

**Kilcock Strategic Housing Development
Ecological Impact Assessment**



Prepared By:

**Moore Group -
Environmental Services**

**On behalf of:
Rycroft Homes Ltd.**

**Job Number 19043
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Project Proponent	Rycroft Homes Ltd.
Project	Kilcock Strategic Housing Development
Title	Kilcock Strategic Housing Development Ecological Impact Assessment


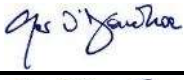
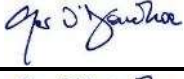
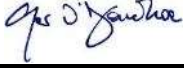
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Appendix 1 TII Evaluation of Habitats

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1. INTRODUCTION

Moore Group was commissioned by Rycroft Homes Ltd. to undertake a Biodiversity; Flora & Fauna Survey and EclA of the site of a proposed Strategic Housing Development (SHD) in the townlands of Commons West, Boycetown and Kilcock (adjacent to the existing Brayton Park estate), Kilcock, Co. Kildare in order for An Bord Pleanála to undertake impact assessment with regard to the planning application.

This report was compiled by Ger O'Donohoe of Moore Group providing information on habitats in the study area. Ger O'Donohoe M.Sc. is the principal ecologist with Moore Group and has 25 years' experience in ecological impact assessment.

This report provides information on ecological features if present within the study areas, of particular significance, primarily designated habitats and species, including habitats/species listed in Annex I, II and IV of the EU Habitats Directive, rare flora listed in the Flora Protection Order along with other semi-natural habitats of conservational value.

The report has been compiled in compliance with the European Communities Legal requirements and follows EPA Draft Guidelines on Information to be contained in an EIAR (EPA, 2017) and on Transport Infrastructure Ireland TII policy and guidance outlined in Section 2.

The European Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (Article 6) indicates the need for plans and projects to be subject to Habitats Directive Assessment (also known as Appropriate Assessment) if the plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site (which includes SACs and SPAs) but which has the potential to have implications on a site's conservation objectives. These implications can be significant effects either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

As such, a report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement was undertaken by Moore Group for the proposed development on behalf of An Bord Pleanála. These stand alone reports are presented as part of the planning application package for the Project.

The site location is presented in Figure 1 below.

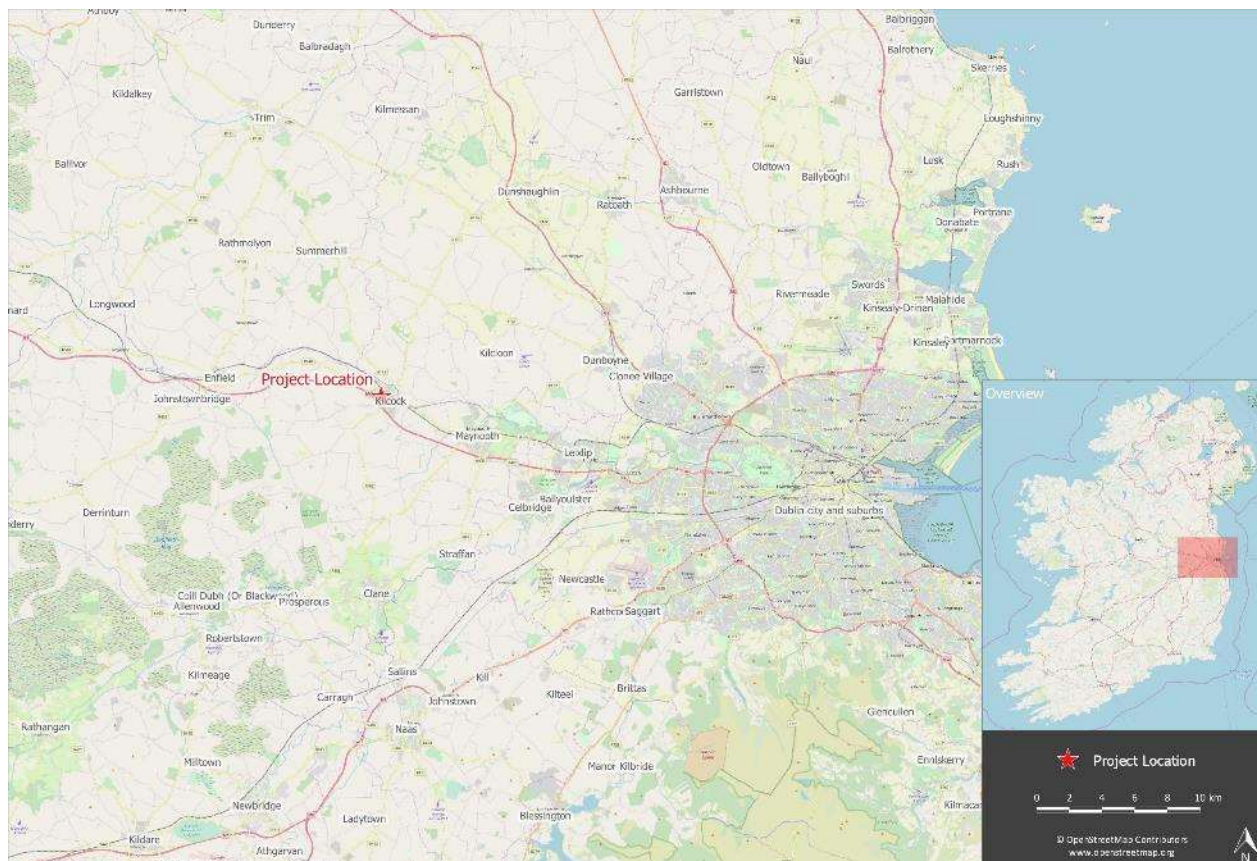


Figure 1. Showing the proposed site location at Kilcock, County Kildare (©OSM).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. POLICY & LEGISLATION

2.1.1. EU Habitats Directive

The “Habitats Directive” (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna) is the main legislative instrument for the protection and conservation of biodiversity within the European Union and lists certain habitats and species that must be protected within wildlife conservation areas, considered to be important at a European as well as at a national level. A “Special Conservation Area” or SAC is a designation under the Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive sets out the protocol for the protection and management of SACs.

The Directive sets out key elements of the system of protection including the requirement for “Appropriate Assessment” of plans and projects. The requirements for an Appropriate Assessment are set out in the EU Habitats Directive. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Directive.

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project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site (which includes SACs and SPAs) but which has the potential to have implications on a site's conservation objectives. These implications can be significant effects either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

2.1.2. EU Birds Directive

The "Birds Directive" (Council Directive 79/409/EEC and Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) provides for a network of sites in all member states to protect birds at their breeding, feeding, roosting and wintering areas. This directive identifies species that are rare, in danger of extinction or vulnerable to changes in habitat and which need protection (Annex I species). Appendix I indicates Annex I bird species as listed on the Birds Directive. A "Special Protection Area" or SPA, is a designation under The Birds Directive.

Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas form a pan-European network of protected sites known as Natura 2000 sites and any plan or project that has the potential to impact upon a Natura 2000 site requires appropriate assessment.

2.1.3. Wildlife Acts 1976 - 2018

The primary domestic legislation providing for the protection of wildlife in general, and the control of some activities adversely impacting upon wildlife is the Wildlife Act of 1976. The aims of the wildlife act according to the National Parks and Wildlife Service are "... to provide for the protection and conservation of wild fauna and flora, to conserve a representative sample of important ecosystems, to provide for the development and protection of game resources and to regulate their exploitation, and to provide the services necessary to accomplish such aims." All bird species are protected under the act. The Wildlife (Amendment) Act of 2000 amended the original Act to improve the effectiveness of the Act to achieve its aims.

2.2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

2.2.1. Desk Study

The assessment was carried out in three stages, firstly through desktop assessment to determine existing records in relation to habitats and species present in the study areas. This included research on the NPWS metadata website, the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) database and a literature review of published information on flora and fauna occurring in the development area.

Sources of information that were used to collect data on the Natura 2000 network of sites, and the environment within which they are located, are listed below:

- The following mapping and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data sources, as required:
 - National Parks & Wildlife (NPWS) protected site boundary data;
 - Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI) mapping and aerial photography;
 - OSI/Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rivers and streams, and catchments;
 - Open Street Maps;
 - Digital Elevation Model over Europe (EU-DEM);
 - Google Earth and Bing aerial photography 1995-2019;
- Online data available on Natura 2000 sites as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from www.npws.ie including:
 - Natura 2000 - Standard Data Form;
 - Conservation Objectives;
 - Site Synopses;
 - National Biodiversity Data Centre records;
 - Online database of rare, threatened and protected species;
 - Publicly accessible biodiversity datasets.
- Status of EU Protected Habitats in Ireland. (National Parks & Wildlife Service, 2019); and
- Relevant Development Plans in neighbouring areas;
 - Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023
 - Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021

2.2.2. Field Study

The second phase of the assessment involved a site visit to establish the existing environment in the footprint of the proposed development area. Areas which were highlighted during desktop assessment were investigated in closer detail according to the Heritage Council Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping (Smith *et al.*, 2011). Habitats in the proposed development area were classified according to the Heritage Council publication “A Guide to Habitats in Ireland” (Fossitt, 2000). This publication sets out a standard scheme for identifying, describing and classifying wildlife habitats in Ireland. This form of classification uses codes to classify different habitats based on the plant species present. Species recorded in this report are given in both their Latin and English names. Latin names for plant species follow the nomenclature of “An Irish Flora” (Parnell & Curtis, 2012).

Habitats were surveyed on 14th of February 2019 by conducting a study area walkover covering the main ecological areas identified in the desktop assessment. The survey date is outside the optimal botanical survey period but adequate in terms of the improved grassland and search for potential badger setts. A photographic record was made of features of interest during fieldwork.

Signs of mammals such as badgers and otters were searched for while surveying the study area during fieldwork, noting any sights, signs or any activity in the vicinity especially along adjacent boundaries.

Birds were surveyed using standard transect methodology and signs were recorded where encountered during the field walkover surveys.

The final part of the assessment involves an evaluation of the study area and determination of the potential impacts on the habitats of the study area. This part of the assessment forms the basis for Impact Assessment and is based on the following guidelines and publications:

- Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites (EC, 2002);
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites (EC, 2000);
- Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2007);
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, December 2009, Rev 2010);
- EPA Draft Guidelines on Information to be contained in an EIAR (EPA, 2017);
- Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping (Heritage Council, 2011);
- Ecological Surveying Techniques for Protected Flora & Fauna (NRA, 2008);
- Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes (NRA, 2009);
- Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2016).

2.2.3. Site Evaluation and Impact Assessment

The TII Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes (NRA, 2009) outlines the methodology for evaluating ecological impacts of the project in the present report. According to the TII Guidelines, the Ecological Study should address:

- Designated conservation areas and sites proposed for designation within the zone(s) of influence of any of the route options,
- All the main inland surface waters (e.g. rivers, streams, canals, lakes and reservoirs) that are intersected by any of the route corridor options, including their fisheries value and any relevant designations,
- Aquifers and dependent systems and turloughs and their subterranean water systems,
- Any known or potentially important sites for rare or protected flora or fauna that occur along or within the zone(s) of influence of any of the route options,
- Any other sites of ecological value, that are not designated, along or in close proximity to any of the route corridor options,

- Any other relevant conservation designations or programmes (e.g. catchment management schemes, habitat restoration or creation projects, community conservation projects, etc.),
- Any other features of particular ecological or conservation significance along any of the route options.

The TII Guidelines set out a method of evaluating the importance of sites identified and in turn the evaluation of the significance of impacts. The Evaluation Scheme is presented in Appendix 1.

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Project consists of the construction of a Strategic Housing Development on lands at the townlands of Commons West, Boycetown and Kilcock, (all adjoining the existing Brayton Park Estate), Kilcock, Co. Kildare on a site of approximately 11.56 ha.

The site is generally bound by undeveloped agricultural land to the north west, to the north east by the Dublin-Sligo railway line, open space at Bawnogues/Commons West to the south west, the Brayton Park residential development to the east and the M4 to the west.

The development will consist of:

345 no. residential units (69 no. Duplex Type Units, 182 no. Houses and 94 no. Apartments) ranging from 2 to 5 storeys, a standalone creche facility (approximately 466.76 sqm) with an overall height of 2 storeys, an associated external play area (approximately 277.67 sqm), associated ancillary surface car parking spaces and bicycle parking spaces, a link street, internal roads, pedestrian paths, cycle paths, public and private open spaces.

The proposed housing mix is comprised of 13 no. 1 bed units, 136 no. 2 bed units, 158 no. 3 bed units and 38 no. 4 bed units.

Out of the 345 no. residential units, 35 no. units are put forward to meet the applicant's obligations under Part V of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Each residential unit has associated private open space, in the form of either gardens, terraces or balconies in addition to access to the proposed public open space (including 3 no. playground areas) with hard and soft landscaping treatment.

A total of 650 no. surface car parking spaces are provided for the residential development including visitor parking. 280 no. bicycle spaces are proposed for the proposed apartments and duplexes and bicycle spaces for the proposed houses are provided on curtilage. In addition, the crèche will be provided with 34 no. surface car parking spaces and 30 no. bicycle parking spaces.

The proposed development provides for 1 no. vehicular access and associated pedestrian and cycle paths via a new link street connecting from the Brayton Park Road and 1 no. vehicular access and associated pedestrian path providing a link into the existing Brayton Park Estate.

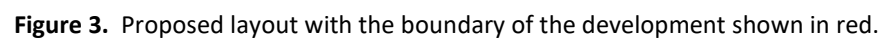
The proposed development makes provision for future linkages to adjoining lands; including undeveloped lands to the north-west, the adjoining undeveloped educational zoned lands to the north, as part of this application land is reserved for access to a potential future pedestrian/cycle bridge over the railway line to the north-east of the site (to be delivered by others) . In addition, the proposed development provides for pedestrian and cycle paths connection to the north east of the site, as well as 4 no. pedestrian access points and 1 no. gated vehicular (for Kildare County Council maintenance use only) and pedestrian access point to the open space at Bawnogues/Commons West along the southern boundary of the site.

Bin storage is provided either on curtilage and or in communal storage. The associated site and infrastructural works include foul and surface water drainage, attenuation tanks, SuDs arrangements, hard and soft landscaping, permeable paving, boundary walls, fences and noise buffers, 3 no. substations (approximately 20 sqm each), public lighting, a link street, internal roads, cycle paths, pedestrian paths and all associated ancillary site development works.

Figure 2 shows a detailed view of the existing site on high resolution aerial photography. Figure 3 shows the layout of the proposed development.



Figure 2. Showing the development area in red on the most recent aerial photography.



4. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

4.1. DESIGNATED CONSERVATION AREAS

DoEHLG (2009) Guidance on Appropriate Assessment suggests an assessment of European sites within a zone of impact of 15 km. This distance is a guidance only and the zone of impact has been identified taking consideration of the nature and location of the proposed Project to ensure all European sites with connectivity to it are considered in terms of a catchment-based assessment.

The zone of impact may be determined by connectivity to the proposed Project in terms of:

- Nature, scale, timing and duration of works and possible impacts, nature and size of excavations, storage of materials, flat/sloping sites;
- Distance and nature of pathways (dilution and dispersion; intervening 'buffer' lands, roads etc.); and
- Sensitivity and location of ecological features.

The guidance provides that, at the screening stage, it is necessary to identify the sites and compile information on their qualifying interests and conservation objectives. In preparation for this, the potential for source pathway receptor connectivity is firstly identified and detailed information is then provided on sites with connectivity. European sites that are located within 15 km of the Project are listed in Table 1 and presented in Figures 4 and 5, below. Spatial boundary data on the Natura 2000 network was extracted from the NPWS website (www.npws.ie) on the 14th February 2019 and updated on 18th December 2019.

Table 1 European Sites located within 15km or the potential zone of impact of the Project.

Site Code	Site name	Distance (km) ¹
000206	North Dublin Bay SAC	33.22
000210	South Dublin Bay SAC	31.71
001398	Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC	6.81
001393	Hodgestown Bog NHA	11.71
004006	North Bull Island SPA	33.22
004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	30.15

The proposed Project site is a greenfield site located to the west of Kilcock. The nearest European site is Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (Site Code 001398), which is located approximately 6.8 km to the east of the proposed Project. The only other European sites with potential connectivity to the proposed

¹ Distances indicated are the closest geographical distance between the proposed Project and the European site boundary, as made available by the NPWS. Connectivity along hydrological pathways may be significantly greater.

development are the those associated with Dublin Bay, which are located over 30 km to the east of the proposed Project.

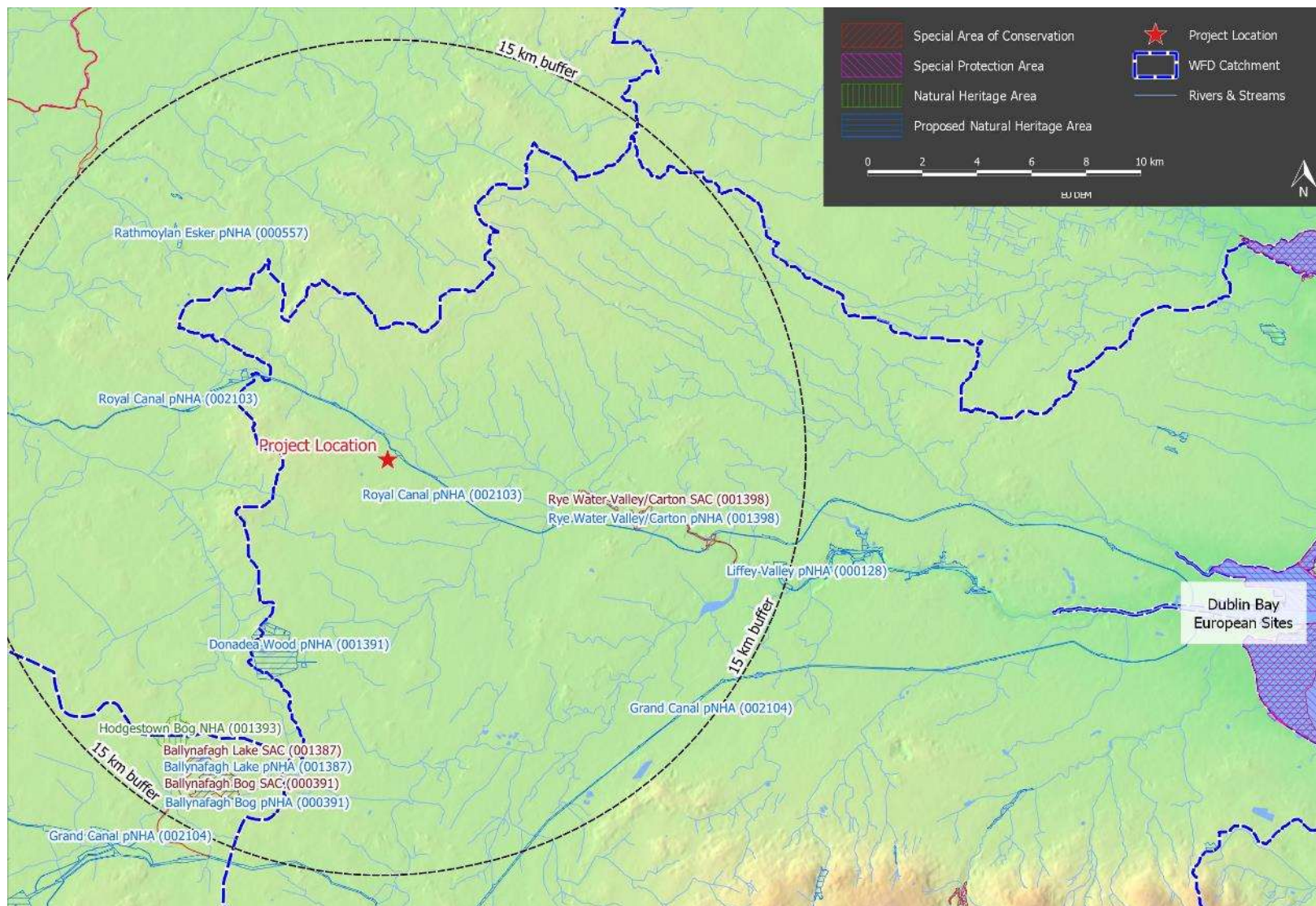


Figure 4. Showing the designated conservation sites in the vicinity of the Project.

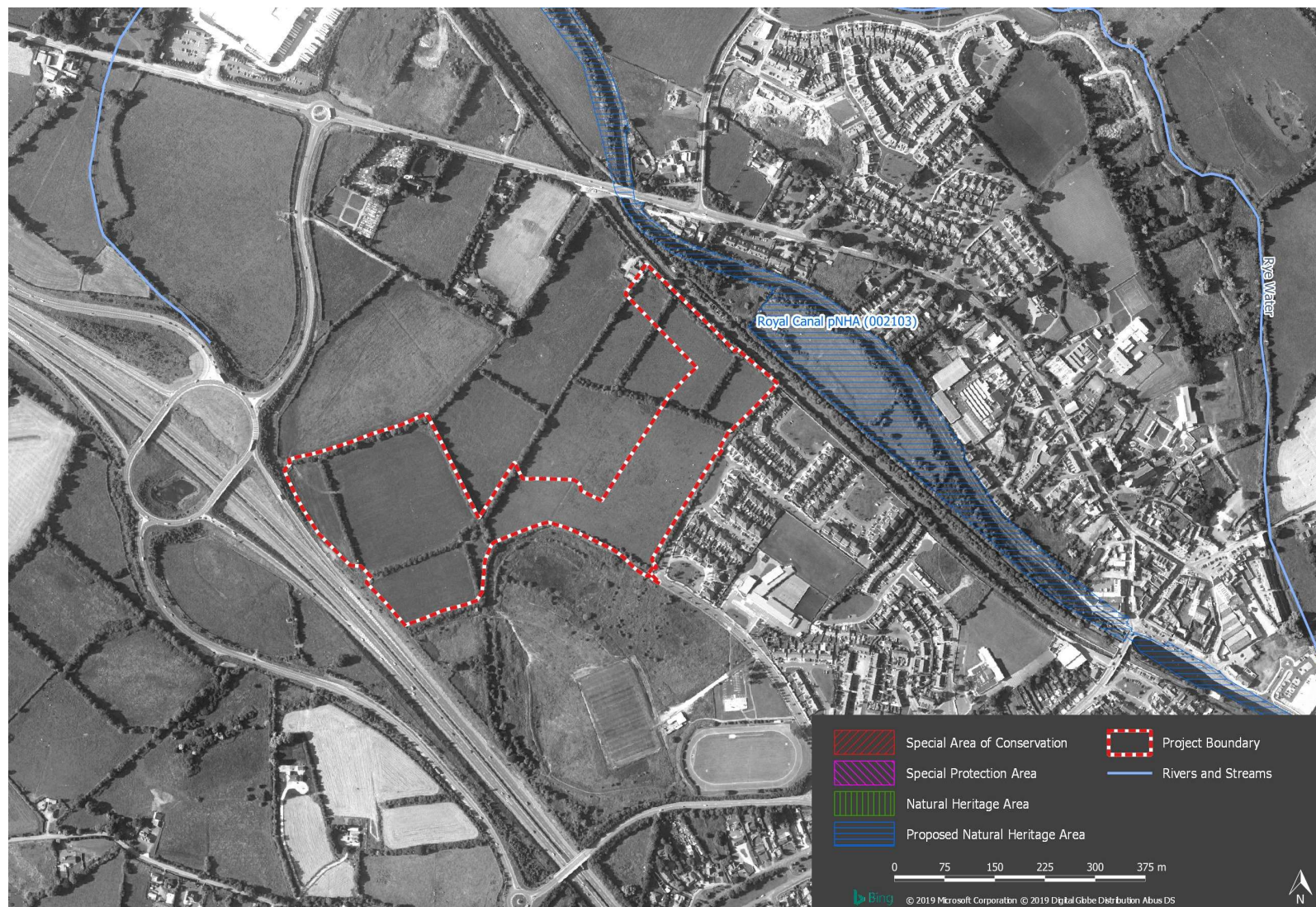


Figure 5. Detail of designated conservation sites in the vicinity of the Project.

4.2. HABITAT DESCRIPTIONS

The proposed development boundary and habitats contained within are presented in the Habitat Map in Figure 6 below. The subject site is located close to both agricultural and residential areas with housing estates located to the north-west and south-east. The pNHA Grand Canal can be found towards the north-east. The site contains a mixture of habitats, predominantly Improved Agricultural Grassland (GA1) surrounded by hedgerows (WL1), drains (FW4) and patches of bramble scrub (WS1). Additional habitats found on site included bare ground (ED2), recolonised bare ground (ED3) and buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3).

A list of habitats recorded and their corresponding Fossitt codes is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Habitat types present according to Fossitt (2000).

Habitat	Habitat Category	Habitat Type
(F) Freshwater	(FW) Water courses	(FW4) Drainage ditches
(G) Grassland	(GA) Improved grassland	(GA1) Improved agricultural grassland
(W) Woodland	(WS) Scrub/transitional woodland	(WS1) Scrub
	(WL) Linear woodland/scrub	(WL1) Hedgerows
(E) Exposed rock and disturbed ground	(ED) Disturbed ground	(ED2) Spoil and bare ground
		(ED3) Recolonising bare ground
(B) Cultivated and built land	(BL) Built land	(BL3) Buildings and artificial surfaces

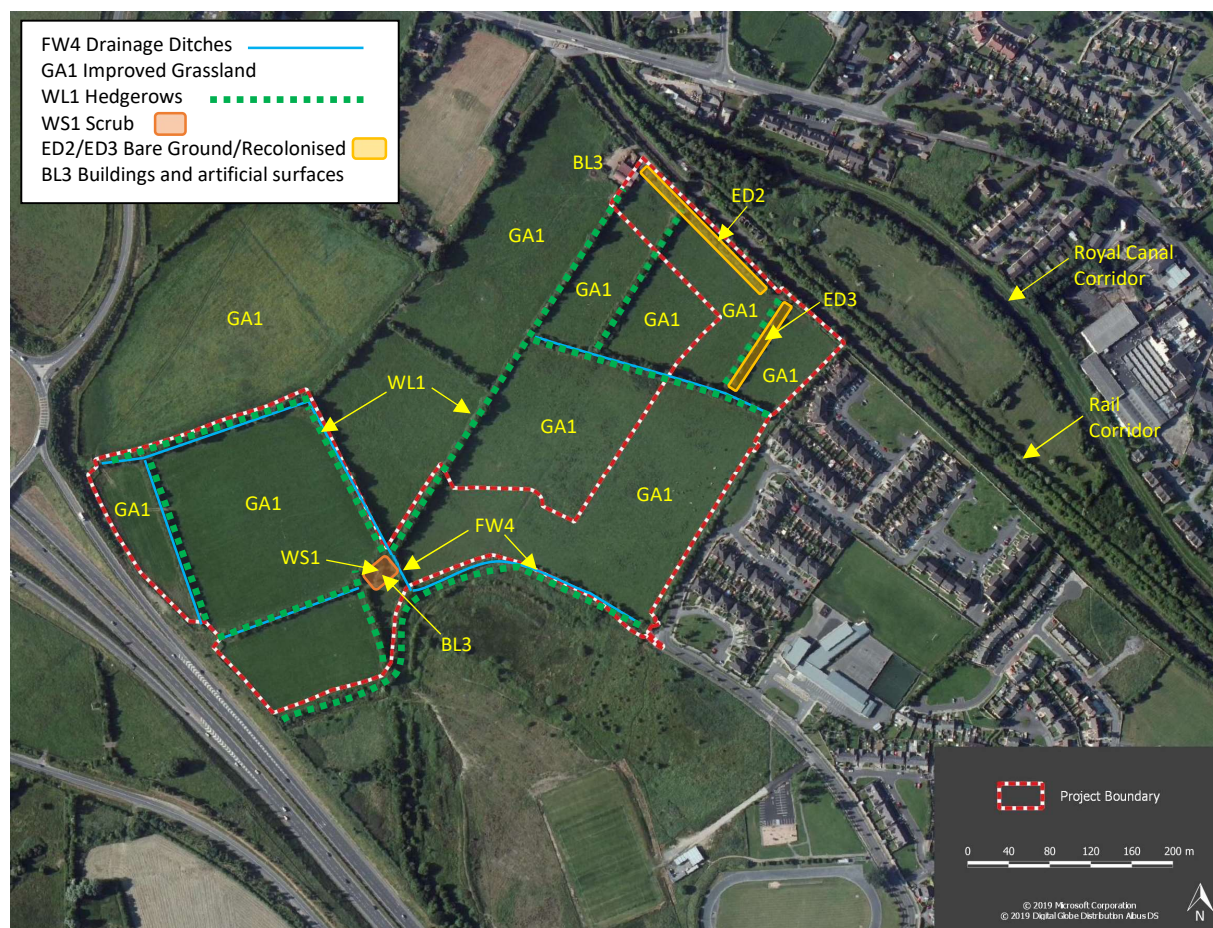


Figure 6. Habitat map based on recent Bing aerial photography showing internal hedgerows.

Drainage ditches (FW4)

Drainage ditches on site are shallow and appear to soak away to ground. They are stagnant and do not support aquatic species. The sloping edges are associated with the understorey flora of hedgerows and are colonised by Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and dense Bramble scrub (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.).

Improved agricultural grassland (GA1)

Improved grassland areas comprise the largest habitat on site (Photo 1). The entire open field areas have been managed, regularly used for grazing cattle. The sward height was low ~5cm. The general topography of these fields is flat. Perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) dominated the grassy component of this habitat whilst occasional Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and Cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*) could be found towards the margins. Typical characteristic species for this habitat found on site included; Meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Broad-leaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), Creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and Spear thistle (*C. vulgare*).

Scrub (WS1)

Scrub on site is dominated by bramble. It can be found close to field margins and by areas of lower agricultural activity such as the pathway to the north and surrounding the ruins to the south. Other species found here include; Nettle, Lords and ladies (*Arum maculatum*), Wood avens (*Geum urbanum*), Lesser celandine (*Ficaria verna*) and hard fern (*Blechnum spicant*).

Hedgerows (WL1)

The site is well represented with hedgerows, acting as boundaries between each of the fields on site. The dominant species found within this habitat is Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) interspersed with Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*). The ground layer is dominated by Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), Cleavers (*Galium aparine*), Wild angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*).

Arable land (BC1)

The majority of the site is considered under the category 'Cultivated land' (BC) and comprises the arable fields which are intensively managed.

(ED2/ED3) Recolonising bare ground

Short sections of track to the north of the site corresponds to bare and recolonised ground. Species found here included Nettle, Cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), Cleavers, Dock and Nettle.

(BL3) Buildings and artificial surfaces.

Several structures lie within the site including an agricultural shed and several ruined buildings. OSI maps also show an open well onsite. A search did not reveal any obvious well at this location. However, a drain covered in thick bramble was found here (Appendix 2 Photo 3).

4.1. FAUNA**4.1.1. Mammals**Otters

Otters are protected under Annex II of the Habitats Directive while their resting places are also fully protected. Any interference with a holt or access to it is prohibited except under an EU derogation. Otters have been recorded previously on the Royal Canal with the closest record dated from 2012 where an otter was noted as roadkill from c. 800m east of the subject site. No holts, slides or prints of otter were observed on the habitats located within the subject site during the present survey.

Badgers

There are no records of badgers on the NBDC database within the proposed development site. The nearest records are for roadkill to the northwest on the old Dublin Road.

There were no badger setts recorded in the study area during fieldwork.

Bats

Bats are protected by law (Wildlife Act (1976), Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Habitats Directive (Council Directive No. 97/62/EC of 27 October 1997 (amending Council Directive No. 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992)). In order to comply with legislation that bats are not killed or injured, it is essential to ensure that measures to reduce risk to bats are undertaken or that the presence of bats can be ruled out.

The daylight assessment of the site revealed no high potential roost features on any of the trees located within the site. Further, no evidence of other structures suitable for hosting bat roosts could be found.

Other Mammals

Signs of fox were encountered occasionally but no fox earths were recorded.

Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) were recorded throughout the site with burrows in outer field boundaries.

4.1.2. Birds

A list of breeding bird species recorded during fieldwork in February 2019 is presented in Table 2 below. Hedgerows on site provide roosting habitat for a number of bird species with at least eight wood pigeons noted perched on trees within the site. Other species observed within the site included Song thrush, Blackbird, Pied wagtail, Coal tit, Blue tit, Rook, Meadow Pipit, Magpie and Chaffinch.

Table 2. Birds recorded during fieldwork in February 2019.

Birds	Scientific name	BWI Status	Habitat Type
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Green	Dense woodland to open moorland, common in gardens
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Green	Hedgerows, gardens and farmland
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Green	Hedgerows, gardens and farmland
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	Green	Woods, hedges, gardens
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	Green	Woods, hedges, gardens

Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	Green	Woods, hedges, gardens
Meadow Pipit	<i>Erythacus rubecula</i>	Green	Woodland, gardens and parks
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Green	Gardens, woods, hedges
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Green	Woodland, gardens and parks
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	Green	Gardens, woods, hedges

5. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

5.1. SITE EVALUATION

The ecological value of the site was assessed following the guidelines set out in the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (2016) and according to the Natura Scheme for evaluating ecological sites (after Nairn & Fossitt, 2004). Judgements on the evaluation were made using geographic frames of reference, e.g. European, National, Regional or Local.

Due cognisance of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna, such as those with a "stepping stone" and ecological corridors function, as referenced in Article 10 of the Habitats Directive were considered in this assessment.

Following a detailed literature review, desktop assessment and field survey the site can be categorised into two broad habitat types:

- Improved agricultural grassland (GA1)
- Hedgerows & Scrub (WS1 & WL1)

There are no Annexed habitats on or adjacent to the proposed development site. There were no rare or protected species recorded on the site and there were no invasive species recorded. There are no rare or protected habitats recorded within the study area.

There are no rivers or streams that cross the proposed development site, as indicated in Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) Geographical Information System (GIS) data made available by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The site is bounded by the M4 Motorway to the south west, the town of Kilcock to the east, the Dublin/Sligo railway line to the north east and agricultural land to the west and north west. There are no hydrological pathways to nearby rivers or streams evident. The nearest river, Rye Water, is separated from the proposed Project by the Dublin/Sligo railway line, the Royal Canal, and residential development associated with Kilcock.

The habitats under the footprint of the proposed development are of low to moderate local ecological value with the hedgerows being of low to moderate value.

5.2. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.2.1. Direct Impacts

Habitats

Improved agricultural grassland (GA1)

There will be a minor loss of agricultural grassland which is considered imperceptible and neutral in the context of proposed green areas within the Project design.

Scrub (WS1)

The bramble scrub areas are considered of low value at a local level. The minor loss is considered imperceptible and neutral.

Hedgerows(WL1)

Outer boundary hedgerows will be retained in place where feasible and there will be no impacts on these habitats. A separate Tree Survey report is included in the planning application which details specific trees and sections of hedgerow to be removed. There will be a loss of sections of five internal hedgerows of low to moderate value and the loss is considered imperceptible and neutral.

Fauna

Otters

There will be no direct or indirect impact on otters.

Badgers

There will be no direct or indirect impact on badgers.

Bats & Birds

All birds are protected under the Wildlife Acts. Potential impacts on nesting birds can be avoided by timing the cutting of vegetation as required by the Wildlife Acts.

5.2.2. Indirect Impacts

The potential for any adverse effects on the Rye Water/Carton or Dublin Bay European sites as a result of the proposed Project is highly unlikely given:

- The distance between the proposed Project and the European sites considered;
- The lack of hydrological connectivity between the proposed Project site and any water courses that flow to the European sites considered; and
- That the proposed Project is to be connected to the existing public sewer networks for the treatment of wastewater and surface water.

All bats are protected under the Wildlife Acts. Overall, the site is of low to moderate value for commuting and feeding bats. The site is of relatively low value for commuting bats and the standard recommendation that 'lighting should not exceed 3 lux along any hedgerow or mature trees to allow for bat feeding and commuting' will be adhered to.

5.2.3. Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts or effects are changes in the environment that result from numerous human-induced, small-scale alterations. Cumulative impacts can be thought of as occurring through two main pathways: first, through persistent additions or losses of the same materials or resource, and second, through the compounding effects as a result of the coming together of two or more effects.

As part of the Screening for an Appropriate Assessment, in addition to the proposed works, other relevant projects and plans in the region must also be considered at this stage. This step aims to identify at this early stage any possible significant in-combination or cumulative effects / impacts of the proposed development with other such plans and projects on the Natura 2000 sites.

A review of mapping made available through the planning section of the Kildare County Council website indicates that, within the last three years, there have been four applications for planning granted permission in the vicinity of the proposed Project, details below.

Under **Planning Ref 16639** Kildare County Council granted permission for (1) extended opening hours of Monday to Friday 7.30am to 6.30pm and associated Condition 2 of Ref. Ref. 04/1720 which restricted opening hours Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 6.00pm and (2) retention of total number of 58 no. childcare spaces within the established facility, consistent with relevant Regulations, and associated modification to Condition 5 of Reg. Ref. 04/1720 which limited the maximum number of children using the premises to 31 no. at any one time.

Under **Planning Ref 17116** Kildare County Council granted permission for the construction of a lean-to porch to front door of existing dwelling.

Under **Planning Ref 17743** Kildare County Council granted permission for alterations to the previously permitted planning permission reference number 13/846. The alterations to include the following: (1) Omission of the sub-station; (2) Omission of the underground foul storage tank and pumping station; (3) Relocation of the underground fire water storage tank; (4) Revised landscape design; (5) New external door to switch-room on northern elevation; (6) Revised design to guardrails at roof level. Revised by Significant Further Information which consists of minor alteration to front entrance gate added to proposed development, additional details and drawings of relocated underground fire water storage tank and omitted underground foul storage tank and pumping station. Development description changed from proposed to retention in points 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6 as detailed below: (1) retention of omitted esb substation; (2) retention of omitted underground foul storage tank and pumping station;

(3) retention of relocated underground fire water storage tank; (5) retention of new external door to switch-room on northern elevation; (6) retention of revised guardrails at roof level. The Planner's Report noted:

Rye Water Valley/Cartron SAC is located approximately 6.17km east of the subject site. The previous AA screening report concluded that "having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and the proximity of same to the nearest SAC site as above, it is not considered that there would be potential for significant effects on the Natura 2000 network...". This conclusion remains applicable following consideration of the Further Information.

Under **Planning Ref 191033** Kildare County Council granted permission for (a) relocation of existing single storey portacabin, provision of new all weather artificial surface training pitch with 6m high perimeter fencing and 4 no. floodlights (12m high), 1.5m high reinforced concrete retaining wall and all associated site works (b) retention of existing single storey modular building extension (classroom accommodation) to side of existing school.

There are no predicted in-combination effects given the nature and scale of the above developments which have been screened for potential significant effects on European sites where appropriate and given:

- The distance between the proposed Project and the European sites considered;
- The lack of hydrological connectivity between the proposed Project site and any water courses that flow to the European sites considered; and
- That the proposed Project is to be connected to the existing public sewer networks for the treatment of wastewater and surface water.

6. MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential impacts on birds will be avoided by cutting of vegetation outside the bird nesting season March 1st to August 31st.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The development is located in an area of low to moderate ecological value and as such predicted to have a neutral imperceptible effect on biodiversity.

8. REFERENCES

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Appendix 1

TII Evaluation of Habitats

Ecological valuation: Examples

International Importance:

- ☐ 'European Site' including Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Site of Community Importance (SCI), Special Protection Area (SPA) or proposed Special Area of Conservation.
- ☐ Proposed Special Protection Area (pSPA).
- ☐ Site that fulfills the criteria for designation as a 'European Site' (see Annex III of the Habitats Directive, as amended).
- ☐ Features essential to maintaining the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network.⁴
- ☐ Site containing 'best examples' of the habitat types listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive.
- ☐ Resident or regularly occurring populations (assessed to be important at the national level)⁵ of the following:
 - ☐ Species of bird, listed in Annex I and/or referred to in Article 4(2) of the Birds Directive; and/or
 - ☐ Species of animal and plants listed in Annex II and/or IV of the Habitats Directive.
- ☐ Ramsar Site (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially Waterfowl Habitat 1971).
- ☐ World Heritage Site (Convention for the Protection of World Cultural & Natural Heritage, 1972).
- ☐ Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO Man & The Biosphere Programme).
- ☐ Site hosting significant species populations under the Bonn Convention (Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, 1979).
- ☐ Site hosting significant populations under the Berne Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, 1979).
- ☐ Biogenetic Reserve under the Council of Europe.
- ☐ European Diploma Site under the Council of Europe.
- ☐ Salmonid water designated pursuant to the European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations, 1988, (S.I. No. 293 of 1988).⁶

National Importance:

- ☐ Site designated or proposed as a Natural Heritage Area (NHA).
- ☐ Statutory Nature Reserve.
- ☐ Refuge for Fauna and Flora protected under the Wildlife Acts.
- ☐ National Park.
- ☐ Undesignated site fulfilling the criteria for designation as a Natural Heritage Area (NHA); Statutory Nature Reserve; Refuge for Fauna and Flora protected under the Wildlife Act; and/or a National Park.
- ☐ Resident or regularly occurring populations (assessed to be important at the national level)⁷ of the following:
 - ☐ Species protected under the Wildlife Acts; and/or
 - ☐ Species listed on the relevant Red Data list.
- ☐ Site containing 'viable areas'⁸ of the habitat types listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive.

County Importance:

- ☐ Area of Special Amenity.⁹
- ☐ Area subject to a Tree Preservation Order.
- ☐ Area of High Amenity, or equivalent, designated under the County Development Plan.
- ☐ Resident or regularly occurring populations (assessed to be important at the County level)¹⁰ of the following:
 - ☐ Species of bird, listed in Annex I and/or referred to in Article 4(2) of the Birds Directive;
 - ☐ Species of animal and plants listed in Annex II and/or IV of the Habitats Directive;
 - ☐ Species protected under the Wildlife Acts; and/or
 - ☐ Species listed on the relevant Red Data list.
- ☐ Site containing area or areas of the habitat types listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive that do not fulfil the criteria for valuation as of International or National importance.
- ☐ County important populations of species, or viable areas of semi-natural habitats or natural heritage features identified in the National or Local BAP,¹¹ if this has been prepared.
- ☐ Sites containing semi-natural habitat types with high biodiversity in a county context and a high degree of naturalness, or populations of species that are uncommon within the county.
- ☐ Sites containing habitats and species that are rare or are undergoing a decline in quality or extent at a national level.

Local Importance (higher value):

- ☐ Locally important populations of priority species or habitats or natural heritage features identified in the Local BAP, if this has been prepared;
- ☐ Resident or regularly occurring populations (assessed to be important at the Local level)¹² of the following:
 - ☐ Species of bird, listed in Annex I and/or referred to in Article 4(2) of the Birds Directive;
 - ☐ Species of animal and plants listed in Annex II and/or IV of the Habitats Directive;
 - ☐ Species protected under the Wildlife Acts; and/or
 - ☐ Species listed on the relevant Red Data list.
- ☐ Sites containing semi-natural habitat types with high biodiversity in a local context and a high degree of naturalness, or populations of species that are uncommon in the locality;
- ☐ Sites or features containing common or lower value habitats, including naturalised species that are nevertheless essential in maintaining links and ecological corridors between features of higher ecological value.

Local Importance (lower value):

- ☐ Sites containing small areas of semi-natural habitat that are of some local importance for wildlife;
- ☐ Sites or features containing non-native species that are of some importance in maintaining habitat links.

Appendix 2

Site Photos



Photo1. Improved grassland dominating, e.g. southern field facing east.



Photo2. Showing example of low value gappy overgrown hedgerows recorded on site.



Photo 3. Example of drain on site.



Photo 4. Agricultural buildings.