTS

The potential for indirect impacts to arise as a result of the Noise Action Plan is examined using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model. The pathway that can conceivably function as vectors of impacts between land use activities generated by a plan are listed in the following bullet point list. Each of these pathways is examined in the context of the aims and objectives of the Noise Action Plan with regard to the potential for the Plan to result in activities that could generate emissions to European Sites via these pathways.

- Emissions to surface water
- Emissions to groundwater
- Noise and vibration emissions
- Emissions to air
- Light emissions;
- Visual emissions;
- Mobile species pathway; and

- Human Disturbance Pathway

Whether each of these potential pathways occur in the context of the Noise Action Plan and connect the Plan to any European Sites in the wider surrounding area is examined in the following subsections.

4.2.1 Hydrological Pathways

The Noise Action will not trigger land use effects that could result in emissions to waters with associated perturbations to European Sites and the qualifying interests.

4.2.2 Air Pathway

The Noise Action will not trigger land use effects that could result in emissions to waters with associated perturbations to European Sites and the qualifying interests.

4.2.3 Noise & Vibration

The Noise Action Plan aims to reduce noise emissions within the County and therefore will not have the potential to generate noise emissions.

4.2.4 Light

The Noise Action Plan will not generate any changes to baseline night time lighting in the County and will not result in light emissions.

4.2.5 Visual Disturbance

The Noise Action Plan will not generate any changes to the landscape that could result in visual disturbance to qualifying species of European Sites.

4.2.6 Mobile Species Pathway

The Noise Action Plan does not specify any measures that could result in the loss of habitat within the range of mobile/vagile species for which European Sites are designated. As such the Plan will not have the potential to result in changes to the

availability of suitable habitat for such species outside the boundary of their associated European Sites.

4.2.7 Summary of Pathways & Zone of influence

Following the above consideration of pathways that could conceivably connect the Noise Action Plan Area to European Sites in the wider surrounding area it has been found that given the Plan itself will contribute towards noise reduction in the County and the proper management of land use activities with respect to controlling and minimising noise emissions, it will not result in activities that could generate emissions, which turn could be conveyed along the above pathways to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.

5.0 EXAMINATION OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

Table 5.1 provides a Screening Analysis in line with EC Guidelines (2021) used to examine the potential of the Noise Action Plan to result in likely significant effects to European Sites .

Table 5.1: Examination of Likely Significant Effects

Assessment Criteria
<i>Summary Description of the Plan</i>
A description of the Plan is provided in Section 2 above.
<i>Description of European Sites</i>
A total of 98 European Sites have been identified as occurring within the zone of influence of the Plan. these are listed in Appendix 1 to this report

<p>Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the Plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) to the qualifying interests of European Sites occurring within the zone of influence of the Plan:</p>	
Size and Scale	The Noise Action Plan relates to the provision of measures to reduce noise across County Clare. The Plan is representative of county-scale plan.
Land-take	The Plan does not involve any land-take from European Sites.
Distance from European sites or key features of the site	European Sites occur within and adjacent to County Clare. The European Sites occurring within the zone of influence of the Plan are shown on Figures 4.1 and 4.2 above.
Resource requirements	No resources associated with the above listed European Sites will be required for, or utilised by the project.
Emissions	As set out under Section 4.2 above the Plan will not generate any emissions that could be conveyed via pathways to European Sites.
Excavation requirements	No excavations will be completed as part of the Plan
<p>Describe any likely changes to qualifying features arising as a result of:</p>	
Reduction of habitat area	The Noise Action Plan Area will not result in a reduction in the area of any qualifying habitats of European Sites or the habitats upon which qualifying species of European Sites rely.

Disturbance of key species	<p>Given that the Plan will contribute towards a reduction in noise emissions and the control and management of noise resulting from land use activities it will not result in activities that could result in disturbance to Annex 2 species of SACs or special conservation interest bird species of SPAs. The implementation of the Plan will contribute to a reduction in noise emissions across the County which in turn could contribute toward specific objectives for European Sites occurring within the zone of influence of the Plan.</p>
Habitat or species fragmentation	<p>The proposed Noise Action Plan Area will not have the potential to result in the fragmentation of qualifying habitats or the habitats upon which qualifying habitats species rely.</p>
Reduction in species density	<p>Given that the Plan will contribute towards a reduction in noise emissions and the control and management of noise resulting from land use activities it will not have the potential to result in a reduction in the density of Annex 2 species of SAC, special conservation interest bird species of SPAs or the species upon which such qualifying interests rely.</p>
Changes in key indicators of conservation status	<p>The indicators of conservation status for the key habitats and species occurring within the zone of influence of the Noise Action Plan Area include the percentage change in long-term populations of species; changes in the natural range of habitats and species; and the extent of habitat available to maintain the species population.</p> <p>Given that the Plan will contribute towards a reduction in noise emissions and the control and management of noise resulting from land use activities, it will not have the potential to result in changes to key indicators of conservation status for European Sites.</p>
<p>Describe any likely impacts on European Sites as a whole in terms of:</p>	

<p>Interference with key relationships that define the structure and function of the site</p>	<p>The structure and function of the European Sites occurring within the zone of influence of the Noise Action Plan are defined by both biotic and abiotic processes.</p> <p>Given that the Plan will not result in land use activities, it will not have the potential to result in changes to key indicators of conservation status for European Sites.</p>
<p>In-Combination Effects</p>	<p>Given that the Plan will contribute towards a reduction in noise emissions and the control and management of noise resulting from land use activities it will not have the potential to combine with other plans or project in the surrounding area to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>

6.0 CONCLUSION

During the examination of the Plan it was found that 98 European Sites occur within the zone of influence of the Plan. These European Sites relate to those located within and adjacent to County Clare. The Noise Action Plan has been examined to identify its potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. The measures set out in the Plan relate to the reduction of noise in the County and the provision of measures that will manage and control noise generated by land use/human activities. the implementation of these measures will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.

In light of the findings of this report it is the considered view of the authors of this Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment that it can be concluded by Clare County Council that the County Clare Noise Action Plan will not, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, result in likely significant effects to any European Sites in view of their Conservation Objectives and on the basis of best scientific evidence and there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to that conclusion.

REFERENCES

Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) (2010). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects. Guidance for Local Authorities.

English Nature (1999). *Habitats regulations guidance note no. 3 (HRGN No. 3). Determination of Likely Significant Effect under The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994.*

European Commission (2000). *Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.* Luxembourg.

European Communities (2021). *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites. Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.* Luxembourg.

European Commission (1992). EU Habitats Directive.

APPENDIX 1: EUROPEAN SITES IN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PLAN

Site Code	European Sites	Site Code	European Sites
2244	Ardrahan Grassland SAC	2241	Lough Derg, North-east Shore SAC
2279	Askeaton Fen Complex SAC	606	Lough Fingall Complex SAC
2295	Ballinduff Turlough SAC	51	Lough Gash Turlough SAC
14	Ballyallia Lake SAC	2119	Lough Nageeron SAC
16	Ballycullinan Lake SAC	304	Lough Rea SAC
2246	Ballycullinan, Old Domestic Building SAC	308	Loughatorick South Bog SAC
19	Ballyogan Lough SAC	2165	Lower River Shannon SAC
994	Ballyteige (Clare) SAC	2351	Moanveanlagh Bog SAC
432	Barrigone SAC	57	Moyree River System SAC
231	Barrougher Bog SAC	2157	Newgrove House SAC
20	Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC	2091	Newhall and Edenvale Complex SAC
238	Caherglassaun Turlough SAC	2010	Old Domestic Building (Keevagh) SAC
2294	Cahermore Turlough SAC	2314	Old Domestic Buildings, Rylane SAC
2293	Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC	318	Peterswell Turlough SAC
2250	Carrowmore Dunes SAC	2126	Pollagoona Bog SAC
1021	Carrowmore Point to Spanish Point and Islands SAC	319	Pollnacknockaun Wood Nature Reserve SAC
242	Castletaylor Complex SAC	37	Pouladatig Cave SAC
930	Clare Glen SAC	64	Poulnagordon Cave (Quin) SAC
248	Cloonmoylan Bog SAC	322	Rahasane Turlough SAC
2034	Connemara Bog Complex SAC	2316	Ratty River Cave SAC
252	Coole-Garryland Complex SAC	216	River Shannon Callows SAC
2317	Cregg House Stables, Crusheen SAC	1313	Rosturra Wood SAC
174	Curraghchase Woods SAC	939	Silvermine Mountains SAC
30	Danes Hole, Poulnalecka SAC	2258	Silvermines Mountains West SAC
261	Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC	2312	Slieve Bernagh Bog SAC
32	Dromore Woods and Loughs SAC	1913	Sonnagh Bog SAC
2181	Drummin Wood SAC	1321	Termon Lough SAC

Site Code	European Sites	Site Code	European Sites
1926	East Burren Complex SAC	2247	Toonagh Estate SAC
268	Galway Bay Complex SAC	439	Tory Hill SAC
1430	Glen Bog SAC	2343	Tullaher Lough and Bog SAC
1912	Glendree Bog SAC	4005	Cliffs of Moher SPA
1013	Glenomra Wood SAC	4041	Ballyallia Lough SPA
1432	Glenstal Wood SAC	4042	Lough Corrib SPA
2180	Gortacarnaun Wood SAC	4056	Lough Cutra SPA
36	Inagh River Estuary SAC	4096	Middle Shannon Callows SPA
1275	Inisheer Island SAC	4107	Coole-Garryland SPA
212	Inishmaan Island SAC	4114	Illaunonearaun SPA
213	Inishmore Island SAC	4119	Loop Head SPA
1197	Keeper Hill SAC	4161	Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA
2263	Kerry Head Shoal SAC	4165	Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains SPA
2264	Kilkee Reefs SAC	4168	Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA
2111	Kilkieran Bay And Islands SAC	4182	Mid-Clare Coast SPA
2319	Kilkishen House SAC	4189	Kerry Head SPA
286	Kiltartan Cave (Coole) SAC	4220	Corofin Wetlands SPA
1285	Kiltiernan Turlough SAC	4152	Inishmore SPA
2318	Knockanira House SAC	4142	Cregganna Marsh SPA
297	Lough Corrib SAC	4031	Inner Galway Bay SPA
2117	Lough Coy SAC	4077	River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA
299	Lough Cutra SAC	4058	Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA