Multiuse Games Area (MUGA)

Carrowtiege
Ballina
Co. Mayo

Screening Statement for Appropriate Assessment

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLES

FIGURES

1 INTRODUCTION

This report comprises of an Appropriate Assessment Screening for the proposed development of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) to include associated drainage, lighting, fencing and civil works at Carrowtiege, Ballina, Co. Mayo in order determine whether or not this development, alone and in combination with other plans or projects, could have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 sites (EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC), in view of the site's conservation objectives.

The Natura network is made up of Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPA) and Special Conservation Areas (SAC) for habitats and species. The proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site. The findings of the assessment will determine whether the proposed development requires an Appropriate Assessment and a Natura Impact Statement under Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

1.1 STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

The ecological survey for this report was carried out on March 31th 2021 by Leo Brogan (B.Env., Sc. M.Sc and Dip. Field Ecol.) who has the relevant academic qualifications and experience to undertaking habitat surveys and appropriate assessments.

1.2 GUIDANCE

This report has been carried out using the following guidance:

- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10[1].
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities. (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010)[2].
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg (EC 2000)[3].
- 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, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg (EC 2002)[4].

[1] NPWS (2010). Legislation Unit, NPWS Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 7 Ely Place Dublin 2.

[2] National Parks and Wildlife Services (2010): http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf

[3] European Commission (2000) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision_of_art6_en.pdf

[4] European Commission (2000)

- Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg (EC 2007)[5].
- Practice Note P01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, Office of the Planning Regulator (2021)[6]

2 SCREENING ASSESSMENT

2.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed site for the development is Carrownagloch townland, 400m west of the village of Carrowtiege which is located 45 km north west of Ballina (see Figure 1). The site is positioned immediately to the east of *Scoil Muire Gan Smal* and is proposed to link in with the existing play ground to the east.

The 0.31 hectares within the redline planning boundary (see Figure 2) are in the ownership of the Local Authority. The proposed playing surface itself is 15m x 30m (450 m^2) and the footprint of the development enclosed within the perimeter fencing is approximately 920m^2 .

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_assess_en.pdf

[5] European Commission (2007)
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/guidance_art6_4_en.pdf

[6] https://www.opr.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/9729-Office-of-the-Planning-Regulator-Appropriate-Assessment-Screening-booklet-15.pdf

Figure 1 Location for proposed MUGA Development in Carrowtiege Ballina

Figure 2 Redline boundary for MUGAs development

2.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.2.1 Description of Project

The construction of a Multiuse Games Area to include associated drainage, lighting, fencing and civil works. The proposal includes hard and soft landscaping works, surface paving, boundary treatments and all other associated site development works and services. The facility will the serve the needs of the local school and the community.

Insitu soils and subsoils are proposed to be excavated to a depth of approximately 300mm after which a geotextile membrane will be installed on the sub-base. A 150mm layer of clean broken 75mm diameter stone will be levelled and compacted followed by a 75 mm layer of 25mm diameter clean broken stone. A blinding layer of levelled and compacted 6mm clean broken stone to a depth of 50mm will be installed.

The all-weather surface will be monofilament synthetic surface underpinned with a 20mm Shock Pad throughout. Precast concrete kerbs will be laid around the perimeter of the pitch and perimeter metal fencing will be erected. Pathways and gates will be provided to access the proposed facility from *Scoil Mhuire gan Smal* and the existing playground.

It is anticipated that there will be a 3 month construction period to commencing in the July 2021.

2.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

2.3.1 Information Sources

The ecological desktop study to inform the Appropriate Assessment Screening completed for the proposed development comprised the following elements:

- Identification of European Sites within the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the proposed development area through the identification of potential pathways/ links from the proposed development area and European sites and/ or supporting habitats;
- Review of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) site synopses (Natura 2000 data form) and conservation objectives for European Sites[7] with identification of potential pathways from the proposed development; and
- Review of available literature and online data. This included a detailed review of the NPWS website including mapping and available reports[8] for relevant sites and in particular Qualifying Interests described and their conservation objectives.

An outline of the key datasets and information sources reviewed as part of the study are provided below:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) database of areas designated (and proposed) for nature conservation
- National Biodiversity Data Centre database (NBDC)[9];
- EDEN Application [10]; and
- EPA Appropriate Assessment Geo Tool[11]
- OSI and Bing Maps aerial photography and mapping were used to identify non-designated semi-natural habitats of local ecological importance.

2.3.2 Existing Environment

Habitats

Using Fossits Guide to Habitats of Ireland[12], the terrestrial habitat (See Figure 4) within the redline boundary can best be described as;

- Wet grassland (WS4) / Wet Heath (HH3) Mosaic
- Scrub (WS1)
- Hedgerow (WL1)

[7] National Parks and Wildlife Service: http://www.npws.ie/protectedsites/ (accessed February 2021)

[8] National Parks and Wildlife Service: http://www.npws.ie/mapsanddata/ (accessed February 2021)

[9] NBDC https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Map (accessed February 2021)

[10] EPA https://www.edenireland.ie/home/secure (accessed February 2021)

[11] EPA AA Geotool (https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/AAGeoTool) (accessed February 2021)

[12] Fossit 2000. A guide to habitats in Ireland. The Heritage Council

The hedgerow on the northern boundary of the site is composed of Lodgepole pine <4 m in height while that on the western boundary is composed of New Zealand Flax. Both of these species are non native and are of low ecological value.

The central portion of the site is a mosaic of wet grassland and wet heath habitats within which the majority of the MUGA footprint is proposed. Dominated by *Calluna Vulgaris* (Ling Heather) and *Molinia caerulea (*Purple moor grass with Soft rush, Marsh thistle, plantain, Knapweed and sparse patches of Sphagnum moss. Numerous mammal paths were observed traversing this habitat.

The third habitat present on the site is Scrub (WS1) which is mainly composed of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus)* and Bramble *(Rubus fructicosus).*

A summary of the habitats located within and adjacent to the site is provided in Figure 3 and photographs in Figures 4 to 6.

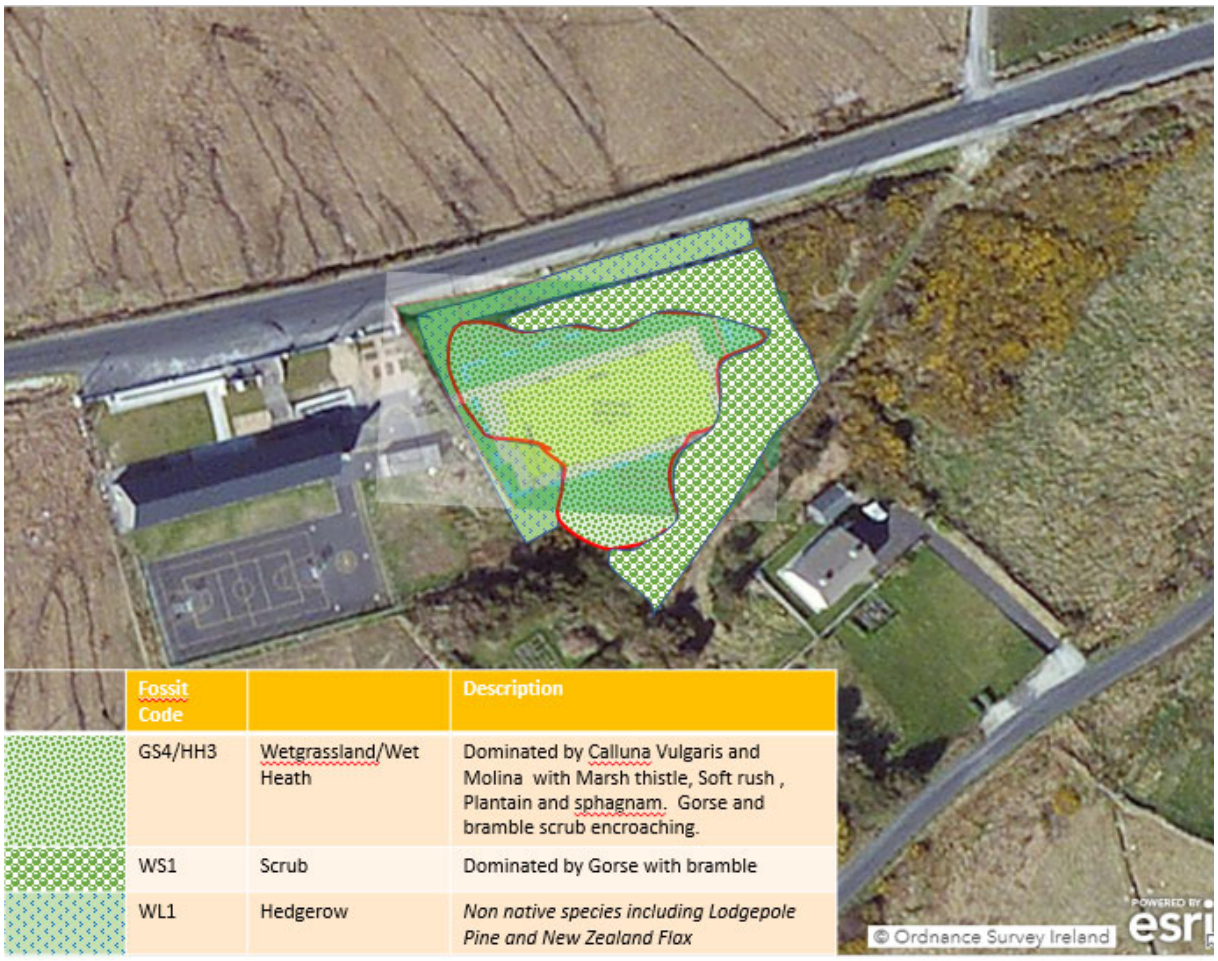

Figure 3 Habitats Map within proposed development area

Figure 4 View northwest from within featuring GS4 / HH3 mosaic

Figure 5 View northwest from within the site showing example of Scrub habitat

Figure 6 View west from existing playground showing WL1 hedgerow habitat

2.3.3 Surface Water

A review of the EPA Eden website indicates that the site is located in the Killgallingan_010 sub catchment , two tributaries of which runs approximately 80m to the west and 50m to the south of the proposed development site (Figure 7) . There are no surface water features (streams or ditches or drains) within or adjacent to red line boundary. There are currently no EPA water monitoring stations location within this waterbody and consequently the Ecological Status is unassigned

The Ecological Status assigned to Sruwaddacon Bay Transitional waterbody (IE_WE_400_0200), the receiving waterbody for Killgalligan_010 is Good, based on 2013 to 2018 data.

This section of the Killgallingan_010 discharges onto Rinroe Beach which has Blue Flag Status

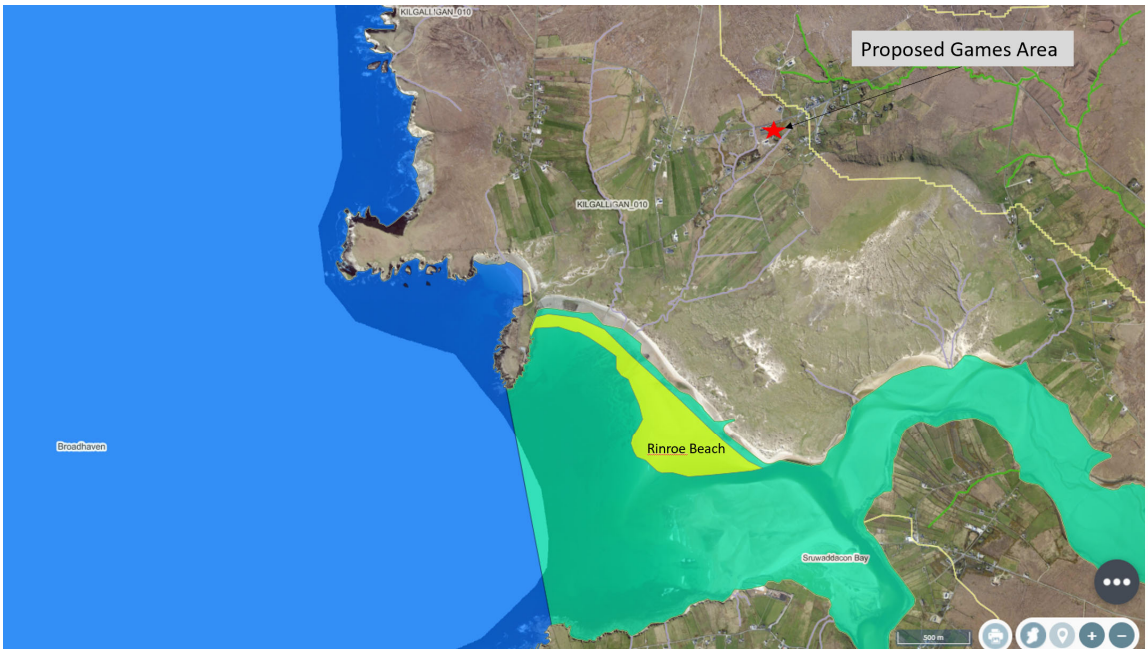

Figure 7 Proposed MUGA in relation to relevant surface water feature

2.3.4 Groundwater Environment

Bedrock at the site is the Benmore Formation (Psammite) while subsoils are described as shallow non-calcareous metamhopic tills Based on the local topography groundwater flow direction is anticipated to be to the south. The bedrock aquifer is described as Poor (PI) and) and groundwater vulnerability is classified as being high.[13]

2.4 IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT NATURA 2000 SITES

A standard source-receptor-pathway conceptual model was used to identify a preliminary list of 'relevant' European sites (i.e. those which could be potentially affected). This conceptual model is a standard tool in environmental assessment. In order for an effect to occur, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism means there is no likelihood for the effect to occur. In the context of the proposed development, the model comprises:

- Source (s) – e.g. sediment run-off from the proposed development
- Pathway (s) – e.g. drains and streams connecting to a European site
- Receptor (s) – Qualifying habitats and species of European sites

There are 11 Natura 2000 sites , 7 SACs and 4 SPAs located within 15km of the proposed development site as shown in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 respectively.

[13] Geological Survey of Ireland (2021) Groundwater Data Viewer Application https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer(Access March 2021)

All potential source-receptor-pathway relationships has been identified and evaluated in Tables 2.4 and 2.5 below. Glenamoy Complex SAC, Broadhaven Bay SAC and Blacksod Bay/ Broadhaven SPA are the only Natura 2000 sites considered further in the screening process as shown in Figure 8 below.

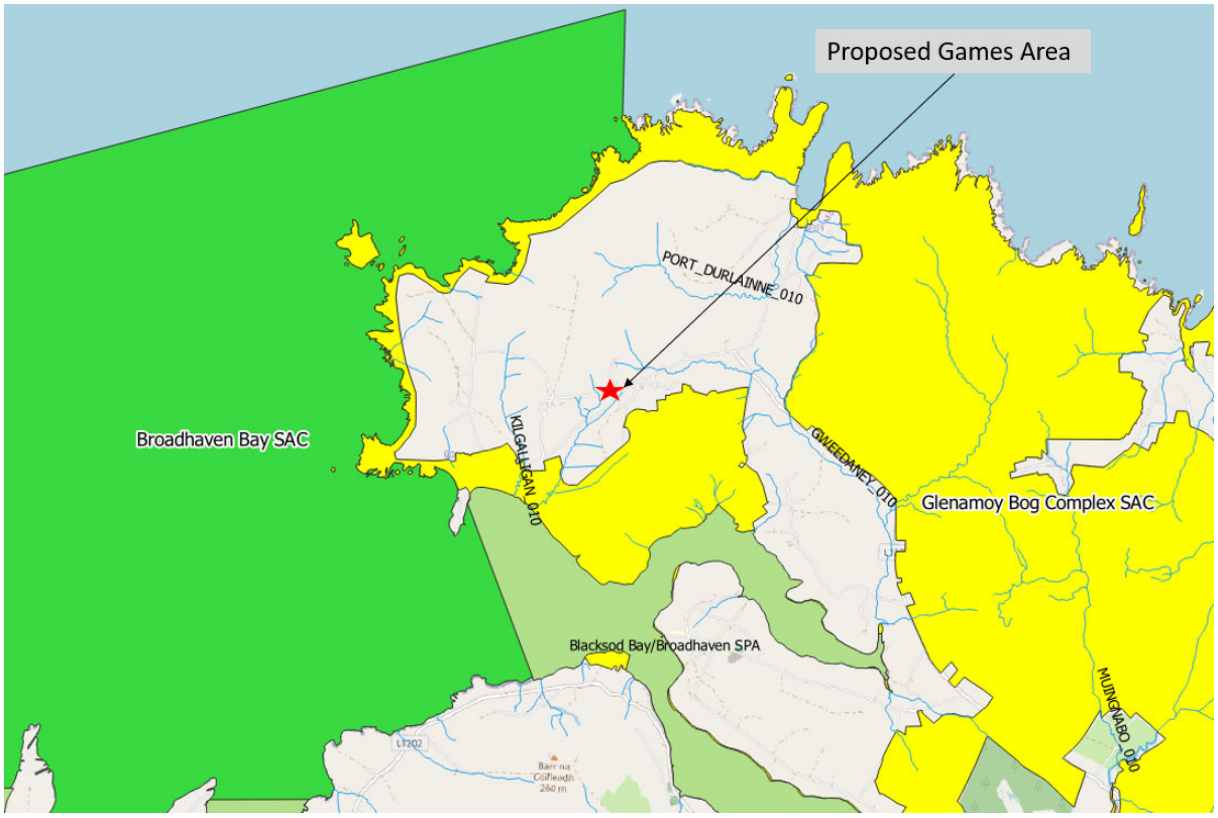

Figure 8 Natura 2000 Sites within zone of influence of the Astro pitch development

Table 2-1 Designated SAC Sites within a 15km radius of the proposed development

European Sites	List of Qualifying Interest	Distance from Proposed Development (km)	Connections (Source-pathway-receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
Glenamoy Bog Complex	**Habitats** 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts 21A0 Machairs (* in Ireland) 3160 Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix 5130 Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands 7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog) 7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion **Species** **1106 Salmon *(Salmo salar)*** 1395 Petalwort *(Petalophyllum ralfsii)* 1528 Marsh Saxifrage *(Saxifraga hirculus)* 1393 Slender Green Feather-moss *(Drepanocladus vernicosus)*	0.3 km to the south	Yes Weak Indirect hydrological pathway exist via surface water discharges. *Salmo salar* migrate into Glenamoy River via Srcuwaddacon Bay. No pathway for effects on Machair or Petalwort which is present to the south of the development	**Y (See Section 2.5)**
Broadhaven Bay SAC (000472)	**Habitats** 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1160 Large shallow inlets and bays 1170 Reefs 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) 8330 Submerged or partially submerged sea caves	1.9 km to the south west	Yes Weak Indirect hydrological pathway exist via surface water discharges to Broadhaven Bay.	**Y (See Section 2.5)**

European Sites	List of Qualifying Interest	Distance from Proposed Development (km)	Connections (Source-pathway-receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
Erris Head SAC (001501)	**Habitats** 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths	10 km to the west	No ecological connection via surface/groundwater. No ecological connection via air due to separation distance	N
Carramore Lake Complex SPA (00476)	**Habitats** 7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog) 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion Species 1393 Slender Green Feather-moss *(Drepanocladus vernicosus)* 1528 Marsh Saxifrage *(Saxifraga hirculus)*	11 km to the east	No . Indirect hydrological pathway not present. No ecological connection via air due to separation distance	N
Slieve Fyagh Bog SAC (00542)	Habitats 7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog)	11 km to the east	No . Indirect hydrological pathway not present. No ecological connection via air due to separation distance	N
West Connaught Coast SAC (002998)	**Species** 1349 Common Bottlenose Dolphin *(Tursiops truncatus)*	12 km to the west	Yes . Indirect hydrological pathway present but too remote to be significant	N
Mullet /Blacksod Complex SAC [000470]	**Habitats** 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1160 Large shallow inlets and bays	14km to the west	Yes . Indirect hydrological pathway present but too remote to be significant	N

European Sites	List of Qualifying Interest	Distance from Proposed Development (km)	Connections (Source-pathway-receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
	1170 Reefs 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* 2150 Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea)* 21A0 Machairs (* in Ireland) 3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation 7230 Alkaline fens **Species** 1355 Otter (Lutra lutra) 1395 Petalwort (Petalophyllum ralfsii)			

Table 2-2 Designated SPAs Sites within a 15km radius of the proposed development

European Sites	List of Qualifying Interest	Distance from Proposed Development (km)	Connections (Source-pathway-receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven 04037	**Birds** A157 Bar-tailed Godwit *(Limosa lapponica)* A149 Dunlin *(Calidris alpina)* A160 Curlew *(Numenius arquata)* A144 Sanderling *(Calidris alba)* A191 Sandwich Tern *(Sterna sandvicensis)* A137 Ringed Plover *(Charadrius hiaticula)* A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose *(Branta bernicla hrota)* A069 Red-breasted Merganser *(Mergus serrator)* A065 Common Scoter *(Melanitta nigra)* A466 Dunlin *(Calidris alpina schinzii)* A003 Great Northern Diver *(Gavia immer)* **Habitats** Wetlands	1.6 km	Yes Weak Indirect hydrological pathway present for surface water discharges to enter Broadhaven Bay	**Y (See Section 2.5)**
Stags of Broad Haven 004072	**Birds** A015 Leach's Storm-petrel *(Oceanodroma leucorhoa)* A014 Storm Petrel *(Hydrobates pelagicus)*	5.6 km	No . Indirect hydrological pathway not present. No ecological connection via are due to separation distance	**N**
Illanmaster SPA 004074	**Birds** A014 Storm Petrel *(Hydrobates pelagicus)*	10 km	No . Indirect hydrological pathway not present.	**N**

European Sites	List of Qualifying Interest	Distance from Proposed Development (km)	Connections (Source-pathway-receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
			No ecological connection via are due to separation distance	
Carrowmore Lake 04052	**Birds** A191 Sandwich Tern *(Sterna sandvicensis)*	11km	No . Indirect hydrological pathway not present. No ecological connection via are due to separation distance	**N**

2.5 ASSESSMENT OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON THE SITES WITHIN THE ZONE OF INFLUENCE

Table 2-3 Screening Matrix for Assessment of Significance of Potential Impacts

(a) Identify all potential direct and indirect impacts that may result in significant effects on the conservation objectives of the 3 European sites taking into account the size and scale of the project under the following headings	
Impacts	**Significance of Impacts (Duration /Magnitude /etc)**
Construction Phase • **Vegetation clearance** • **Demolition** • **Surface water runoff from soil excavations/infill and landscaping** • **Noise , dust vibration** • **Impact on groundwater/dewatering** • **Storage of excavated/construction materials** • **Access to site** • **Pests**	The construction of a MUGA facility will require clearance of vegetation from the footprint and the excavation of soil and subsoil to formation level which will be retained onsite for landscaping purposes. It is not expected to require rock breaking or dewatering during construction. There are existing available access routes to the site. There is potential for surface runoff and groundwater contamination. However the indirect hydrological connection to the European Sites is weak due to absence of water courses within or adjacent to the development and the separation distance (2km) to the outflow from the Glenamoy River (Salmon), marine habitats listed among the qualifying interests in Broadhaven Bay SAC and the SCI and wetlands listed for the Blacksod Bay /Broadhaven SPA. The terrestrial habitats and species (Machair and Petalwort) present 600m south of the site will not be impacted due to the absence of pathway.
Operational phase e.g. • **Direct emission to air and water l** • **Surface water runoff containing contaminant or sediment** • **Lighting disturbance** • **Noise/vibration** • **Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage or abstraction**	The MUGA facility will be fitted with lighting to allow its use during winter months but these will be designed to reduce light spillage Operational impacts are considered unlikely given the co-location with existing facilities with ample parking and the limited numbers of users expected. The operational phase of the development will not lead to any effects on the European sites.

• **Presence of people, vehicles and activities** • **Physical presence of structures (e.g. collision risks)** • **Potential for accidents or incidents**	
In combination Effects/Other	It is considered that due to the nature and scale of the proposed project, there is no potential for in combination effects with other projects .

(b) Describe any likely changes to the European site	
Examples of the type of changes to give consideration to include: • **Reduction or fragmentation of habitat area** • **Disturbance to QI species l Habitat or species fragmentation** • **Reduction or fragmentation in species density** • **Changes in key indicators of conservation status value (water or air quality etc.)** • **Changes to areas of sensitivity or threats to QI** • **Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site**	None. The application site is not located adjacent or within a European site, therefore there is no risk of habitat loss or fragmentation or any effects on QI species directly or ex-situ. The significant distance between the proposed development site and any European Sites, and the very weak and indirect ecological pathway is such that the proposal will not result in any likely changes to the European sites that comprise part of the Natura 2000 network in the wider area.

(c) Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening	
☐¨Yes¨ ☒ No	While best practice construction methods will be employed during construction these are not required to avoid or reduce any effects on a European site. These measures are not relied upon to reach a conclusion of no likely significant

3 SCREENING CONCLUSION

The Appropriate Assessment screening process considered potential impacts which may arise during the construction and operational phase of the proposed Multi Use Games Area at Carrowtiege, Ballina Co. Mayo.

On the basis of the information on file, which is considered adequate to undertake a screening determination and having regard to:

- the nature and scale of the proposed development,
- the intervening land uses and distance from European sites, l
- the lack of direct connections with regard to the Source-Pathway-Receptor model,

it is concluded that the proposed development, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to have a significant effect on the above listed European sites or any other European site, in view of the said sites' conservation objectives. An appropriate assessment is not, therefore, required.

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