

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Proposed Public Infrastructure Development

At

Ennis, Clarecastle, and Barefield Co. Clare

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Common Acronyms

AA	Appropriate Assessment
ACP	An Coimisiún Pleanála
AASR	Appropriate Assessment Screening Report
BCI	Bat Conservation Ireland
BOCCI	Birds of Conservation Concern Ireland
ВТО	British Trust for Ornithology
CEMP	Construction and Environmental Management Plan
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
CO	Conservation Objective
DEHLG	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
ECIA	Ecological Impact Assessment
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FPO	Flora Protection Order
FWPM	Fresh Water Pearl Mussel
GIS	Geographic Information System
GSI	Geological Survey Ireland
IFI	Inland Fisheries Ireland
ISMP	Invasive Species Management Plan
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LSE	Likely Significant Effect
NBDC	National Biodiversity Data Centre
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NRA	National Roads Authority
OSI	Ordnance Survey Ireland
OPR	Office of the Planning Regulator
PEA	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
РВНА	Preliminary Bat Habitat Assessment
PBRA	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment
PNHA	Proposed Natural Heritage Area
PRF	Potential Roost Feature (for bats)
QI	Qualifying Interest (of a European site)
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SCI	Special Conservation Interest
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPR	Source-Pathway-Receptor
SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Solutions
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
WFD	Water Framework Directive
ZOI	Zone of Influence



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1 Introduction

Teire Consulting was commissioned by Clare County Council to undertake a Stage 1 AA Screening Report for a proposed development at Ennis, Clarecastle, and Barefield Co. Clare (hereafter referred to as the "proposed development" or "site"). A red-line boundary map is provided in Figure 1.

The proposed development will comprise works to 71 no. bus stops within Ennis town. The works to each bus stop vary - some are new installations while others require only minor upgrades such as the erection of signage. Works will occur along existing urban road corridors primarily throughout Ennis town, with two stops each in Barefield and Clarecastle.



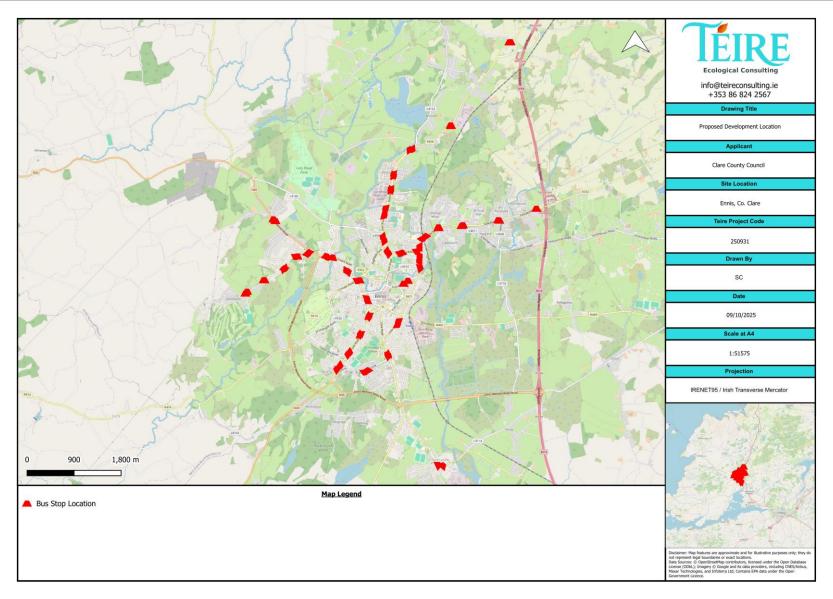


FIGURE 1. SITE LOCATION.



1.1 Statement of Authority

All surveying and reporting have been completed by Shane Connolly of Teire Consulting. Teire is an ecological consultancy with professional expertise in ecological surveying, assessment, and reporting. The practice specialises in AA, PEA, EcIA, and associated documentation prepared in accordance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended), the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), and guidance published by the NPWS, the OPR, and CIEEM.

Shane Connolly, principal ecologist and author of this report, holds a B.Sc. (Hons) in Botany and Zoology from the University of Galway and is an Associate member of CIEEM. He has over 3 years' experience in professional consultancy and holds several licences issued by the NPWS, including a bat roost disturbance licence (Licence No. DER-BAT-2025-266), a licence to photograph and film bats (Licence No. 092/2025), and has undergone training with Bat Conservation Ireland in the handling of bats, which authorises him to conduct this specialist task under licence and at the discretion of the NPWS. Shane has a wealth of experience in surveying, reporting, and consulting on all aspects of terrestrial ecology, including bats, birds, mammals, plants, habitats, reptiles, amphibians, invasive species etc. He has led ecological inputs for a wide range of projects including residential developments, renewable infrastructure, public realm schemes, and commercial infrastructure.

1.2 Legislative Context

The purpose of AA is to ensure that no plan or project is permitted where it would adversely affect the ecological integrity of a European Site, having regard to that site's COs. The assessment must follow the precautionary principle. Where uncertainty exists regarding the likelihood of significant effects, further assessment is required. AA considers not only direct effects but also indirect, cumulative, and incombination effects. Where it is not possible to rule out LSEs at the screening stage, a Stage 2 AA is triggered, and a NIS is required.

European Sites, collectively referred to as Natura 2000 sites, include SACs designated under Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive) and SPAs designated under Directive 2009/147/EC (the Birds Directive). These sites are protected for habitats and species listed in Annexes of the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive, which are of community interest and require strict legal protection.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive stipulates that any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site must be subject to AA (AA) where it is likely to have a significant effect on that site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. This obligation is transposed into Irish law via Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011), as amended.

Section 177U(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires the competent authority to carry out screening for AA to determine, based on best scientific knowledge, whether a proposed development is likely to result in significant effects on any European Site. Where necessary, the competent authority may request further information to complete the screening process.

The relevant EU instruments include:

- Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive)
- Directive 2009/147/EC (Birds Directive)



- Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (EIA Directive)
- Regulation (EU) No. 1143/2014 on Invasive Alien Species, transposed into Irish law under S.I. No. 374/2024
- Directive 2000/60/EC (Water Framework Directive)
- OPR Practice Note PN01 (OPR, 2021)

These are transposed into Irish law through:

- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011), as amended
- Planning and Development Act 2000 and Planning and Development Act 2024 (where applicable)
- Wildlife Act 1976, as amended
- Flora (Protection) Order 2022
- European Communities Environmental Objectives (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No. 296/2009)
- National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030

1.2.1 Stages of AA

The AA process is divided into four distinct stages in line with EU and Irish guidance:

Stage 1 - Screening

Establishes whether the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site. This stage includes:

- A description of the proposed development and its receiving environment
- Identification of relevant European Sites using the Source-Pathway-Receptor (SPR) framework (see Section 2.1)
- Reference to the COs of relevant European Sites
- Assessment of potential effects, including in-combination effects
- A screening conclusion on whether Stage 2 AA is required

Stage 2 - AA (NIS)

Where LSEs cannot be excluded, this stage requires:

- Detailed description of the affected European Sites
- Evaluation of potential adverse effects on COs
- Identification of mitigation measures
- A conclusion, supported by scientific evidence, as to whether the project will adversely affect site integrity, in view of its COs

Stage 3 - Assessment of Alternative Solutions

If adverse effects cannot be ruled out, all reasonable alternatives must be assessed and documented.

Stage 4 – Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)

Only where no alternatives exist and the project is justified by IROPI may it proceed, subject to compensatory measures being secured.



Note: At Stage 1, mitigation measures cannot be considered when determining whether significant effects are likely, in accordance with established case law (e.g. C-323/17, People Over Wind).

1.3 Description of the Proposed Development

The proposed development will comprise works to 71 no. bus stops within Ennis town (Figure 1). The works to each bus stop vary as some are new installations while others require only minor upgrades such as the erection of signage. The works to a typical bus stop generally comprise:

- the removal and/or installation of kerbs
- installation of gullies
- installation of paving and/or a hardstanding area if not already present
- erection of bollards
- painting of road markings
- installation of a bus stop pole.

No bus shelters are being installed at the current time. Works will occur along existing urban road corridors. An example of a typical bus stop layout is provided in Figure 2. The works to each stop are generally confined to within 200m of the stop.

1.3.1 Surface Water Drainage

Surface water drainage will be managed through the existing urban drainage network. Each stop will incorporate minor localised drainage measures, including the installation of new gullies where required to ensure that surface runoff from the new hardstanding areas is collected efficiently. Discharge will occur to the existing road surface water system, which ultimately drains to the local receiving network in Ennis.



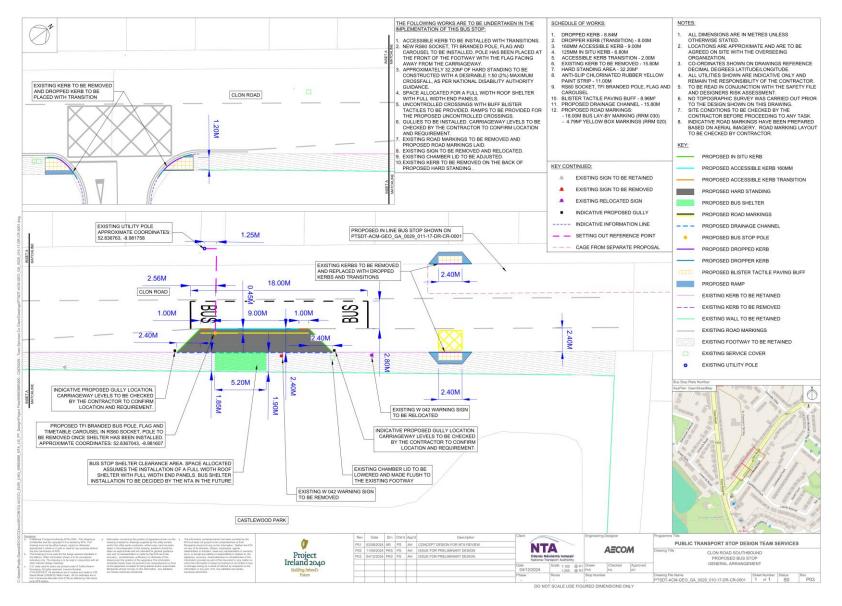


FIGURE 2. EXAMPLE OF A TYPICAL BUS STOP LAYOUT (AECOM, 2025).



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Source-Pathway-Receptor (SPR) Framework and Assessment of LSEs

To support this assessment, the SPR framework is applied in preference to arbitrary 15 km search zones, in line with guidance from the OPR (2021) and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The SPR method assesses whether a credible ecological linkage exists between the proposed development and any European Site. The methodology assesses if a likely ("read possible" (OPR, 2021)) significant effect" can occur, based on the three elements of the framework being present and viable.

For a LSE to arise, all three components of the SPR framework must be present. If any one of the source, pathway, or receptors is absent, then no effect can occur (OPR, 2021).

- **Source (S)**: Any element of the project with potential to be transmitted to a receptor and cause an impact, which may lead to an LSE. Examples include dust, noise, silt, and pollution
- Pathway (P): The means by which a source could reach a receptor, such as hydrological connections
 (e.g. oil spills), airborne transmission (e.g. dust, noise), or groundwater flows. Pathways may also be
 functional, such as the site being used as a foraging ground by a QI.
- Receptor (R): The ecological feature at risk, namely a European Site and/or its designated QIs or SCIs

Furthermore, for a source to be viable as part of the SPR framework, it must be reasonably present in a quantity that may give rise to an LSE and as such, the viability of any sources is assessed in this report. For example, all projects are likely to generate dust in some extent, but not all projects are likely to generate enough dust that could impact a European site. The generation of a source does not exclusively mean it is viable or likely to cause significant effects.

The same reasoning can be used for pathways - a pathway might be present but may not be viable. An example of this might be a slow-moving river vs a fast-moving river that are upstream of a European site. The slow-moving watercourse may be less likely to transmit a source vs a fast watercourse, due to factors such as deposition that might be more active in a slow-moving watercourse.

These scenarios are considered under source and pathway viability when determining LSEs under the SPR framework in this report.

2.2 Zone of Influence (ZoI)

The ZoI of a proposed development is the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the QIs of a European site. Therefore, where an SPR link is present, a ZoI is established.

If it cannot be concluded based on best scientific evidence that significant effects are unlikely, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, a Stage 2 AA is required, and a NIS should be prepared.



2.3 Desk Study

A desk study scoping exercise was undertaken in October 2025 to assemble spatial and documentary data to inform this Report. Any GIS analysis was completed in QGIS v3.40. The following sources were consulted:

- Species records from the NBDC website (https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Map) (NBDC, 2025)
- NPWS online datasets (https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data) for SAC and SPA boundaries, QIs, SCIs and COs (NPWS, 2025)
- Standard Data Forms for European Sites from the EEA Natura 2000 viewer (EEA, 2025)
- EPA GIS layers (https://gis.epa.ie/GetData/Download) for rivers, lakes, WFD catchments, groundwater bodies and water-quality status (EPA, 2025)
- EPA web services for baseline environment data (e.g. geology, hydrology, aquifer etc.) (https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/) (EPA, 2025)
- OSI orthophotography and mapping, supplemented by Google and Bing imagery (OSI, 2025)
- Planning applications within the ZOI from the Clare County Council online planning portal (eplanning.ie) and the National Planning Database (DHLGH, 2025)

These datasets informed mapping of European sites, assessment of hydrological and hydrogeological connectivity, and identification of in-combination developments.

2.4 Limitations

The following limitation(s) were encountered:

 No field survey was conducted as part of this screening exercise. The footprint of the proposed development is small and from the desktop scoping exercise, it was determined the works area is unlikely to support any significant habitat for QI/SCIs of any European site. Where any doubt remains, the precautionary principle is applied.

Accordingly, no limitations were encountered that would be considered significant, nor would undermine the validity of the data presented.

3 SITE CHARACTERISTICS AND RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Site Location

The proposed development is located in Ennis, Clarecastle, and Barefield Co. Clare. The works involve the installation or upgrading of 71 no. bus stops primarily throughout Ennis town, with 2 no. stops each in Clarecastle and Barefield.

Each individual bus stop is located along a main road. The majority of these bus stops are located on current hardstanding areas within the urban centre of Ennis and its surrounds.

3.2 European Sites

Figure 3 depicts European sites in proximity and which are most likely to contain a pathway to the proposed development.



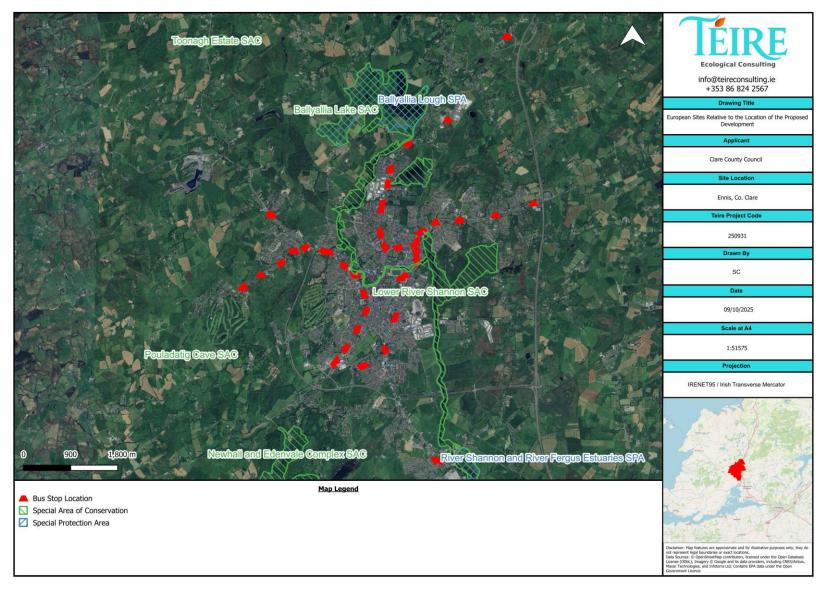


FIGURE 3. EUROPEAN SITES RELATIVE TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.



3.3 Physical Environment

An outline of the key physical environment features relevant to the site are displayed in Table 1 and Table 2. Further detail on the key features are described in the below subsections. Maps of the hydrological, hydrogeological, and geological features relevant to the proposed development are displayed in Figure 4 – Figure 6.

TABLE 1. HYDROLOGICAL FEATURES IN PROXIMITY TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

EPA Name	EPA ID Code	Stream Order	WFD Status 2019- 2024	WFD Risk
BUNNOW 27	27B54	2	Poor	At Risk
CLOGHLEAGH 27	27C73	1	Poor	At Risk
Fergus	27F01	5	Poor	At Risk
FORTFERGUS	27F10	1	Poor	At Risk
Inch [Clare]	27101	4	Poor	At Risk
LOUGHVELLA	27L24	1	Poor	At Risk

TABLE 2. BASELINE ENVIRONMENT DETAILS - SUMMARY TABLE.

Environmental Feature At Site	Feature Name	Relevant Criteria (EPA, 2025; GSI, 2025)
WFD catchment	Shannon Estuary North (EU Code: 27)	-
WFD sub-catchments	Fergus_SC_030 (EU Code: 27_3) Fergus_SC_040 (EU Code: 27_1) Fergus_SC_050 (EU Code: 27_10)	-
Groundwater body	Ennis (EU Code: IE_SH_G_080)	Flows generally to the south
Ennis WFD 2019-2024 status	-	Good
Ennis Groundwater body risk	-	At risk
Groundwater vulnerability	-	Moderate – extreme
Aquifer	Rkc	Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (conduit)
Bedrock 100k Units	Dinantian Pure Bedded Limestones	-



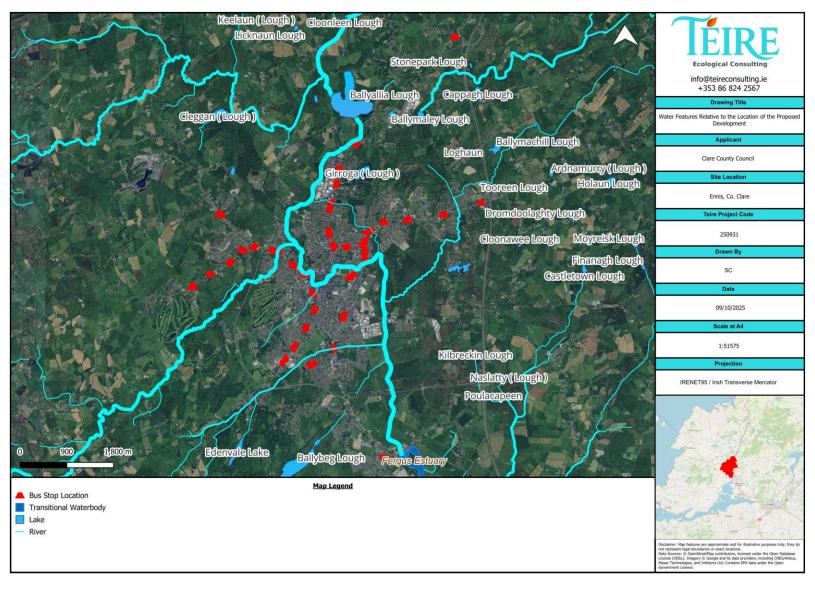


Figure 4. Water features in proximity to the proposed development (Data source: EPA, 2025).



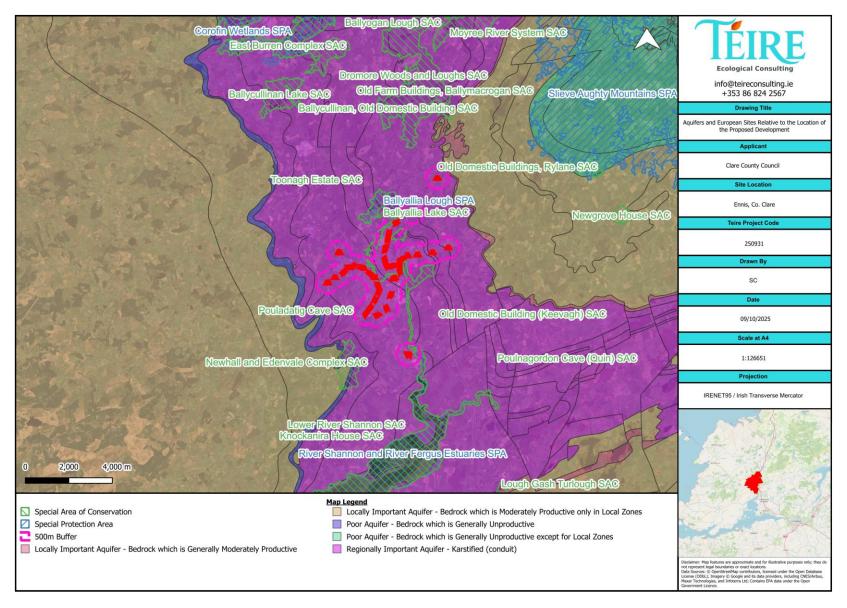


Figure 5. Aquifer units relevant to the site (Data source: GSI, 2025).



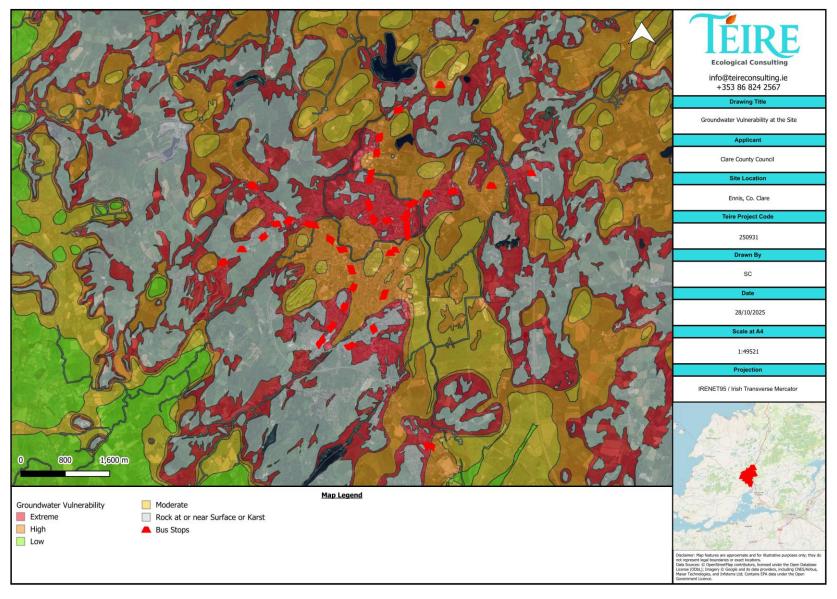


FIGURE 6. GROUNDWATER VULNERABILITY AT THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT (DATA SOURCE: GSI, 2025).



4 STAGE 1: SCREENING FOR AA

In accordance with established case law (CJEU, C-323/17, People Over Wind and Sweetman), no mitigation measures can be considered at the screening stage when determining the likelihood of significant effects on European sites. This includes the exclusion of any purpose-designed mitigation, such as buffer zones, sediment controls, or post-construction management, unless they form part of the normal function of the project. Accordingly, this assessment is based solely on the characteristics of the project absent any mitigation and is precautionary in line with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

4.1 Management of European Sites

The proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European sites.

4.2 European Sites Within the Zol

To determine what European sites (if any) may be affected by the proposed development, it is necessary to determine the ZoI using the SPR methodology as per OPR (2021).

This begins with assessing sources (S) that may arise or be generated from the proposed development, then assessing whether there is a pathway (P) to transmit the identified sources to a receptor (R) site (European site).

A ZoI occurs when a source, pathway, and receptor are all present. Where a viable SPR link occurs, the receptor's (European site's) COs will be evaluated against the proposed development, to determine the potential for LSEs.

4.2.1 SPR Step 1: Source Identification

Sources are factors from the proposed development that could potentially give rise to LSEs e.g. the release of pollutants. Where a source is present, its viability (likelihood to be produced in quantities significant enough such that a likely significant effect (LSE) may arise) is also assessed. Only when a source is considered likely and viable is it carried through as a link in the SPR framework.

Based on the development description and nature of the works, the sources in Table 3 were identified as being likely to arise arise/occur from the proposed development.

The works will be conducted in a phased approach. This will reduce the impact of any sources being created en masse and reduce the potential impact.

TABLE 3. IDENTIFIED SOURCES OF EFFECTS. POTENTIALLY VIABLE SOURCES IN BLUE.

Potential Source	Phase Present	Viability Rationale	Potential for LSEs
Silt and sediment	Construction	The works are confined to mostly hardstanding areas with little excavation required. Silt or sediment are not likely to be released in any quantity that could undermine the COs of any European site.	No
Pollutants (chemical)	Construction	No chemicals or pollutants are to be used in any quantity that could undermine the COs of any European site.	No
Noise	Construction A temporary increase in noise levels may occur during the proposed works but not significantly higher than the		No



Potential Source Phase Present Viability Rationale		Viability Rationale	Potential for LSEs
	background noise already associated with Ennis town. Levels are not expected to be at a scale whereby they could		
		undermine the CO of any European site. Noise levels during the operational phase are not expected to	
Noise	Operation	be above the normal thresholds for the site in its present state and are unlikely to have an impact on any QI/SCI species should a viable pathway exist.	No
Artificial light	Construction	Works will be conducted during daylight hours. No artificial light is required during the construction phase, nor for security lighting at night.	No
Artificial light	Operation	No additional lighting will be produced during the operational phase that could have any impact on QI/SCI species should a viable pathway exist.	No
Air pollution	Construction & Constr		No
Dust	Construction	Minor dust generation may occur during works but not in quantities significant enough to pose a risk to COs should a viable pathway exist.	No
Spread of invasive plant species	Construction	No invasive plant species are likely to be present on site considering the hardstanding locations of the proposed stops. Works are unlikely to cause a spread that could undermine the CO of any European site should a viable pathway exist.	No
Physical disturbance to QI/SCI's	Physical disturbance to Construction The proposed works will not entail a significant increase in personnel or machinery beyond the normal occurrences at Ennis town and its surrounds. No significant increase in		No
Collision risk	Operation	The proposed development does not involve the installation of any structures of significant height that could pose a risk to SCI species should a viable pathway exist.	No
movement Construction & with any ecological corridors on site the		The proposed development does not require interference with any ecological corridors on site that could significantly affect QI/SCI species on site should a viable pathway exist.	No
Habitat fragmentation	Construction & Operation		
Loss of ex situ habitat	Construction & Operation		
Recreational pressures on European sites	Operation	The proposed development is unlikely to cause a significant increase in the population at the site such that recreational pressures at any European site could be increased, even if a viable pathway exists.	No

While a number of sources of impacts may arise as a result of the proposed development, none are considered likely to arise in quantities capable of causing a significant effect should they reach a European site.

As such, a complete SPR chain is absent, and the occurrence of significant effects can be ruled out at this stage (OPR, 2021). In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and Section 177U of



the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the requirement to proceed to Stage 2 AA and the preparation of a NIS does not arise in this instance.

Notwithstanding this conclusion, the report sets out the SPR considerations in full to support the competent authority in its decision-making.

4.2.2 SPR Step 2: Pathway Identification

Where a potential source of effects is identified, an assessment must be undertaken to determine whether a viable transmission pathway exists for that source to reach a receptor (i.e. a European site or its QIs). Pathways may be direct, or indirect.

All potential pathways are assessed in Table 4, as is their viability i.e. are they capable of transmitting a potentially viable source. In some instances, although a pathway might be present it may not be functional. For example, a river might link a proposed development to an SPA, but if the works are small and the SPA is >50km downstream, significant effects are not likely and thus the pathway can be considered non-viable in terms of transmitting sources.

Where pathways are viable, they are considered further in the SPR link to determine if there is a receptor site along the pathway. In this instance, a functional SPR link is present, a ZoI is established, and the European sites CO's will be assessed in relation to the SPR link.

If no pathway is present, an SPR link is does not occur and the ZoI of the proposed development cannot possibly reach nor affect any European site, thus the requirement for Stage 2 AA can be ruled out. Detailed assessment of pathways is discussed below.

TABLE 4. PATHWAY ASSESSMENT TABLE. POTENTIALLY VIABLE PATHWAYS IN BLUE.

Pathway Type	Viability Rationale	Potential to Transmit LSEs
Proximity	The proposed development is in close proximity (<10m) to a European site. Sources, if produced in significant quantities could reach a CO via proximity. This pathway is considered viable.	Yes
Hydrological connectivity	A hydrological pathway exists between the proposed development and Lower River Shannon SAC (002165) and Ballyallia Lake SAC (000014) via the surface water drainage network and surface water flow considering the distance. Two bus stops are <10m from these SACs at their closest points and so surface water could flow straight to the European site. This pathway is considered viable.	Yes
Groundwater connectivity	A groundwater pathway exists between the proposed development and a number of European sites as they occur within the same aquifer bands as the proposed development (Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (conduit)). Karstified limestone can transmit groundwater easily. This pathway is considered viable.	Yes
Airborne pathways	An airborne pathway exists between the proposed development and Lower River Shannon SAC (002165) and Ballyallia Lake SAC (000014), considering the intervening distance of <10m. This pathway is considered viable.	Yes
Functional/migratory	No functional ecological pathway exists between the	No



Pathway Type Viability Rationale		Potential to Transmit LSEs
route proposed development and any European site. The site		
	does not lie along any migratory routes or contain any significant ecological corridor(s) that would be utilised by	
	QI/SCI species.	
	This pathway is considered non-viable.	
	A visual disturbance pathway exists between the	
Visual disturbance	proposed development and Lower River Shannon SAC	
	(002165) and Ballyallia Lake SAC (000014), as a number	Yes
(sightline)	of bus stops are adjacent to the SACs.	
	This pathway is considered viable.	

4.2.2.1 Proximity Pathway

The site is within close proximity (<10m) to two European sites (Lower River Shannon SAC (002165) and Ballyallia Lake SAC (000014)), meaning there is no intervening land use barrier. This creates a direct spatial pathway between the works and QIs over which impacts could be transmitted if present in significant quantities.

This pathway is considered viable.

4.2.2.2 Hydrological Pathway

A hydrological pathway is present between the site and Lower River Shannon SAC (002165) and Ballyallia Lake SAC (000014). Surface water discharges via the local surface water network which drains into Lower River Shannon SAC (002165). Bus stops 35 and 36 are adjacent to Ballyallia Lake SAC (000014). As such, there is potential for surface water to transmit sources directly via this pathway should they be present.

This pathway is considered viable.

4.2.2.3 Groundwater Pathway

The site lies within the Ennis groundwater body. Waters within this groundwater body flow in a general southerly direction. However, considering the groundwater vulnerability beneath the site is "Moderate extreme" (GSI, 2025), and the aquifers beneath the proposed development are karstified limestone and are classed as "regionally important", there is the potential for pollutants (should they be present in significant quantities) to enter the groundwater and flow towards European sites. A number of European sites share an aquifer band with bus stops as part of the proposed development (Figure 7):

- Ballyallia Lake SAC
- Ballycullinan Lake SAC
- Dromore Woods and Loughs SAC
- Pouladatig Cave SAC
- East Burren Complex SAC
- Lower River Shannon SAC
- Old Farm Buildings, Ballymacrogan SAC
- Ballycullinan, Old Domestic Building SAC
- Toonagh Estate SAC
- Ballyallia Lough SPA
- Corofin Wetlands SPA



• River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA

This pathway is considered viable.



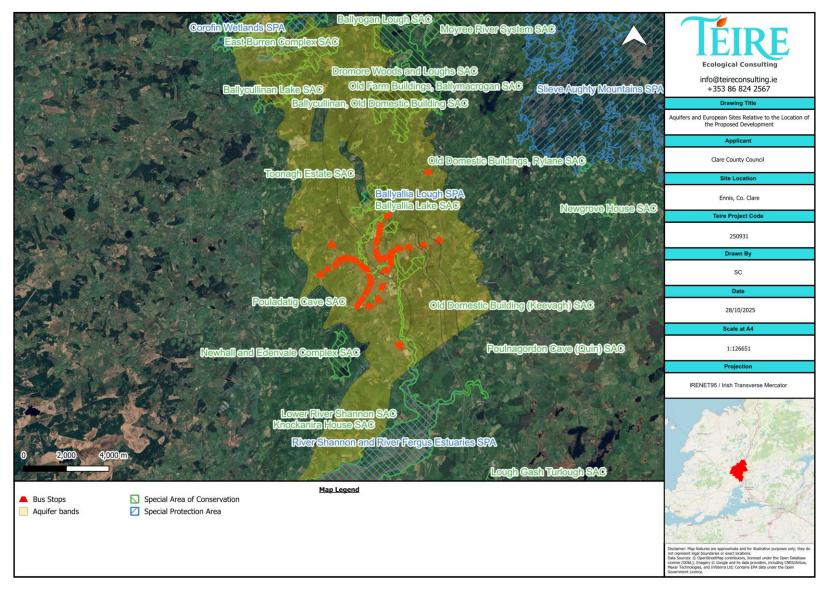


FIGURE 7. EUROPEAN SITES WITHIN THE SAME AQUIFER BANDS (DATA SOURCE: GSI, 2025).



4.2.2.4 Airborne Pathway

Airborne pathways include the transmission of dust, noise, and light. Each is evaluated below using recognised buffers and guidance thresholds.

4.2.2.4.1 Dust

The IAQM (2016) *Guidance on the Assessment of Mineral Dust Impacts for Planning* - derived chiefly from monitoring at quarries - records highest dust impacts within 100m of active sources, declining to 250m and, in extreme hard-rock cases, to 400m. Although construction dust from the proposed development will be far lower than quarry emissions, a conservative 400m buffer is applied.

The nearest European sites, Lower River Shannon SAC (002165) and Ballyallia Lake SAC (000014), lie within <10m of the site. There is potential for dust to reach a European site should it become airborne due to this distance.

This pathway is considered viable.

4.2.2.4.2 Noise

Noise can disturb species by drowning out warning calls, mating calls, echolocation etc. Noise sensitivity depends on species ecology and local habituation. NatureScot (2022) notes rural, disturbance-sensitive species may require 750m – 1km buffer, whereas urban-tolerant species generally show no measurable response beyond 500m. Sites near urban areas usually host habituated fauna and are therefore less sensitive than those residing in rural settings.

The site lies within <10m of Lower River Shannon SAC (002165) and Ballyallia Lake SAC (000014). As such, a source effect, should it be present in a quantity sufficient to undermine a CO, could potentially reach a European site via this pathway.

This pathway is considered viable.

4.2.2.5 Functional/Migratory Pathway

4.2.2.5.1 Spread of Invasive Plant Species

No invasive plant species are known to be present on site, nor are they likely to be considering the locations are mostly hardstanding and in use as part of the urban network.

This pathway is considered non-viable.

4.2.2.5.2 Disruptions to Migratory Paths

The site is located adjacent to potential migratory or commuting corridors for QI/SCI species, but there are no ecological features as part of the proposed development that would function as such. The absence of species movement routes between the site and European sites means there is no viable functional pathway to expose QI/SCI species to effects

This pathway is considered non-viable.



4.2.2.6 Visual Pathway

4.2.2.6.1 Sightline and Light Disturbance

Some bus stops are adjacent to European sites and have a direct line-of-sight to same. Project activities such as human presence and lighting could be perceived by QI/SCI species, creating a visual disturbance pathway.

This pathway is considered viable.

4.2.3 SPR Step 3: Identification of Relevant European Sites

The SPR framework requires all three aspects to be viable to facilitate a negative effect occurring on a European site. Without a receptor (European site) at the end of an SPR link that has so far identified a viable source and pathway, no effects can occur. All viable sources and pathways identified thus far are detailed in Table 5.

TABLE 5. SPR LINKS THUS FAR. A SOURCE OR PATHWAY CONSIDERED VIABLE ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN BLUE.

Viable Sources	Viable Pathways
	Proximity pathway
None identified	Hydrological pathway
	Groundwater pathway
	Airborne pathway
	Visual disturbance pathway

Where a viable source and pathway exist, these SPR links were assessed to determine whether they lead to a European site. If so, a ZoI is established, and the relevant European sites must be assessed with respect to their CO's.

European sites which are most likely to have connectivity to the proposed development via a pathway or proximity (Figure 3), are listed and then assessed in Table 6. A map depicting European sites with viable pathways is displayed in Figure 8.



TABLE 6. EUROPEAN SITES WITH POTENTIAL CONNECTIVITY TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

Relevant European Site and Distance (km)	QI/SCIs	Viable SPR Connections	Consider Further
Lower River Shannon SAC (002165) Distance: <10m	 Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] Freshwater pearl mussel (Margaritifera margaritifera) [1029] Sea lamprey (Petromyzon marinus) [1095] Brook lamprey (Lampetra planeri) [1096] River lamprey (Lampetra fluviatilis) [1099] Salmon (Salmo salar) [1106] Common bottlenose dolphin (Tursiops truncatus) [1349] Otter (Lutra lutra) [1355] 	Viable Sources: None identified Viable Pathways: Proximity pathway Hydrological pathway Groundwater pathway Airborne pathway Visual disturbance pathway	No
Ballyallia Lake SAC (000014) Distance: <10m	Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> - type vegetation [3150]	Viable Sources: None identified Viable Pathways: Proximity pathway Hydrological pathway Groundwater pathway Airborne pathway	No



Relevant European Site and Distance (km)	QI/SCIs	Viable SPR Connections	Consider Further
Ballycullinan Lake SAC (000016) Distance: 7.5km	Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210]	 Visual disturbance pathway Viable Sources: None identified Viable Pathways: Groundwater 	No
Dromore Woods and Loughs SAC (000032) Distance: 3km	 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150] Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430] Limestone pavements [8240] Lesser horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) [1303] Otter (Lutra lutra) [1355] 	pathway Viable Sources: None identified Viable Pathways: Groundwater pathway	No
Pouladatig Cave SAC (000037) Distance: 2.7km	 Caves not open to the public [8310] Lesser horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) [1303] 	Viable Sources: None identified Viable Pathways: Groundwater pathway	No
East Burren Complex SAC (001926) Distance: 10km	 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140] Turloughs [3180] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae [6130] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (*important orchid sites) [6210] Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis) [6510] Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] 	Viable Sources: None identified Viable Pathways: Groundwater pathway	No



Relevant European Site and Distance (km)	QI/SCIs	Viable SPR Connections	Consider Further
	 Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Caves not open to the public [8310] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] Marsh fritillary (Euphydryas aurinia) [1065] Lesser horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) [1303] Otter (Lutra lutra) [1355] 		
Old Farm Buildings, Ballymacrogan SAC (002245) Distance: 6.3km	Lesser horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) [1303]	Viable Sources: None identified Viable Pathways: Groundwater pathway	No
Ballycullinan, Old Domestic Building SAC (002246) Distance: 7.2km	Lesser horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) [1303]	Viable Sources:None identifiedViable Pathways:Groundwater pathway	No
Toonagh Estate SAC (002247) Distance: 4.5km	Lesser horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) [1303]	Viable Sources: None identified Viable Pathways: Groundwater pathway	No
Ballyallia Lough SPA (004041) Distance: <10m	 Teal (Anas crecca) [A052] Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos) [A053] Coot (Fulica atra) [A125] Black-tailed godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156] Wigeon (Mareca penelope) [A855] Shoveler (Spatula clypeata) [A857] Gadwall (Mareca strepera) [A889] Wetland and waterbirds [A999] 	Viable Sources: None identified Viable Pathways: Groundwater pathway	No



Relevant European Site and Distance (km)	QI/SCIs	Viable SPR Connections	Consider Further
Corofin Wetlands SPA (004220) Distance: 8.5km	 Little grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] Whooper swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Black-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>) [A855] Wetland and waterbirds [A999] 	 Viable Sources: None identified Viable Pathways: Groundwater pathway 	No
River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (004077) Distance: 275m	 Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017] Whooper swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038] Light-bellied brent goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046] Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048] Teal (Anas crecca) [A052] Pintail (Anas acuta) [A054] Scaup (Aythya marila) [A062] Ringed plover (Charadrius hiaticula) [A137] Golden plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140] Grey plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141] Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142] Knot (Calidris canutus) [A143] Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149] Black-tailed godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156] Bar-tailed godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157] Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160] Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] Greenshank (Tringa nebularia) [A164] Black-headed gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Wigeon (Mareca penelope) [A855] Shoveler (Spatula clypeata) [A857] Wetland and waterbirds [A999] 	Viable Sources: None identified Viable Pathways: Groundwater pathway	No



4.3 SPR Conclusion

The results of the SPR analysis undertaken in section 4 are summarised in Table 7.

Each viable source and pathway were assessed to determine whether a European site (receptor) exists at the end of that linkage. Where a complete SPR link exists, the European site was assessed in light of its COs to determine if Stage 2 AA is required. Where any individual element of the SPR link is absent, the risk of an LSE occurring can be ruled out.

TABLE 7. SPR LINKS IDENTIFIED. A FULL AND COMPLETE SPR LINK THAT COULD ACCOMMODATE A LSE IS IDENTIFIED AS A FULL BLUE ROW.

Viable Source	Viable Pathway	Potential Receptor Sites
None identified	Proximity pathway Hydrological pathway Groundwater pathway Airborne pathway Visual disturbance pathway	Lower River Shannon SAC (002165)
None identified	Proximity pathway Hydrological pathway Groundwater pathway Airborne pathway Visual disturbance pathway	Ballyallia Lake SAC (000014)
None identified	Groundwater pathway	Ballycullinan Lake SAC (000016)
None identified	Groundwater pathway	Dromore Woods and Loughs SAC (000032)
None identified	Groundwater pathway	Pouladatig Cave SAC (000037)
None identified	Groundwater pathway	East Burren Complex SAC (001926)
None identified	Groundwater pathway	Old Farm Buildings, Ballymacrogan SAC (002245)
None identified	Groundwater pathway	Ballycullinan, Old Domestic Building SAC (002246)
None identified	Groundwater pathway	Toonagh Estate SAC (002247)
None identified	Groundwater pathway	Ballyallia Lough SPA (004041)
None identified	Groundwater pathway	Corofin Wetlands SPA (004220)
None identified	Groundwater pathway	River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (004077)

No complete SPR links have been identified (Table 7) and the proposed development can be excluded from having a LSE on any European site.



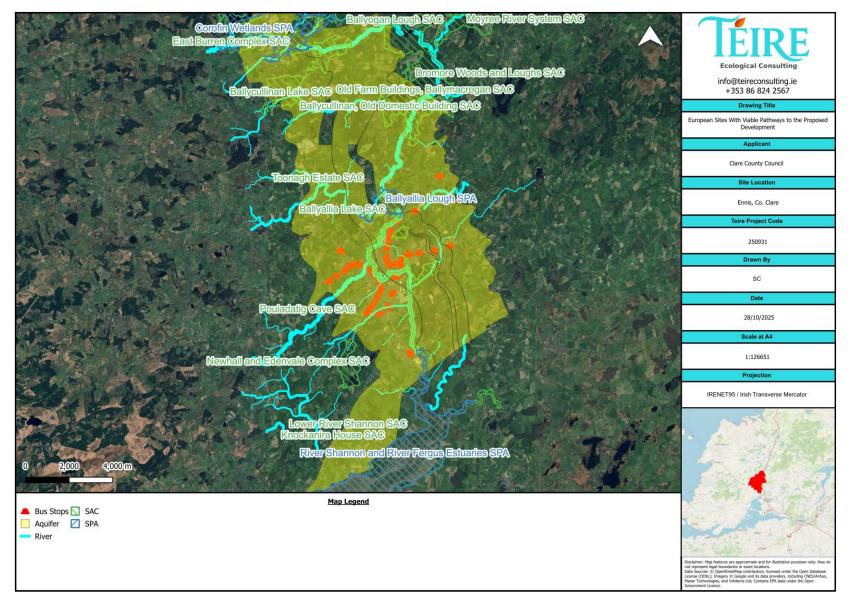


FIGURE 8. EUROPEAN SITES WITH VIABLE SPR LINKS TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.



4.4 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

TABLE 8. ASSESSMENT OF LSES.

LSE	Reasoning
Habitat loss/fragmentation	All works are confined to the site footprint. No loss or fragmentation of habitats supporting QIs/SCIs will occur.
Disturbance	Construction activities will be temporary and limited in scale. The proposed development is situated mostly in an urban centre already generating background noise. Any additional noise generated is not expected to result in a significant increase above baseline conditions. No disturbance is anticipated at a level capable of affecting the COs of any European site.
Water quality/hydrology	Hydrological pathways exist from surface water runoff to European sites, however no sources of effects with the potential to cause LSEs have been identified, and so the pathway is not likely to transmit a significant effect.
Air quality	Any dust or emissions from small-scale plant during construction will be minimal, short- term and highly localised. No emission source exists that could result in an LSE on any European site.

4.4.1 In-combination Effects

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, this section considers whether the proposed development could result in an LSE on any European site when assessed in-combination with other plans or projects.

Small-scale developments such as domestic extensions, change-of-use, or retention permissions are unlikely to give rise to measurable in-combination effects and are not included in the search criteria. This review focuses on larger-scale developments located within 100m of the proposed development, and which have been submitted in the past five years.

Relevant plans and projects were identified through:

- Review of the National Planning Application Database (housinggovie.maps.arcgis.com)
- Review of planning proposals on https://eplanning.ie/

Table 9 summarises the developments reviewed and provides a conclusion on whether any could give rise to in-combination effects.



TABLE 9. IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS OF GRANTED AND NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS FROM WITHIN THE PAST 5 YEARS.

Application Number	Development Description	Development Address	Application Decision	Link
20737	to (a) Demolish 2 No. sub-standard single storey town houses (b) extend adjoining dwelling house (c) construct 2 No. two story town houses together with all ancillary site development works and services	Carmody Street, Ennis, Co Clare	CONDITIONAL	http://www.eplanning.ie/ClareCC/AppFileRefDetails/20737/0
21750	for development at a 0.0145 ha site at Ennis Shopping Centre, Francis Street, Ennis, Co Clare, V95 WF5W. the development will consist of the provision of an ESB substation and switch room structure (c. 45.5 sq.m gross floor area) adjacent to the northern entrance of Ennis Shopping Centre, a new pedestrian crossing adjacent to the car park entrance, landscape treatment with realigned curb, relocation of bollards and all associated site development works	Ennis Shopping Centre, Francis Street, Ennis Co Clare	CONDITIONAL	http://www.eplanning.ie/ClareCC/AppFileRefDetails/21750/0
211118	for development at a c.0.010 ha site in the car park of Ennis Shopping Centre (Tesco), Francis Street, Ennis, Co Clare. V95 WF5W. The development will consist of: (i) the construction of a sheltered canopy (c. 50 sq.m) in the existing car park for the purpose of providing 2 no. dedicated 'Click and Collect' spaces for the existing Tesco store; (ii) ancillary signage; and (iii) a	Ennis Shopping Centre (Tesco), Francis Street, Ennis Co Clare	CONDITIONAL	http://www.eplanning.ie/ClareCC/AppFileRefDetails/211118/0



Application Number	Development Description	Development Address	Application Decision	Link
	pedestrian crossing and all associated site development works			
22260	to complete the construction of two no town houses, to include connections to services and all necessary ancillary works. Construction to date authorised under Planning Permission P03/970	Quay Road, Clarecastle, Co Clare	CONDITIONAL	http://www.eplanning.ie/ClareCC/AppFileRefDetails/22260/0
22924	of (a) the subdivision of the supermarket unit and (b) the standalone use of the off- licence unit	Unit 1 Roslevan Shopping Centre, Roslevan, Ennis Co Clare	CONDITIONAL	http://www.eplanning.ie/ClareCC/AppFileRefDetails/22924/0
23255	of the following development (a) of the existing temporary access gate at the side of dwellinghouse to provide off-street car parking	The Corner House Buttermarket Street, Ennis, Co. Clare V95 V6KP	CONDITIONAL	http://www.eplanning.ie/ClareCC/AppFileRefDetails/23255/0
2425	to renovate and make change to the elevations and floor layout of the dwelling, and to extend the width of the existing vehicular entrance to provide an additional on-site parking space, with all associated site works	No 15 Summerhill, Ennis, Co Clare	CONDITIONAL	http://www.eplanning.ie/ClareCC/AppFileRefDetails/2425/0
2460192	to construct a single storey extension to the rear of his dwelling and to create off street parking to the front of the dwelling	30 Connolly Villas, Ennis, Co. Clare	CONDITIONAL	http://www.eplanning.ie/ClareCC/AppFileRefDetails/2460192/0



Application Number	Development Description	Development Address	Application Decision	Link
2460292	to alter and extend an existing derelict house and boundary walls along with all associated works	Tulla Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.	CONDITIONAL	http://www.eplanning.ie/ClareCC/AppFileRefDetails/2460292/0
2560093	to change the use of the rear of Unit 5 from existing restaurant to Class 2 use as defined in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) but excluding betting office use, all internal alterations, new signage and all associated site works	Unit 5 Clare Road Mall, Clare Road Ennis, Co. Clare	CONDITIONAL	http://www.eplanning.ie/ClareCC/AppFileRefDetails/2560093/0
25309	to widen/increase existing vehicular entrance plus all ancillary site works	No 4 St Anne's Terrace, Clonroad, Ennis Co Clare	N/A	http://www.eplanning.ie/ClareCC/AppFileRefDetails/25309/0



Each of the projects in Table 9 has undergone AA screening by the local authority and where stage two AA was considered necessary, mitigation has been provided. As such, these developments do not constitute activity that could result in cumulative or in-combination effects with the proposed development that could result in a LSE on any European site.

5 SCREENING CONCLUSION

This screening for AA has been undertaken in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

The assessment considered the characteristics of the proposed development, the surrounding environment, the nature and sensitivities of relevant European sites, and the presence or absence of viable SPR linkages. Where a complete SPR link was identified, the potential for an unmitigated LSE in light of the COs of the connected European sites was evaluated.

A number of pathways have been identified as having the potential to link the proposed development to a European site. These include a proximity pathway as two European sites are <10m from the proposed development at their nearest points. A hydrological pathway exists due to surface water flowing to the local drainage network which outflows to European sites, as well as surface water flows having the capability to flow directly to these sites based on proximity. Proximity also accommodates visual, and airborne pathways. Lastly, a groundwater pathway links multiple sites to the proposed development considering the groundwater flows are highly permeable due to the karstified nature of the bedrock beneath the site.

However, while these pathways are viable, there were no sources of effects capable of causing an LSE on any European site identified. The works are small scale, temporary, and will be conducted in a phased manner, thereby reducing the likelihood of any impacts. No sources of effects will be produced in quantities capable of causing a significant effect on any European site, should they be transmitted. Therefore, the SPR link is absent, and LSEs can be ruled out as per OPR (2021).

This report concludes, based on objective scientific evidence, that the proposed development will not result in an LSE on any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Conclusion: Stage 2 AA not Required



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SECTION 38 OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 1994 PROPOSED BUS STOPS FOR ENNIS TOWN BUS SERVICE

Notice is hereby given that Clare County Council, pursuant of Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act 1994, propose installation of new bus stops and construction of associated works at the following locations:

Cloughleigh Road (W)

Fergus Lawn (S)

Ennis General Hospital (S)

Gort Road Business Park (S)

Ballyallia (S)

Lahinch Road - Shanballa (W)

Lahinch Road – Shanballa (E)

Francis Street (N) GAA - Tesco

Francis Street (S) Tesco

Lifford Road (N)

Lifford Road (S)

Carmody Street (W)

Cloughleigh Road (E)

Shanaway Road - Lahinch Road (W)

Shanaway Road (E)

Shanvogh (E)

College Green (E)

Tulla Rd - Hillcrest (W)

Ballymaley (N)

Lahinch Road Terminus

Station Road (E)

Plans and particulars of the proposed works will be available for inspection at the following locations from Friday 14th November 2025 to Friday 12th of December 2025.

- Clare County Council Website.
- The offices of Clare County Council, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare between the hours of 9.00am to 5.00pm.

Submissions or observations in relation to the proposals may be made before **4:00 p.m. on Friday 12th December 2025 by:**

- email to ennismunicipaldistrict@clarecoco.ie
- or in writing to the Senior Engineer, Ennis Municipal District, Clare County Council, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.



