

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING
IN LINE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF
ARTICLE 6(3)
OF THE
EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE

OF THE
DRAFT GAELTACHT LOCAL AREA PLAN
ACCOMPANYING (APPENDIX III) THE
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT



For: Galway County Council

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Terms of Reference

This is an Appropriate Assessment Screening - in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) - of the Draft Gaeltacht Local Area Plan.

1.2 Methodology

This report complies with the European Communities (2000) *Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EC*.

This report was prepared in compliance with the European Communities (2002) *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* - the Screening Matrix and the Finding of no significant effects report matrix (Section 2 of this report) have been taken from Section 3 (Figures 1 and 2, Page 22 to 23) of these Guidelines.

Section 2 Screening

Screening matrix

Brief description of the project or plan

The Draft Gaeltacht Local Area Plan consists of a written statement and appendices which contain maps and development control guidelines and standards. It includes community objectives for each of the six Gaeltacht districts as well as including village plans for Carraroe and Spiddal. The two village plans included in the LAP consist of land use proposals and specific policies and objectives and are the only elements of the LAP which had the potential to impact upon the Natura 2000 Sites are the village plans for Carraroe and Spiddal.

Brief description of the Natura 2000 sites

Kilkieran Bay and Islands Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Site Code 002111 is located to the west of Carraroe Bay and extends from Keeraun Point, south of Carraroe, westwards to Mace Head, west of Carna. It is an extensive coastal complex site that is of high conservation value, particularly for the examples of marine and terrestrial Habitats Directive Annex I habitats that it supports and for its important Otter as well as for its seabird populations.

The site contains a large area of open marine water, many islands and rocky islets, and the coastline is much indented with a series of bays channels and inlets. The entrances of the bays face the prevailing south-westerly winds and they are subject to strong tidal streams as the sea funnels between islands and through channels.

Connemara Bog Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Site Code 002034 is located to the north of Spiddal. It is a large site encompassing the majority of the south Connemara lowlands including a large area of relatively undamaged lowland Atlantic blanket bog of high conservation significance to Ireland as well as Europe. Because of its large size the site contains a wide range of habitats.

The site supports several bird species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive and a range of plant and animal species listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. Atlantic Salmon, listed under Annex II of the Habitats Directive occurs in many of the rivers within the site, including the Owenboliska which flows through Spiddal. Arctic Char are listed in the Irish Red Data Book as being threatened. Otter has been recorded as occurring in the Connemara Bog Complex. Irish Hare, another mammal listed in the Red Data Book, occurs on the site. Common Frog breeds on the site. The main damaging operations and threats in the Connemara Bog Complex are peatcutting, overgrazing and afforestation.

Site Synopses for both designated sites are provided in Appendix I to the SEA.

Assessment criteria

Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 sites.

Village plans for Carraroe and Spiddal included in the Gaeltacht LAP SEA could have impacted upon the Kilkieran Bay and Islands and the Connemara Bog Complex SAC Natura 2000 Sites respectively, however, due the location and extent of both plan boundaries (which were deemed the preferred alternatives as a result of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process) and due to the inclusion of various mitigation measures incorporated into the plan as

a result of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process there are no elements of the plan likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 sites.

Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:

■ size and scale;

None

■ land-take;

None

■ distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site;

The Carraroe Village Plan Boundary is, at its closest point, approximately 300m from the Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC Natura 2000 Site. The Spiddal Village Plan Boundary is, at its closest point, approximately 1km from Connemara Bog Complex SAC Natura 2000 Site.

■ resource requirements (water abstraction etc.);

The existing water supply for Carraroe is abstracted from Loughaunwillan and chlorinated. Work is expected to begin in 2007 on the Casla regional supply scheme, which will supply water to Carraroe.

Water is currently supplied to Spiddal and surrounding areas from Boliska Lough which is located 3-4km upstream of the village (*and inside the SAC*). Because of continuous population growth, it will be necessary to obtain a new abstraction order relating to the source under the provisions of the EIA Regulations. Impacts upon the source will therefore - in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity - be more appropriately assessed at the level of this individual development.

■ emissions (disposal to land, water or air);

None

■ excavation requirements;

None

■ transportation requirements;

None

■ duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.;

None

■ other;

None

Describe any likely changes to the sites arising as a result of:

■ reduction of habitat area:

None

■ disturbance to key species;

None

■ habitat or species fragmentation;

None

- reduction in species density;
None
 - changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.);
None
 - climate change.
None
-

Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 sites as a whole in terms of:

- interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site;
None
 - interference with key relationships that define the function of the site.
None
-

Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:

- loss;
n/a
 - fragmentation;
n/a
 - disruption;
n/a
 - disturbance;
n/a
 - change to key elements of the sites (e.g. water quality etc.).
n/a
-

Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.

None

Finding of no significant effects report matrix

Name of project or plan

Draft Gaeltacht Local Area Plan

Name and location of Natura 2000 sites

Kilkieran Bay and Islands Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (Site Code 002111) is located to the west of Carraroe Bay

Connemara Bog Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (Site Code 002034) is located to the north of Spiddal

Description of the project or plan

The Draft Gaeltacht Local Area Plan consists of a written statement and appendices which contain maps and development control guidelines and standards. It includes community objectives for each of the six Gaeltacht districts as well as including village plans for Carraroe and Spiddal. The two village plans included in the LAP consist of land use proposals and specific policies and objectives and are the only elements of the LAP which had the potential to impact upon the Natura 2000 Sites are the village plans for Carraroe and Spiddal.

Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the sites (provide details)?

No

Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the sites (provide details)?

The Gaeltacht LAP would not be likely to affect any Natura 2000 sites. It is not possible to reliably estimate whether the Galway County Development Plan 2003 to 2009 as amended would be likely to affect Natura 2000 Sites in County Galway.

It is not possible, therefore, to reliably estimate whether the Galway County Development Plan 2003 to 2009 as amended together with the Gaeltacht LAP would be likely to affect Natura 2000 Sites in County Galway.

The assessment of significance of effects

Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site.

Not likely to affect the sites

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.

n/a

List of agencies consulted: provide contact name and telephone or e-mail address.

The following were consulted on the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan, covering the assessment of the Plan on biodiversity and flora and fauna.

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG)

Julie Fossitt, Division Ecologist, National Parks and Wildlife Service, 091704208

Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (DCMNR)
Frank O'Brien 01 6783051

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Tadhg O'Mahony, 0214875540

Response to consultation

SEA Scoping letters sent to DEHLG, DCMNR and EPA.

Meetings held with: Julie Fossitt, NPWS, DEHLG, date unknown; Tadhg O'Mahony, EPA, unknown.

Summary of responses

Written response received from DEHLG - no response regarding biodiversity and flora and fauna.
No written responses received from EPA, DCMNR.

Data collected to carry out the assessment

Who carried out the assessment?

CAAS (Environmental Services) Limited for Galway County Council

Sources of data

Existing Records and field studies

Level of assessment completed

Desktop study and SEA practitioner site visits

Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed

On display with ER and LAP