

Report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment Screening

as required under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive
(Council Directive 92/43/EEC)

Belmullet Residential Development

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On behalf of
Mayo County Council

Project Proponent	Mayo Co. Co.
Project	Belmullet Residential Development
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Appendix A – Finding of No Significant Effects Report

Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
EEC	European Economic Community
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographical Information System
LAP	Local Area Plan
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
OSI	Ordnance Survey Ireland
pNHA	proposed Natural Heritage Area
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage System
WFD	Water Framework Directive

1. Introduction

1.1. General Introduction

This report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been prepared to support a Planning Application for the Proposed Development (described in Section 3 below). This report contains information required for the competent authority to undertake screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) on the potential for a small Residential Development at Belmullet, Co. Mayo (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development) to significantly affect European sites.

Screening is the process that addresses the first two tests of Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended) (referred to as the Habitats Directive):

- I). whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site, and
- II). whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives.

Having regard to the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (section 177U and 177V), the purpose of a screening exercise under section 177U of the PDA 2000 is to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site.

If it cannot be *excluded* on the basis of objective information that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site then it is necessary to carry out a stage 2 appropriate assessment.

When screening the project, there are two possible outcomes:

- the project poses no risk of a significant effect and as such requires no further assessment; and
- the project has potential to have a significant effect (or this is uncertain) and AA of the project is necessary.

This report has been prepared by Moore Group - Environmental Services to support a Part 8 application for the Proposed Development to allow Mayo County Council to carry out AA screening in relation to the Proposed Development. The report was compiled by Ger O'Donohoe (B.Sc. Applied Aquatic Sciences (GMIT, 1993) & M.Sc. Environmental Sciences (TCD, 1999)) who has 25 years' experience in environmental impact assessment and has completed numerous Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports and Natura Impact Statements on terrestrial and aquatic habitats for numerous projects.

1.2. Legislative Background - The Habitats and Birds Directives

It is necessary that the Proposed Development has regard to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. This is transposed into Irish Law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 to 2015 (referred to as the Habitats Regulations). The Planning and Development Act 2000 (section 177U and 177V) govern the requirement to carry out appropriate assessment per Section 1.1 above.

The Habitats Directive is the main legislative instrument for the protection and conservation of biodiversity in the European Union (EU). Under the Habitats Directive, Member States are obliged to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) which contain habitats or species considered important for protection and conservation in a EU context.

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds), transposed into Irish law by the Habitats Regulations 2011, is concerned with the long-term protection and management of all wild bird species and their habitats in the EU. Among other things, the Birds Directive requires that Special Protection Areas (SPAs) be established to protect migratory species and species which are rare, vulnerable, in danger of extinction, or otherwise require special attention.

SACs designated under the Habitats Directive and SPAs, designated under the Birds Directive, form a pan-European network of protected sites known as Natura 2000. The Habitats Directive sets out a unified system for the protection and management of SACs and SPAs. These sites are also referred to as European sites.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the requirement for an assessment of proposed plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites.

Article 6(3) establishes the requirement to screen all plans and projects and to carry out a further assessment if required (Appropriate Assessment (AA)). Article 6(4) establishes requirements in cases of imperative reasons of overriding public interest:

Article 6(3): *“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”*

Article 6(4): *“If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, Member States shall take all*

compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to the beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.”

2. Methodology

The Commission’s methodological guidance (EC, 2002 & 2018, see Section 2.1 below) promotes a four-stage process to complete the AA and outlines the issues and tests at each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required.

Stages 1 and 2 deal with the main requirements for assessment under Article 6(3). Stage 3 may be part of Article 6(3) or may be a necessary precursor to Stage 4. Stage 4 is the main derogation step of Article 6(4).

Stage 1 Screening: This stage examines the likely effects of a project either alone or in combination with other projects upon a Natura 2000 site and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant. In order to screen out a project, it must be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment: In this stage, there is a consideration of the impact of the project with a view to ascertain whether there will be any adverse effect on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site’s structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are predicted impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts is considered.

Stage 3 Assessment of Alternative Solutions: This stage examines alternative ways of implementing the project that, where possible, avoid any adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

Stage 4 Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain: Where imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist, an assessment to consider whether compensatory measures will or will not effectively offset the damage to the sites will be necessary.

To ensure that the Proposed Development complies fully with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and all relevant Irish transposing legislation, Moore Group compiled this report to support an application for planning permission for the Proposed Development to allow Mayo County Council to carry out AA screening in relation to the Proposed Development to determine whether the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with another plan or project will have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site.

2.1. Guidance

This report has been compiled in accordance with guidance contained in the following documents:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities. (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 rev.).
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10.
- 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 (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001); hereafter referred to as the EC Article Guidance Document.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2000); hereafter referred to as MN2000.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018).
- OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (OPR, 2021).

2.2. Data Sources

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 1995-2021;
- 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;

- Mayo County Development Plan 2021-2027

3. Description of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Development consists of the construction of 4 no. dwellings along with all associated site development works including roads, car parking, footways, site boundaries, drainage, associated earthworks, public lighting, utilities, services connections and ancillary works.

The mix of dwellings includes, 2 No. 2-bedroomed 2 storey houses and 2 No. 1- bedroomed apartments in a 2 storey block.

Figure 1 shows the Proposed Development location and Figure 2 shows a detailed view of the Proposed Development boundary on recent aerial photography. Figure 3 shows the layout of the Proposed Development.

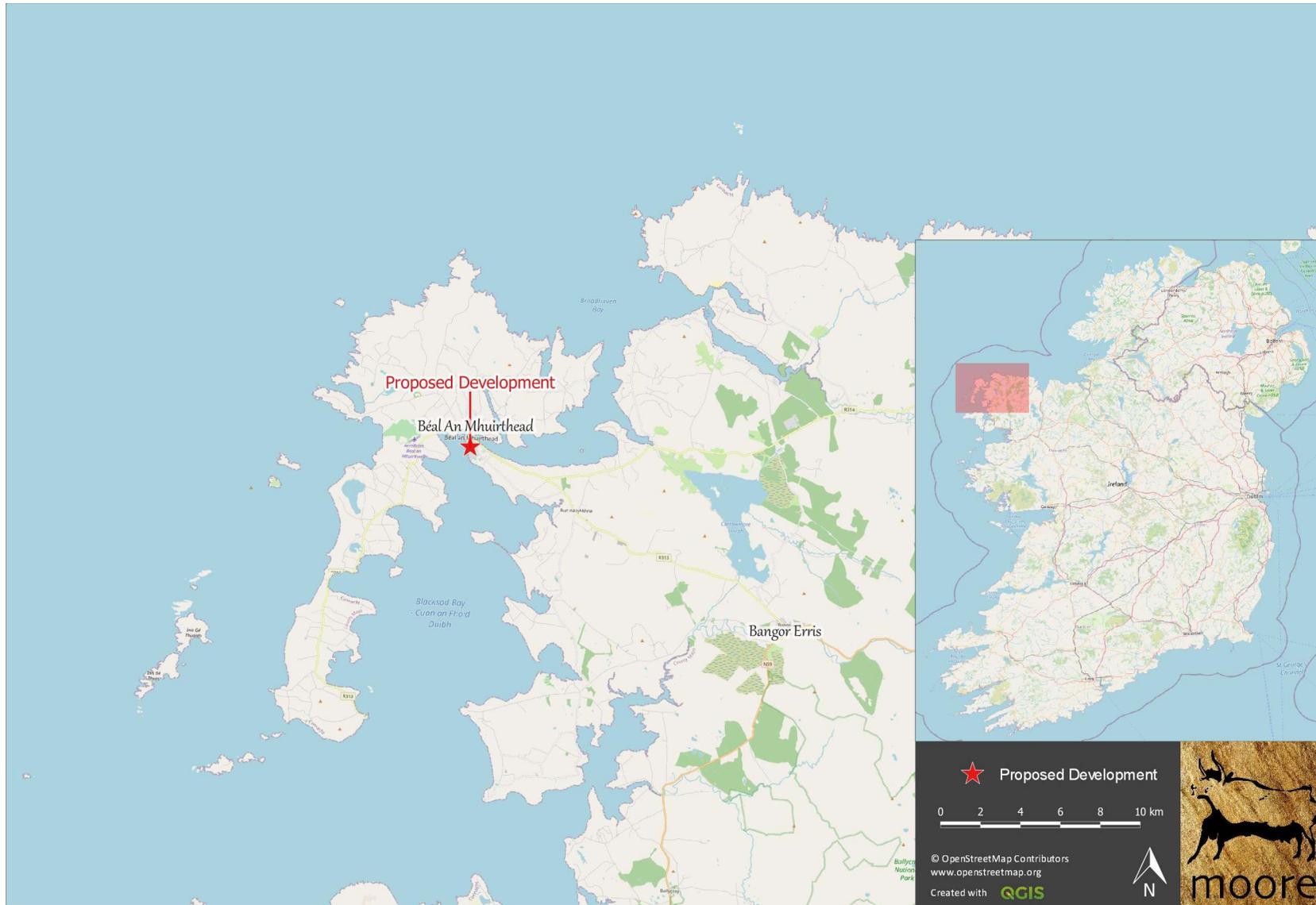


Figure 1. Showing the Proposed Development location at Belmullet, Co. Mayo.



Figure 2. Showing the Proposed Development boundary on recent aerial photography.

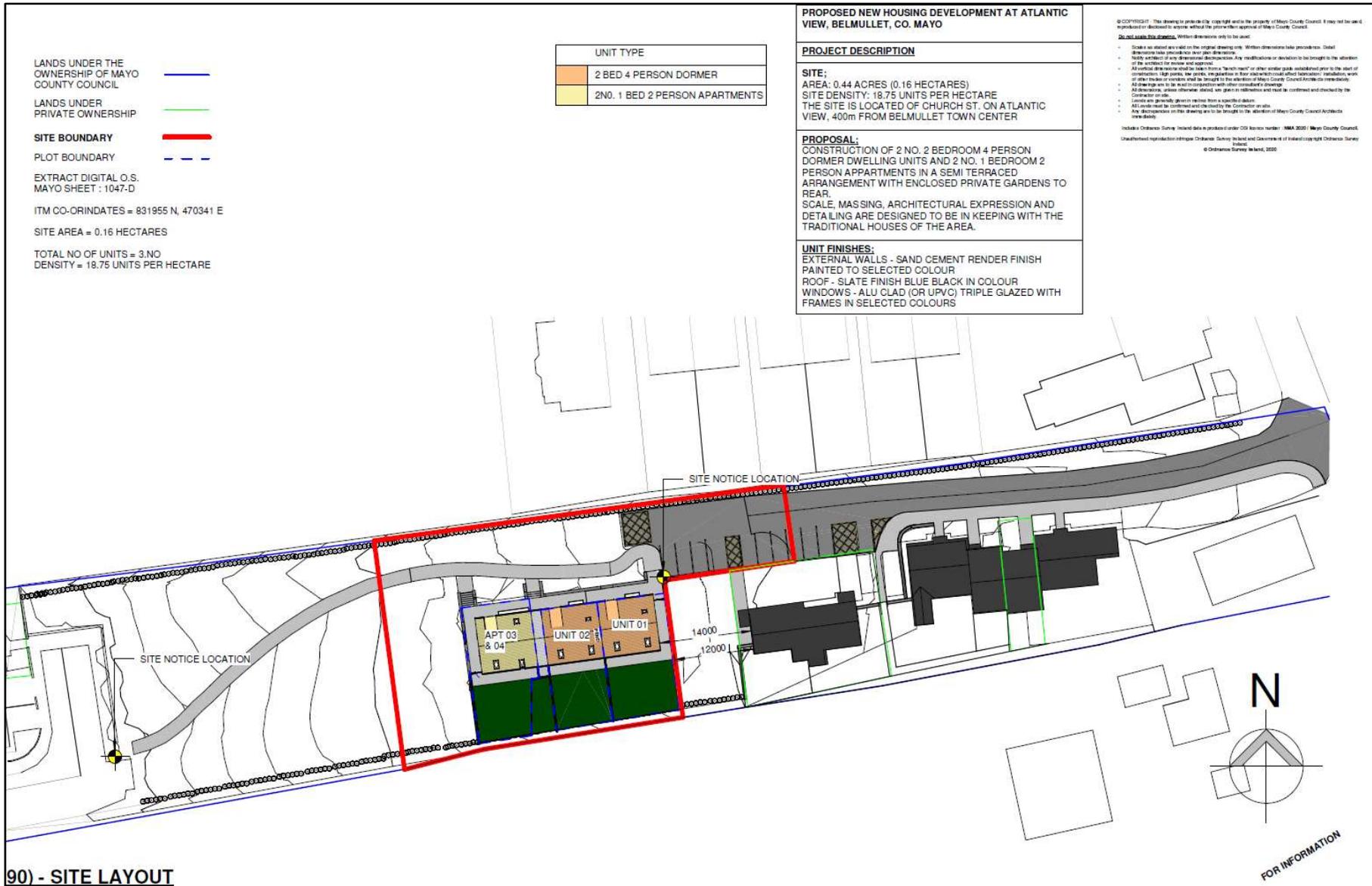


Figure 3. Plan of the Proposed Development.

4. Identification of Natura 2000 Sites

4.1. Description of Natura Sites Potentially Affected

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009) Guidance on Appropriate Assessment recommends an assessment of European sites within a Zone of Influence (Zoi) of 15km. This distance is a guidance only and a zone of influence 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 Qualifying Interests of a European site. This should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source- Pathway-Receptor framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km).

The Zone of Influence may be determined by connectivity to the Proposed Development 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 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 15km of the Proposed Development 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 16 April 2021.

Table 1 European Sites located within 15km or the potential Zone of Influence¹ of the Proposed Development.

Site Code	Site name	Distance (km) ²
000470	Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC	0.20
000472	Broadhaven Bay SAC	0.39
000476	Carrowmore Lake Complex SAC	10.68
000500	Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC	12.01
000507	Inishkea Islands SAC	14.08
001501	Erris Head SAC	5.89
002998	West Connacht Coast SAC	4.47
004004	Inishkea Islands SPA	14.21
004037	Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA	0.20
004052	Carrowmore Lake SPA	10.72

¹ All European sites potentially connected irrespective of the nature or scale of the Proposed Development.

² Distances indicated are the closest geographical distance between the Proposed Development and the European site boundary, as made available by the NPWS. Connectivity along hydrological pathways may be significantly greater.

Site Code	Site name	Distance (km) ²
004084	Inishglora and Inishkeeragh SPA	8.35
004093	Termoncarragh Lake and Annagh Machair SPA	4.26
004227	Mullet Peninsula SPA	1.88

The nearest European sites to the Proposed Development are associated with the Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex and include the Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC 0004700, Broadhaven Bay SAC 000472, Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA 004037 and Mullet Peninsula SPA 004227.

There is no connectivity to any European sites within or outside the guideline 15km zone of potential impact.

The Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of the European sites in the vicinity of the Proposed Development are provided in Table 2 below.

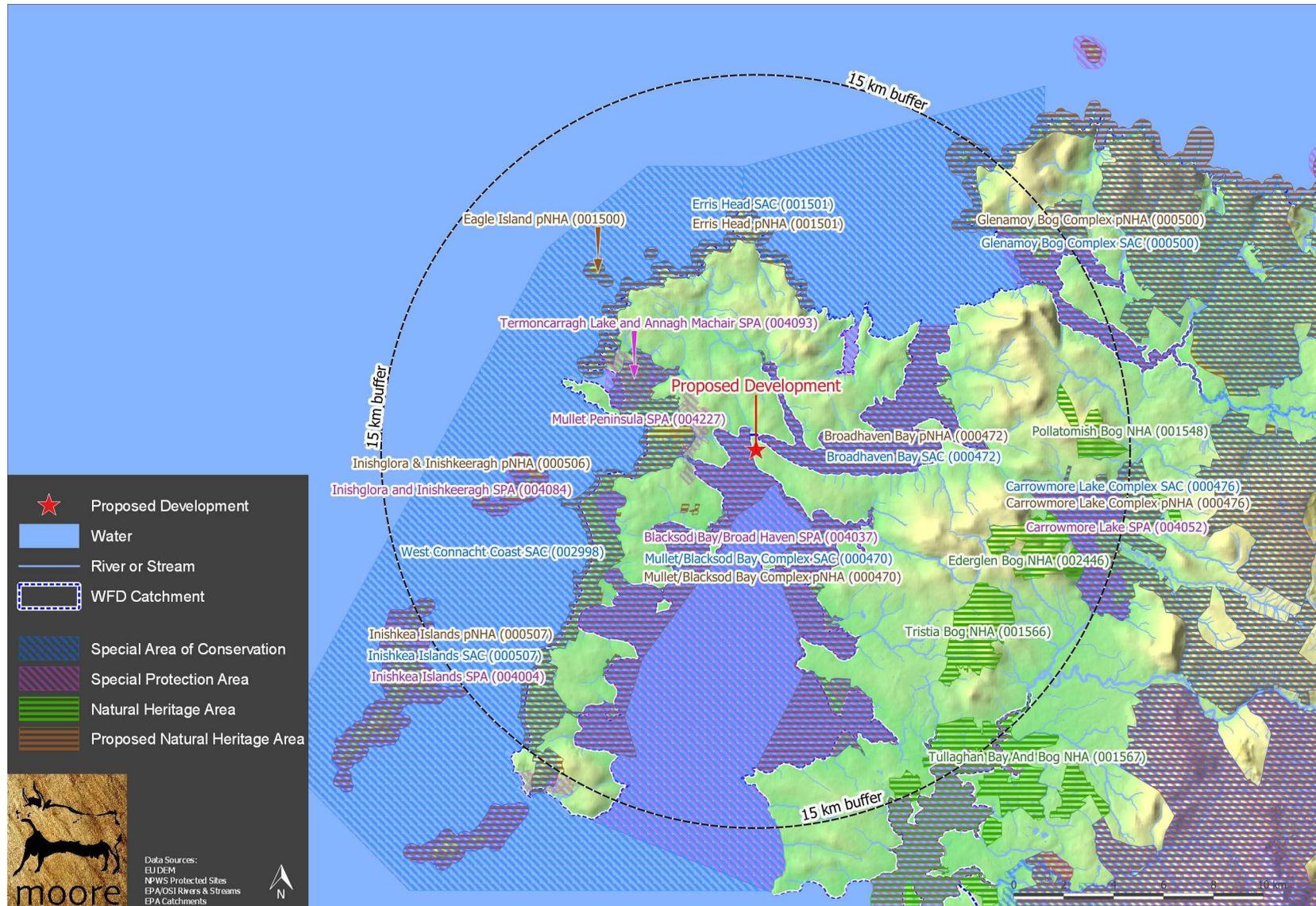


Figure 4. Showing European sites and NHAs/pNHAs within 15km of the Proposed Development.



Figure 5. Detailed view of European sites in the vicinity of the Proposed Development.

Table 2 Identification of relevant European sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model and compilation of information QIs and conservation objectives.

European site name & Site code	Location Relative to the Proposed Development Site	Connectivity – Source-Pathway-Receptor	Considered further in Screening – Y/N
<p>Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC (000470)</p> <p>12 Qualifying Interests</p> <p>including the Priority Habitats-Fixed coastal dunes [2130], Vegetated sea cliffs [1230] and species dependant on high water quality</p> <p>NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC 000470. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht</p>	200m to the west of the Proposed Development	No There are no pathways or connectivity to the habitats of this site.	N
<p>Broadhaven Bay SAC (000472)</p> <p>5 Qualifying Interests</p> <p>NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Broadhaven Bay SAC 000472. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht</p>	390m to the north of the Proposed Development	No There are no pathways or connectivity to the habitats of this site.	N
<p>Carrowmore Lake Complex SAC (000476)</p> <p>4 Qualifying Interests</p> <p>including a Blanket bogs [91E0]</p> <p>NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Carrowmore Lake Complex SAC 000476. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs</p>	10.7km to the southeast of the Proposed Development	No There are no pathways or connectivity to the habitats of this site.	N
<p>Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC (000500)</p> <p>12 Qualifying Interests</p> <p>including the Priority Habitats- Machairs [21A0], Blanket bogs [91E0] and species dependant on high water quality</p> <p>NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC 000500. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs</p>	12km to the northeast of the Proposed Development	No There are no pathways or connectivity to the habitats of this site.	N
<p>Inishkea Islands SAC (000507)</p> <p>3 Qualifying Interests</p>	14 km to the west offshore of the Proposed Development	No There are no pathways or connectivity to the habitats of this site.	N

European site name & Site code	Location Relative to the Proposed Development Site	Connectivity – Source-Pathway-Receptor	Considered further in Screening – Y/N
<p>including a Priority Habitats- Machairs [21A0] and species dependant on high water quality</p> <p>NPWS (201g) Conservation Objectives: Inishkea Islands SAC 000507. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht</p>			
<p>Erris Head SAC (001501)</p> <p>Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]</p> <p>Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</p> <p>including a Priority Habitat-Alluvial forests [91E0] and species dependant on high water quality</p> <p>NPWS (2016) Conservation Objectives: Erris Head SAC 001501. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs</p>	5.9km to the north of the Proposed Development	No There are no pathways or connectivity to the habitats of this site.	N
<p>West Connacht Coast SAC (002998)</p> <p>1349 Common Bottlenose Dolphin <i>Tursiops truncatus</i></p> <p>including a Priority Habitat-Alluvial forests [91E0] and species dependant on high water quality</p> <p>NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: West Connacht Coast SAC 002998. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht</p>	4.5km to the west of the Proposed Development	No There are no pathways or connectivity to the habitats of this site.	N
<p>Inishkea Islands SPA (004080)</p> <p>11 SCIs</p> <p>NPWS (2021) Conservation objectives for Inishkea Islands SPA [004004]. Generic Version 8.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage</p>	14km to the west offshore of the Proposed Development	No Due to distance and the lack of any relevant ex-situ factors of significance to these species or habitat.	N
<p>Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA (004037)</p> <p>12 SCIs including wetlands and waterbirds</p> <p>NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA 004037. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage</p>	200m to the west of the Proposed Development	No Due to distance and the lack of any relevant ex-situ factors of significance to these species or habitat.	N

European site name & Site code	Location Relative to the Proposed Development Site	Connectivity – Source-Pathway-Receptor	Considered further in Screening – Y/N
and the Gaeltacht			
<p>Carrowmore Lake SPA (004232)</p> <p>A191 Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i></p> <p>NPWS (2021) Conservation objectives for Carrowmore Lake SPA [004052]. Generic Version 8.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage</p>	10.7km to the southeast of the Proposed Development	No Due to distance and the lack of any relevant ex-situ factors of significance to these species or habitat.	N
<p>Inishglora and Inishkeeragh SPA (004084)</p> <p>7 SCIs including wetlands and waterbirds</p> <p>NPWS (2021) Conservation objectives for Inishglora and Inishkeeragh SPA [004084]. Generic Version 8.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.</p>	8.4km to the west offshore of the Proposed Development	No Due to distance and the lack of any relevant ex-situ factors of significance to these species or habitat.	N
<p>Termoncarragh Lake and Annagh Machair SPA (004093)</p> <p>7 SCIs including wetlands and waterbirds</p> <p>NPWS (2021) Conservation objectives for Termoncarragh Lake and Annagh Machair SPA [004093]. Generic Version 8.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage</p>	4.3km to the northwest of the Proposed Development	No Due to distance and the lack of any relevant ex-situ factors of significance to these species or habitat.	N
<p>Mullet Peninsula SPA (004227)</p> <p>[A122] Corncrake (<i>Crex crex</i>)</p> <p>NPWS (2021) Conservation objectives for Mullet Peninsula SPA [004227]. Generic Version 8.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.</p>	1.9km to the west of the Proposed Development	No Due to distance and the lack of any relevant ex-situ factors of significance to these species or habitat.	N

4.2. Ecological Network Supporting Natura 2000 Sites

An analysis of the proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) and designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) in terms of their role in supporting the species using Natura 2000 sites was undertaken. It was assumed that these supporting roles mainly related to mobile fauna such as mammals and birds which may use pNHAs and NHAs as “stepping stones” between Natura 2000 sites.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations 2011 place a high degree of importance on such non-Natura 2000 areas as features that connect the Natura 2000 network. Features such as ponds, woodlands and important hedgerows were taken into account during the preparation of this AA Screening report .

The NHAs and pNHAs identified in Figure 4 are located outside the Zone of Influence. There are no areas of supporting habitat that will be affected by the Proposed Development.

5. Identification of Potential Impacts & Assessment of Significance

The Proposed Development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the sites considered in the assessment and therefore potential impacts must be identified and considered.

5.1. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

There is no connectivity to any European sites within or outside the guideline 15km potential Zone of Influence.

The consideration of all potential direct and indirect impacts that may result in significant effects on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the Proposed Development are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects.

Identification of all potential direct and indirect impacts that may result in significant effects on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the project.	
Impacts:	Significance of Impacts:
<p>Construction phase e.g.</p> <p>Vegetation clearance</p> <p>Demolition</p> <p>Surface water runoff from soil excavation/infill/landscaping (including borrow pits)</p> <p>Dust, noise, vibration</p> <p>Lighting disturbance</p> <p>Impact on groundwater/dewatering</p>	<p>The Proposed Development site is located within an existing developed area of Belmullet.</p> <p>Giant Rhubarb <i>Gunnera tinctoria</i> was recorded on site and will be eradicated prior to site development.</p>

<p>Storage of excavated/construction materials</p> <p>Access to site</p> <p>Pests</p>	
<p>Operational phase e.g.</p> <p>Direct emission to air and water</p> <p>Surface water runoff containing contaminant or sediment</p> <p>Lighting disturbance</p> <p>Noise/vibration</p> <p>Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage or abstraction</p> <p>Presence of people, vehicles and activities</p> <p>Physical presence of structures (e.g. collision risks)</p> <p>Potential for accidents or incidents</p>	<p>All foul and surface water runoff, once the development is operational, will be contained on site and discharged to urban drainage systems.</p> <p>There is no real likelihood of any significant effects on European Sites in the wider catchment area.</p> <p>The facility is located at a distance of removal such that there will be no disturbance to qualifying interest species in any European sites.</p>
<p>In-combination/Other</p>	<p>No likely significant in-combination effects are identified.</p>
<p>Describe any likely changes to the European site:</p>	
<p>Examples of the type of changes to give consideration to include:</p> <p>Reduction or fragmentation of habitat area</p> <p>Disturbance to QI species</p> <p>Habitat or species fragmentation</p> <p>Reduction or fragmentation in species density</p> <p>Changes in key indicators of conservation status value (water quality etc.)</p> <p>Changes to areas of sensitivity or threats to QI</p> <p>Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site</p> <p>Climate change</p>	<p>None.</p> <p>The Proposed Development 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.</p> <p>It can be noted that the suburban nature of the proposed development area and distance from the coastal SPAs do not present opportunities to support the bird species for which the surrounding SPAs are designated.</p>

Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening?	
No	While best practice construction methods may be employed with regard to the local environment 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 effects on any European site.

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

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

It may be 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.

5.2. Assessment of Potential In-Combination Effects

In-combination effects are changes in the environment that result from numerous human-induced, small-scale alterations. In-combination effects 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 Development, other relevant plans and projects in the area must also be considered at this stage. This step aims to identify at this early stage any possible significant in-combination effects of the Proposed Development with other such plans and projects on European sites.

A review of the National Planning Application Database was undertaken. The first stage of this review confirmed that there were no data outages in the area where the Proposed Development is located. The database was then queried for developments granted planning permission within 500m of the Proposed Development within the last three years, these are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Planning applications granted permission in the vicinity of the Proposed Development.

Planning Ref.	Description Of Development	Comments
18839	retention of a change of use of the existing retail commercial unit to veterinary surgery and all associated site works	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
19103	demolish existing 2 storey retail unit and vacant residence and construct new 3 storey development comprising 1 no. retail unit and 6 no. apartments and associated site development works	As above. No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
19187	retain existing development	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
19210	retain 27.9 sqm and 25.5 sqm rear and side extensions as constructed. permission for construction of new gable end window and removal of stone cladding to front elevation	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
19491	renovate and alter existing house, consisting of re-development of existing kitchen wing and construction thereover of 2 no. bedrooms, alter and amend existing elevations, upgrade/modify existing entrance to the public road, install a wind turbine with a mast height of no greater than 10m and rotor diameter not exceeding 6m and carry out all required ancillary works on site	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
19616	change of use at ground floor level from a commercial floor space to a restaurant. new ground floor layout shall consist of restaurant area, kitchen, public toilets and ancillary support areas. minor elevation change to incorporate new rear access door into building, new signage provisions and to include all other ancillary site services and development works associated	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
19709	partial change of use at ground floor level from commercial to residential accommodation, including the change of use of the entire first floor area from office space to residential accommodation, extending to five no. bedrooms in total over ground and first floor, all of which are for letting (air b & b). permission also sought for an extension to the retained and existing commercial unit at ground floor including permission for minor modifications to the front elevation and to include all other ancillary site services and development works associated with this permission	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
201037	demolish existing detached dwelling house, construct replacement detached dwelling house together with associated site works	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
20240	redevelopment of the existing single storey detached dwelling to include new first floor accommodation within a new roof element, internal reconfigurations at ground level, provision of an extension at ground floor level located to the rear of the property, modifications to the existng elevations and to include all other site services and development works associated.	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
208	modifications to p08/304 the parent application and subsequent planning under p09/779- planning retention for two no. window sections inserted upon the existing western elevation at ground floor level. planning permission is sought at first floor level, for a change of use to convert the existing dining room, bar area, stairs shaft, five female and male toilet facilities, part of the existing external terrace and change their use into sleeping accommodation. the sleeping accommodation extends to providing an additional ten no. bedrooms to the existing development. permission is also sought for alterations to existing western elevation all at first floor level to accommodate	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.

Planning Ref.	Description Of Development	Comments
	bedroom window openings and to include all other ancillary site services and development works associated	
20810	provide an additional use to a previously approved restaurant development under p19/616. the additional use sought is for a takeaway service/use to support the previously approved development and to include all other ancillary site services and development works associated with this permission.	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
20895	revisions to previously approved development under p20/240	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.

There are no predicted in-combination effects given that the reasons discussed in the 'Comments' column of Table 3, above, and given that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any adverse effects on nearby European sites.

The Mayo County Development Plan in complying with the requirements of the Habitats Directive requires that all Projects and Plans that could affect the Natura 2000 sites in the same zone of impact of the Proposed Development site would be initially screened for Appropriate Assessment and if requiring Stage 2 AA, that appropriate employable mitigation measures would be put in place to avoid, reduce or ameliorate negative impacts. In this way any, in-combination impacts with Plans or Projects for the proposed development area and surrounding townlands in which the proposed development site is located, would be avoided.

The listed developments have been granted permission in most cases with conditions relating to sustainable development by the consenting authority in compliance with the relevant Local Authority Development Plan and in compliance with the Local Authority requirement for regard to the Habitats Directive. The development cannot have received planning permission without having met the consenting authority requirement in this regard. There are no predicted in-combination effects given that it is predicted that the Proposed Development will have no effect on any European site.

Any new applications for the Proposed Development area will be *initially* assessed on a case by case basis by Mayo County Council which will determine the requirement for AA Screening as per the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

6. Conclusion

There are no predicted effects on any European sites given:

- The distance between the Proposed Development and any European Sites;
- The lack of connectivity between the Proposed Development and any hydrological pathways;

- The Proposed Development is to be connected to the existing public sewer network for the treatment of wastewater.
- There are no predicted emissions to air, water or the environment during the construction or operational phases that would result in significant effects.

It has been objectively concluded by Moore Group Environmental Services that:

1. The Proposed Development is not directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of the European sites considered in this assessment.
2. The Proposed Development is unlikely to either directly or indirectly significantly affect the Qualifying interests or Conservation Objectives of the European sites considered in this assessment.
3. The Proposed Development, alone or in combination with other projects, is not likely to have significant effects on the European sites considered in this assessment in view of their conservation objectives.
4. It is possible to conclude that significant effects can be excluded at the screening stage.

It can be *excluded*, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

An appropriate assessment is not, therefore, required.

A finding of no significant effects report is presented in Appendix A in accordance with the EU Commission's methodological guidance (European Commission, 2002).

7. References

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2010) Guidance on Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (as amended February 2010).

European Commission (2000) Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.

European Commission Environment DG (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. European Commission, Brussels.

European Commission (2007) 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 interests, compensatory measures, overall coherence and opinion of the Commission. European Commission, Brussels.

European Commission (2018) Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.

NPWS (2019) The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

NPWS (2021) National Parks and Wildlife Service Metadata available online at <https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data>

Office-of-the-Planning-Regulator (2021) Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management OPR Practice Note PN01. March 2021

Appendix A

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS REPORT

Finding no significant effects report matrix

Name of project or plan

Belmullet Residential Development

Name and location of the Natura 2000 site(s)

The nearest The nearest European sites to the Proposed Development are associated with the Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex and include the Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC 0004700, Broadhaven Bay SAC 000472, Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA 004037 and Mullet Peninsula SPA 004227.

There is no connectivity to any European sites within or outside the guideline 15km zone of potential impact.

Description of the project or plan

The Proposed Development consists of the construction of 4 no. dwellings along with all associated site development works including roads, car parking, footways, site boundaries, drainage, associated earthworks, public lighting, utilities, services connections and ancillary works.

The mix of dwellings includes, 2 No. 2-bedroomed 2 storey houses and 2 No. 1- bedroomed apartments in a 2 storey block.

Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site(s)

No

Are there other projects or plans that together with the projects or plan being assessed could affect the site

A review of the National Planning Application Database was undertaken. The first stage of this review confirmed that there were no data outages in the area where the Proposed Development is located. The database was then queried for developments granted planning permission within 500m of the Proposed Development within the last three years, these are presented in Table 4 below.

Planning applications granted permission in the vicinity of the Proposed Development.

Planning Ref.	Description Of Development	Comments
18839	retention of a change of use of the existing retail commercial unit to veterinary surgery and all associated site works	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
19103	demolish existing 2 storey retail unit and vacant residence and construct new 3 storey development comprising 1 no. retail unit and 6 no. apartments and associated site development works	As above. No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
19187	retain existing development	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
19210	retain 27.9 sqm and 25.5 sqm rear and side extensions as constructed. permission for construction of new gable end window and removal of stone cladding to front elevation	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
19491	renovate and alter existing house, consisting of re-development of existing kitchen wing and construction thereover of 2 no. bedrooms, alter and amend existing elevations, upgrade/modify existing entrance to the public road, install a wind turbine with a mast height of no greater than 10m and rotor diameter not exceeding 6m and carry out all required ancillary works on site	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.

Planning Ref.	Description Of Development	Comments
19616	change of use at ground floor level from a commercial floor space to a restaurant. new ground floor layout shall consist of restaurant area, kitchen, public toilets and ancillary support areas. minor elevation change to incorporate new rear access door into building, new signage provisions and to include all other ancillary site services and development works associated	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
19709	partial change of use at ground floor level from commercial to residential accommodation, including the change of use of the entire first floor area from office space to residential accommodation, extending to five no. bedrooms in total over ground and first floor, all of which are for letting (air b & b). permission also sought for an extension to the retained and existing commercial unit at ground floor including permission for minor modifications to the front elevation and to include all other ancillary site services and development works associated with this permission	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
201037	demolish existing detached dwelling house, construct replacement detached dwelling house together with associated site works	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
20240	redevelopment of the existing single storey detached dwelling to include new first floor accommodation within a new roof element, internal reconfigurations at ground level, provision of an extension at ground floor level located to the rear of the property, modifications to the existing elevations and to include all other site services and development works associated.	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
208	modifications to p08/304 the parent application and subsequent planning under p09/779- planning retention for two no. window sections inserted upon the existing western elevation at ground floor level. planning permission is sought at first floor level, for a change of use to convert the existing dining room, bar area, stairs shaft, five female and male toilet facilities, part of the existing external terrace and change their use into sleeping accommodation. the sleeping accommodation extends to providing an additional ten no. bedrooms to the existing development. permission is also sought for alterations to existing western elevation all at first floor level to accommodate bedroom window openings and to include all other ancillary site services and development works associated	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
20810	provide an additional use to a previously approved restaurant development under p19/616. the additional use sought is for a takeaway service/use to support the previously approved development and to include all other ancillary site services and development works associated with this permission.	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.
20895	revisions to previously approved development under p20/240	No potential for in-combination effects given the scale and location of the project.

There are no predicted in-combination effects given that the reasons discussed in the 'Comments' column of the Table above and given that the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any adverse effects on the nearby European sites.

The Mayo County Development Plan in complying with the requirements of the Habitats Directive requires that all Projects and Plans that could affect the Natura 2000 sites in the same zone of impact of the Proposed Development site would be initially screened for Appropriate Assessment and if requiring Stage 2 AA, that appropriate employable mitigation measures would be put in place to avoid, reduce or ameliorate negative impacts. In this way any, in-combination impacts with Plans or Projects for the proposed development area and surrounding townlands in which the proposed development site is located, would be avoided.

The listed developments have been granted permission in most cases with conditions relating to sustainable development by the consenting authority in compliance with the relevant Local Authority Development Plan and in compliance with the Local Authority requirement for regard to the Habitats Directive. The development cannot have received planning permission without having met the consenting authority requirement in this regard. There are no predicted in-combination effects given that it is predicted that the Proposed Development will have no effect on any European site.

Any new applications for the Proposed Development area will be *initially* assessed on a case by case basis by Mayo County Council which will determine the requirement for AA Screening as per the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

THE ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS

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

There is no connectivity to any European sites within or outside the guideline 15km zone of potential impact.

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.

There are no predicted effects on any European sites given:

- The distance between the Proposed Development and any European Sites;
- The Proposed Development is to be connected to the existing public sewer network for the treatment of wastewater.
- There are no predicted emissions to air, water or the environment during the construction or operational phases that would result in significant effects

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

The requirement for Appropriate Assessment Screening was determined during pre-planning discussion with Mayo County Council.

Response to consultation

N/A.

DATA COLLECTED TO CARRY OUT THE ASSESSMENT

Who carried out the assessment

Moore Group Environmental Services.

Sources of data

NPWS database of designated sites at www.npws.ie

National Biodiversity Data Centre database <http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie>

Level of assessment completed

Desktop Assessment. Fieldwork was carried out as part of the EIA process.

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

Mayo County Council Planning web portal.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

There is no connectivity to any European sites within or outside the guideline 15km zone of potential impact.

There are no predicted effects on any European sites given:

- The distance between the Proposed Development and any European Sites;
- The Proposed Development is to be connected to the existing public sewer network for the treatment of wastewater.

- There are no predicted emissions to air, water or the environment during the construction or operational phases that would result in significant effects.

It has been objectively concluded by Moore Group Environmental Services that:

1. The Proposed Development is not directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of the European sites considered in this assessment.
2. The Proposed Development is unlikely to either directly or indirectly significantly affect the Qualifying interests or Conservation Objectives of the European sites considered in this assessment.
3. The Proposed Development, alone or in combination with other projects, is not likely to have significant effects on the European sites considered in this assessment in view of their conservation objectives.
4. It is possible to conclude that significant effects can be excluded at the screening stage.

It can be *excluded*, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

An appropriate assessment is not, therefore, required.