

1 Introduction

This Screening Conclusion and Statement is taken from the documented Screening Assessment undertaken on behalf of Galway County Council by Ecofact Environmental Consultants Ltd. (March, 2011).

The foregoing Stage 1 Screening Assessment contains a detailed description of the adopted Tuam Local Area Plan (2011-2017); identifies the relevant Natura 2000 sites, their qualifying interests and conservation objectives; and provides an assessment of likely direct, indirect and cumulative impacts.

Any reference to this Screening Conclusion and Statement must take regard of the Stage 1 Screening Assessment.

2 Screening Conclusion and Statement

According to the NPWS (2009), Screening can result in the following possible conclusions or outcomes:

1. AA is not required: Screening, followed by consultation and agreement with the NPWS, establishes that the plan or project is directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the site.
2. No potential for significant effects/AA is not required: Screening establishes that there is no potential for significant effects and the project or plan can proceed as proposed.
3. Significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain: The plan or project must either proceed to Stage 2 (AA), or be rejected if significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain.

The Tuam Local Area plan is not directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the site.

It is acknowledged that the Tuam Local Area plan does have potential for adverse effects on the Lough Corrib SAC. Statutory consultation with the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (Ref: DAU-2010-GA-GA-FP2010/002a) states that: *'The Tuam Local Area Plan has potential to have significant effects on Lough Corrib cSAC (site code 297) both within and outside the plan area. All parts of the plan area drain ultimately to the SAC and Lough Corrib.'*

However, it is considered by Galway County Council that the adopted 2011-2017 Tuam LAP has included changes and amendments solely designed to increase the level of protection and conservation afforded to the Natura 2000 site network; specifically the Lough Corrib cSAC. This Stage 1 Screening Report has demonstrated that the inclusion and implementation of a comprehensive suite of Policies and Objectives in the LAP will reduce the potential for adverse effects on the SAC to below the threshold where these impacts are considered to significantly affect the conservation objectives of the Lough Corrib SAC; with respect to significant adverse effects on the key conservation interests and overall site integrity. In particular Policy DS4 aims to "Ensure that any plans/projects [within the Plan area] with the potential to give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 Sites (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) are subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (Appropriate Assessment) under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and associated legislation and guidelines". Such policies and other provisions would ensure that such effects would not occur.