



**Comhairle Contae  
Dhún na nGall**  
Donegal County Council

**CHOMHARLE CONTAE DHÚN NA NGALL  
DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL**

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (as amended)  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (as amended)  
ARTICLE 81**

## **Muckish Railway Walk Upgrade**

**(Phase 1 of the proposed Burtonport to Letterkenny Greenway)**

### **Part 8 Planning Report**

Prepared by : Donegal County Council  
Community Development  
Station Island  
Lifford  
Co Donegal

Date : August 2019



## **1. Introduction**

Donegal County Council proposes to upgrade approx. 7km of the existing Muckish Railway Walk to Greenway standard through the townlands of Carrownamaddy, Kildarragh, Ray, Moyra Glebe and Dunmore located in the Glenties Municipal District as scheduled below as part of Phase 1 of the proposed Burtonport to Letterkenny Greenway.

## **2. Extents & Nature of the Works**

The proposed development incorporates the following principal features: vegetation and site clearance; provision of a sealed surface path with a desirable maximum width of 3m and a general minimum width of 2m; provision of car parking facilities at Carrownamaddy; provision of traffic calming and safety measures at road crossings; provision of agricultural crossings; provision of boundary fencing, walls and railings; culverts and drains; provision of ducting; provision of way marking and directional signage and other relevant trail furniture including seating, cycle stands, landscaping and all ancillary development and associated accommodation works.

The overall extent of the works is shown on Drawing No. 2018/ORIS/MR/001 Site Location & Extents.

# **Appendix A**

## **Planning Notice**

# SITE NOTICE

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (as amended)  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (as amended)  
ARTICLE 81

**NOTICE PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 81, PART 8 OF THE ABOVE REGULATIONS, RELATING TO A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BY DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL**

TAKE NOTICE that Donegal County Council proposes to upgrade approx. 7km of the existing Muckish Railway Walk to Greenway standard through the townlands of Carrownamaddy, Kildarragh, Ray, Moyra Glebe and Dunmore located in the Glenties Municipal District as scheduled below as part of Phase 1 of the proposed Burtonport to Letterkenny Greenway.

**SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED WORK**

No.	Title	Townlands	Local Office(s) For Viewing Plans
1	Muckish Railway Walk Upgrade (Phase 1 of the proposed Burtonport to Letterkenny Greenway)	Carrownamaddy, Kildarragh, Ray, Moyra Glebe and Dunmore	Donegal County Council, County House, The Diamond, Lifford, F93 Y622 Dungloe Public Service Centre, Gweedore Road, Dungloe, Co. Donegal, F94 H4CF

**Description and Extents**

Donegal County Council proposes to upgrade approx. 7km of the existing Muckish Railway Walk to Greenway standard including related ancillary works.

The proposed development incorporates the following principal features: vegetation and site clearance; provision of a sealed surface path with a desirable maximum width of 3m and a general minimum width of 2m; provision of car parking facilities at Carrownamaddy; provision of traffic calming and safety measures at road crossings; provision of agricultural crossings; provision of boundary fencing, walls and railings; culverts and drains; provision of ducting; provision of way marking and directional signage and other relevant trail furniture including seating, cycle stands, landscaping and all ancillary development and associated accommodation works.

Note that in accordance with Article 120(1)(b)(i) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) Donegal County Council has concluded, based on a preliminary examination of the nature, size and location of the development, that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is not required.

The plans and particulars of this proposed development will be available for inspection (or purchase at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy,) at

Location	Address	Opening Hours
The Planning Department/Reception, Donegal County Council	County House, Lifford, Co. Donegal, F93 Y622	9:00am – 12.30pm and 1.00pm – 5.00pm from Monday to Thursday and from 9:00am – 12.30pm and 1.00pm – 4.30p.m on Fridays.
Dungloe Public Service Centre	Gweedore Road, Dungloe, Co. Donegal, F94 H4CF	

The proposed plans will be available for inspection from Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019 – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

Submissions and observations with respect to the proposed development, dealing with the proper planning and development of the area in which the development is situated may be made in writing to The Co. Secretariat, Donegal County Council, Lifford, County Donegal, before 4.30pm on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

Please mark the front of the envelope with the project name as per the above schedule.

Signed: Liam Ward, Director of Service

Community Development & Planning Services, Donegal County Council, County House, Lifford.

AN tACHT UM PLEANÁIL AGUS FORBAIRT 2000 (arna leasú)  
RIALACHÁIN PLEANÁLA AGUS FORBARTHA 2001 (arna leasú)  
ALT 81

**FÓGRA DE BHUN ALT 81, MÍR 8 DE NA RIALACHÁIN THUASLUAITHE, MAIDIR LE FORBAIRT ATÁ BEARTAITHE AG COMHAIRLE CONTAE DHÚN NA nGALL**

TABHAIR DO D'AIRE go bhfuil sé beartaithe ag Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall uasghrádú a dhéanamh ar thart ar 7km de Shiúlóid Iarnróid na Mucaise, mar atá faoi láthair, go dtí caighdeán Glasbhealaigh, trí bhailte fearainn Cheathrú na Madaí, Coill Darach, an Ráith, Maigh Ráithe agus an Dún Mór atá suite i gCeantar Bardasach na nGleanntach, de réir mar atá sceidealaithe thíos mar chuid de Chéim 1 den Ghlasbhealach Mholta idir Ailt an Chorráin agus Leitir Ceanainn.

**SCEIDEAL DEN OBAIR BHEARTAITHE**

Uimh.	Teideal	Bailte Fearainn	Oifigí Áitiúla ina dtig Amharc ar Phleananna
1	Uasghrádú ar Shiúlóid Iarnróid na Mucaise (Céim 1 den Ghlasbhealach Mholta idir Ailt an Chorráin agus Leitir Ceanainn)	Ceathrú na Madaí, Coill Darach, an Ráith, Maigh Ráithe agus an Dún Mór	Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall, Teach an Chontae, an Chearnóg, Leifear, F93 Y622 Ionad Seirbhíse Poiblí an Chlocháin Léith, Bóthar Ghaoth Dobhair, an Clochán Liath, Co. Dhún na nGall, F94 H4CF

**Cur síos agus Réim**

Tá sé beartaithe ag Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall uasghrádú a dhéanamh ar thart ar 7km de Shiúlóid Iarnróid na Mucaise go dtí caighdeán Glasbhealaigh, lena n-áirítear oibreacha coimhdeacha bainteacha.

Cuimsíonn an fhorbairt bheartaithe na príomhghnéithe seo a leanas: glanadh suímh agus fásra; soláthar cosán dromchla séalaithe darb uasleithead inmhianaithe 3m agus darb íosleithead ginearálta 2m; soláthar saoráid páirceála do charranna ag Ceathrú na Madaí; soláthar bearta ceansaithe tráchtá agus sábháilteachta ag trasrianta bóthair; soláthar trasrianta talmhaíochta; soláthar fálú, ballaí agus ráillí críche; lintéir agus draenacha; soláthar duchtra; soláthar marcáil bealaigh agus comharthaí léirithe treo, agus troscán cuí riain lena n-áirítear suíocháin, seastáin rothair, tírdhreachú agus gach obair choimhdeach forbartha agus cóireála bhainteach.

Tabhair do d'aire go bhfuil Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall den bharúil, i gcomhréir le hAlt 120(1)(b)(i) de na Rialacháin Pleanála agus Forbartha 2001 (arna leasú) agus bunaithe ar réamh-imscrúdú ar nádúr, méid agus suíomh na forbartha, nach bhfuil gá le Tuairisc Measúnachta Tionchair Timpeallachta.

Beidh pleananna agus sonraí na forbartha beartaithe seo ar fáil lena mbreithniú (nó lena gceannach ar tháille nach mó ná an costas réasúnach a thioctadh le cóip a dhéanamh,) ag

Suíomh	Seoladh	Uaireanta Oscailte
Roinn Pleanála/Fáiltiú, Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall	Teach an Chontae, Leifear, Co. Dhún na nGall, F93 Y622	9:00am – 12.30pm agus 1.00pm – 5.00pm ó Luan go Déardaoin agus ó 9:00am – 12.30pm agus 1.00pm – 4.30p.m Dé hAoine.
Ionad Seirbhíse Poiblí an Chlocháin Léith	Bóthar Ghaoth Dobhair, an Clochán Liath, Co. Dhún na nGall, F94 H4CF	9:00am – 12.30pm agus 1.00pm – 5.00pm ó Luan go Déardaoin agus ó 9:00am – 12.30pm agus 1.00pm – 4.30p.m Dé hAoine.

Beidh na pleananna beartaithe ar fáil lena mbreithniú ón Aoine, an 2<sup>ú</sup> Lúnasa 2019 – an Luan, an 2<sup>ú</sup> Meán Fómhair, 2019.

Is féidir aighneachtaí agus tuairimí i dtaca leis an fhorbairt bheartaithe, a phléann le pleanáil agus forbairt chuí an cheantair ina mbeidh an fhorbairt lonnaithe, a chur isteach i scríbhinn chuig Rúnaíocht an Chontae, Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall, Leifear, Contae Dhún na nGall, roimh 4.30pm Dé Luain, an 16<sup>ú</sup> Meán Fómhair, 2019.

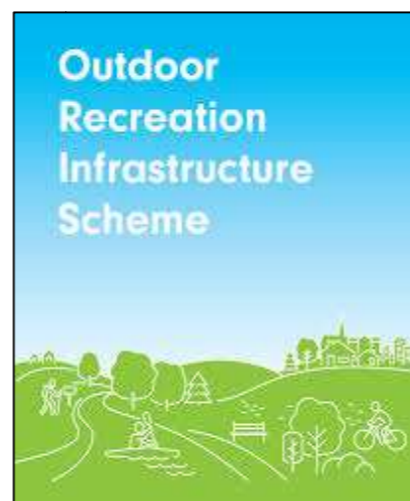
Iarrtar ort ainm an tionscadail, mar atá leagtha amach sa sceideal thuas, a chur ar thosach an chládaigh.

Sínithe ag: Liam Ward, Stiúrthóir Seirbhíse

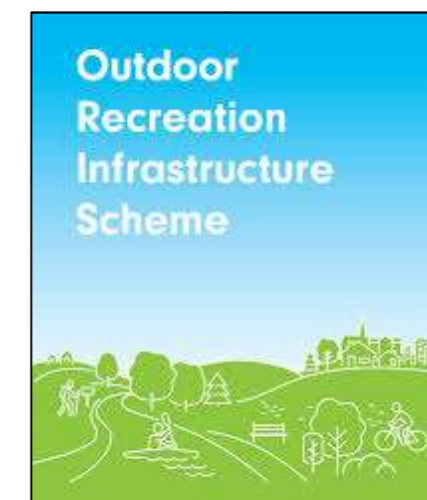
Seirbhísí Forbairt Pobail agus Pleanála, Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall, Teach an Chontae, Leifear.



**An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail**  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development



**An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail**  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development





**Appendix B**  
**Appropriate Assessment**  
**Screening Report**

**Screening Statement for Appropriate  
Assessment for Burtonport Railway trail  
upgrade between Creeslough and Falcarragh,  
Co. Donegal**

To support the Appropriate Assessment process in line with the  
requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive

Prepared by:  
Earthy Matters  
Environmental  
Consultants  
Glenvar,  
Letterkenny, Co.  
Donegal



**Screening Statement for  
Appropriate Assessment  
for  
Burtonport Railway trail upgrade between Creeslough and  
Falcarragh, Co. Donegal**

**To support the Appropriate Assessment process in line with the  
requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive**

Prepared by:

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July 2019

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**Appendix 1a:** Proposed path vis-à-vis towns and rivers and landscape details in box.

**Appendix 1b:** Site layout showing most relevant section of the path where fencing, drainage cleaning or controlled access points will be located.

**Appendix 2a:** Aerial view of habitats in proximity of path.

**Appendix 2b:** Proposed path location vis-à-vis European sites within 5 km radius of start/finish (buffer) of the path.

**Appendix 2c:** Proposed path location vis-à-vis European sites within 10 and 15 km radius of the path.

**Appendix 3:** Site Synopsis and Natura 2000 Data Forms.

**Appendix 4:** Bird records in the vicinity of the proposed path upgrade.

**Appendix 5:** Water Management Unit for Ray Sub-catchment, North Donegal

**Appendix 6:** Plate of photos (taken 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019).

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Terms of reference

This document has been prepared by Dr Florence Renou-Wilson (PhD, M.Sc. (Ag.), Dip. EIA&SEA Mngt) of Earthy Matters Environmental Consultants on behalf of Donegal County Council in order to determine the potential impacts, if any, of Burtonport Railway trail upgrade between Creeslough and Falcarragh, Co. Donegal on European sites (European Conservation designation).

This document is a Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment and is in line with the requirement of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC). As such, this report provides information required in order to establish whether or not the proposed development is likely to have a significant impact on any European site known in the vicinity as in the context of their conservation objectives and specifically on the habitats and species for which the European conservation site has been designated.

## 1.2 Context and stages of an Appropriate Assessment process

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

*“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 subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives”.*

The Habitats Directive, via the Appropriate Assessment process promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. First, the project should aim to avoid any negative impacts on European sites by identifying possible impacts early in the planning stage and designing the project in order to avoid such impacts. Second, mitigation measures should be applied, if necessary, during the Appropriate Assessment process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If the project is still likely to result in adverse effects and no further practicable mitigation is possible, then it is rejected. If no alternative solutions are identified and the project is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effects.

Following the obligations under Article 6(3), the European Commission’s guidance promotes a four-stage process to complete the Appropriate Assessment and outlines the tests required at each stage.

By taking the ecological impact assessment (in relation to the conservation objectives of European sites) in a step by step manner this report seeks to inform the screening process required as the first stage of the Appropriate Assessment procedure.

The Screening Exercise comprises the following steps:

- Determination whether the project is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site
- Description of the project
- Identification of European sites potentially affected
- Identification and description of individual and cumulative impacts likely to result from the project
- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified above on site integrity
- Statement of Appropriate Assessment screening (as per Irish guidance); Exclusion of sites where no significant impacts are foreseen

## **2 Methodology**

This report includes an impact assessment and testing required under the provisions of Article 6(3) by means of the first stage of Appropriate Assessment. In this context, a review of the potential, residual (indirect and direct) and cumulative impacts as well as mitigation measures has been undertaken. It is based on an analysis of existing ecological information including documented information about the designated and non-designated areas involved. The author also walked this area on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019. A number of guidance documents on the Appropriate Assessment process have been referred to during the preparation of this report. These include:

- NPWS (April 2012), Marine Natura Impact Statements in Irish Special Areas of Conservation. A Working Document. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- NPWS (2009), Revised February 2010. Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (NPWS, 2009, Revised February 2010);
- 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 European Communities (2000) Managing Natura 2000: the provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats Directive’ 92/43/EC.

- Requirements for the protection of fisheries and habitats during construction and development works at river sites (2011) ([www.fisheriesireland.ie](http://www.fisheriesireland.ie))

## **2.1 Specific requirements and consultation**

Since the proposed project is located within a High-Status Catchment, additional literature and guidance were followed from:

Ní Chatháin, B., et al. (2012). Management strategies for the protection of High-Status water bodies. EPA. Co. Wexford, Ireland, Environmental Protection Agency. STRIVE Report Series No 99.

Steps within the screening stage have thus been modified to include the following questions:

1. Whether the project is directly connected to or necessary for the protection of a High-Status catchment
2. Whether the project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have significant effects on a High-Status catchment in view of its environmental objectives under the Water Framework Directive.

The NPWS, Inland Fisheries, Birdwatch Ireland and Irish Raptor Study group were all requested to comment on the project proposal and this Screening Report.

## **3 Overview of the project and the receiving environment**

### **3.1 Brief description of the project**

Path improvement works are proposed along the old railway route of the Burtonport Extension from the 1km before the Muckish Trail Head to the R256 'Back of Muckish' Road (see Appendix 1). Creeslough is approximately 6.5 km from the eastern end of the site and Falcarragh is approximately 3.5 km from the western end. The proposed Greenway path will cover 6,546 m (average width: 2.5 m) along the route of the existing old railway. Two small car parks at beginning of the path and at Muckish Trail Head are also proposed. New surface to be laid on top of existing aggregate will be made up of c. 100-200 mm of clause 804 type material finished with a fine dust capping. Surface to be graded to suit existing and proposed drainage and will not exceed 5 m width (i.e. 2.5 m from the centre of the existing path), with the exception where it crosses local watercourses and drainage channels. At these crossings, localised works to clear the drain at the headwall or repair of the headwall is envisaged. The main works will include:

- Grading and compaction of the existing surface to repair potholes;
- Surface dressing of the trail with a natural finish (fine dust or gravel);
- Repair and cleaning of existing drainage channels;
- Fencing where required to control access and provide a safety barrier (near steep embankments);
- Erection of signage; installation of street furniture, such as picnic tables and benches.
- Proposed Gates/Access Control (8 locations): gates to be used in conjunction with the proposed fencing to restrict access to the proposed Greenway, all gates will be timber and placed to allow unrestricted access to pedestrians and cyclists but prevent access by unauthorised vehicles at all crossings with existing local access roads.

Due to the remote location and relatively narrow width of the existing trail, the works will be completed using small plant, which is similar in size to that used extensively by local farmers in the area (JCB backhoe loader, small 4 x 4 tractor and trailer etc.). It is proposed to improve and level the area for parking at the eastern end (i.e. Muckish Trailhead). Parking and gates already exist at the western end of the railway path at Dun Mor (see Photos in Appendix 6).

### **3.2 Brief description of the receiving environment**

This section of the old railway traverses a very natural landscape for most of its length with a mosaic of blanket bog and heath on variable peat depth depending on the intensity of past turf cutting. A large area of dense bracken is present on either side of the old railway line at the most eastern section of this project. The heath located south of the line and included in Muckish SAC is very degraded in most part, having been cut or disturbed in the past during the construction of the railway. The path is slightly elevated for the first 250m before it reaches the old railway line embankment, at which point it remains relatively flat and entirely covered of natural material be it soil or gravel substrate. It is either embanked or carved through rocks at the eastern section before it follows the southern shore of Lough Agher: a 5 m wide wetland or heathland belt separates the path from the Lough. Lough Agher is an oligotrophic lake and is also a reservoir for water supply to Creeslough. The Lough Agher River (order 1) meanders out of the lake westward. The path is bridged over Lough Agher River or its tributaries in four locations including a road bridge at Ford (joined by Maigh\_Ráithe River). The railway path follows the bridge road over the Ray River (order 4) at Moyra Glebe before reaching the R256 at Dún Mór along a local road. Except for the western end, the path is mostly tree-less except

for a few regenerated willow trees (*Salix* spp.) growing in the shelter of the railway embankment. The western section of the path is bordered by more intensively managed land with higher grazing levels, as well as regenerated woodlands (mostly willows and whins) along the bank of the path, as well as planted conifers and a private garden at Dún Mór.

### 3.3 Identification of designated sites

Using aerial photography and databases held online at [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie), a list of all Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection areas (SPAs) located within a 15 km radius of the path (centre point) has been compiled (see Appendices 2b and 2c) and their description can be found in Table 1.

## 4 Assessment of potential impacts

### 4.1 Identification of the Zone of Influence of the development

The Zone of Influence is the ‘effect area’ over which changes could give rise to potentially significant impacts.

The proposed project is **not** located within any protected European sites (see Table 1). The path will border Lough Agher, which is part of the **Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA [004039]**. **Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA (001141)** is also located 3 km away. Disturbance near a SPA site can result in loss of bird numbers using the area and, therefore, the construction works at the proposed site could significantly affect local bird populations. Therefore, both SPAs are deemed to be within the Zone of Influence of the project. On the other hand, Horn Head and Rinclevan SPA[00188] and Inishbofin, Inishdowey and Inishbeg SPA (4823) have been designated for bird populations that are confined to coastal areas or the islands and are, therefore, deemed to be outside the Zone of Influence of the project, which is located inland and can be therefore **screened out**.

The closest SAC, **Muckish [001179]** is located 5 m south of the eastern section of the railway and was designated for a range of habitats located on the mountain itself. It is deemed to be located within the Zone of Influence of the project. Horn Head and Rinclevan SAC [001460], Cloghernagore Bog and Glenveagh National Park SAC [002047], Ballyness Bay SAC [1090], Sheephaven SAC [001192], Sessiagh Lough SAC [00185] and Fawnboy Bog/Lough Nacung SAC [00140] are distant (other side of mountains etc.) to avoid direct and indirect impacts (i.e. via hydrological pathway) as they are all located within separate sub-catchments. Therefore, it is concluded that the activities associated with this facility could not impact these European sites and can be **screened out**.

Table 1: European sites within 10 km of the development.

European sites name	Distance from development at closest point of path	Conservation objectives & Article 4.1 species	Vulnerability; Do any potential source-pathway-receptor links exist between the development and the European site?
<b>Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA [004039]</b>	5 m N (Lough Agher)	Gavia arctica [breeding] Falco columbarius [breeding] Falco peregrinus [breeding] Pluvialis apricaria [breeding] Calidris alpina schinzii [breeding]	This SPA is designated for a range of birds that have been recorded within the vicinity of Lough Agher. <b>-Yes.</b> Given the proximity of this SPA, the development may indirectly impact on the quality of habitats (feeding, roosting etc.) required by populations of birds for which this SPA is designated.
<b>Muckish SAC [001179]</b>	5 m S	Alpine and Boreal heaths Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation	This SAC is designated for a range of habitats located on Muckish mountain. <b>-No.</b> The development does not directly affect any land within the SAC and there are no hydrological pathways between source and receptors.
<b>Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA (001141)</b>	3 km N	<i>Crex crex</i> [breeding]	This SPA is designated for populations of corncrake, which is breeding in this area <b>-Yes.</b> Given the proximity of this SPA, corncrake may use habitats within the surrounding area of the proposed project.
<b>Horn Head and Rinclevan SAC [00147]</b>	2.8 km N	Snail <i>Vertigo geyeri</i> ; Grey seal; Petalwort, Slender Naiad; Embryonic shifting dunes; Marram “white” dunes ; Fixed “grey”; Dunes with creeping willow; Humid dune slacks; Machairs *	This SAC is designated for a range of freshwater and terrestrial habitats that are vulnerable to direct pressures/impacts from land use or indirectly via hydrological pathways. <b>- No.</b> There are no hydrological pathways between the source to the receptors (habitats or species) of this SAC, which are located in another catchment and at a distance that precludes direct impact on habitats.
<b>Horn Head And Rinclevan SPA[00188]</b>	2.8 km N	Fulmar, Cormorant, Shag Barnacle Goose, Peregrine Kittiwake, Guillemot, Razorbill	<b>- No.</b> These bird populations are confined to the coastal areas, which are considered outside the Zone of Influence for potential air/noise/light impacts.
<b>Cloghernagore Bog and Glenveagh National Park SAC [002047]</b>	3.5 km S	Margaritifera margaritifera Salmo salar (only in fresh water) Lutra lutra	This SAC is designated for a range of freshwater habitats and related species, which are vulnerable to direct



Trichomanes speciosum  
 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae)  
 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and allitricho-Batrachion vegetation  
 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix  
 European dry heaths  
 Alpine and Boreal heaths  
 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinia caeruleae)  
 Blanket bogs (\* if active only)  
 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion  
 Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles

pressures/impacts from land use or indirectly via hydrological pathways.

**-No.** The development does not directly affect any land within the SAC and there are no hydrological pathways between source and receptors.

**Ballyness Bay SAC [1090]** 3.6 km NW

Snail Vertigo geyeri  
 Estuaries  
 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide  
 Embryonic shifting dunes  
 Shifting dunes  
 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation  
 Humid dune slacks  
 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae)  
 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters  
 Margaritifera margaritifera  
 Salmo salar  
 Lutra lutra

**-No.** The development does not directly affect any land within the SAC and there are no hydrological pathways between source and receptors.

<b>Sheephaven SAC [001192]</b>	4.2 km W	<p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</p> <p>Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</p> <p>Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330]</p> <p>Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]</p> <p>Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]</p> <p>Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</p> <p>Humid dune slacks [2190]</p> <p>Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0]</p> <p>Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</p> <p><i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]</p> <p><i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort) [1395]</p>	- <b>No.</b> The development does not directly affect any land within the SAC and there are no hydrological pathways between source and receptors.
<b>Sessiagh Lough SAC [00185]</b>	4.6 km N	<p>Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130]</p> <p><i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833]</p>	- <b>No.</b> The development does not directly affect any land within the SAC and there are no hydrological pathways between source and receptors.
<b>Fawnboy Bog/Lough Nacung SAC [00140]</b>	7.1 km SW	<p><i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i></p> <p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></p> <p>Blanket bogs (* if active only)</p> <p>Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i></p>	- <b>No.</b> The development does not directly affect any land within the SAC and there are no hydrological pathways between source and receptors.
<b>Inishbofin, Inishdowey and Inishbeg SPA (4823)</b>	8.2 km N	<p>Corncrake, Barnacle Goose, Common Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Arctic Tern</p>	– <b>No.</b> These bird populations are confined to the islands or habitat, which are considered outside the Zone of Influence for potential impacts.

## **4.2 Description of the European sites with the Zone of Influence**

### **Muckish SAC [001179]**

Muckish comprises the summit and slopes of Muckish Mountain - a large, flattopped quartzite mountain reaching an elevation of 670m with notable deposits of fine quartz sand and a fossil rock glacier. These features have led to it being designated a geological site of regional importance. The site has been listed due to the presence of two Annex I habitats listed on the EU Habitats Directive, namely alpine and boreal heath and siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation. Its qualifying interests are:

[4060] Alpine and Subalpine Heaths

[8220] Siliceous Rocky Slopes

The alpine and boreal heath habitat occurring on the summit of Muckish Mountain is of particular interest and covers an estimated 99 ha. The quartzite cliffs around the summit of Muckish Mountain comprise approximately 56 ha, 1% of the estimated national area of this habitat. This habitat, although species-poor and sparsely vegetated (as is typical for Irish examples), supports a number of notable vascular plant and bryophyte species, including one Red Data Book species – Alpine Saw-wort. Parts of the upland heath are notable for the rare heather hybrid *Erica stuartii*. This SAC has a Management Plan which identify the following conservation objectives:

- To maintain the Annex I habitats for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status; alpine and boreal heath (7% of the site) and siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation (4%)
- To maintain other habitats at favourable conservation status: blanket bog, heath, scree, cut-over bog, flushes, lakes, rivers and streams, exposed rock, sand and gravel and upland grassland on peaty soil
- To maintain the populations of notable species on the site at favourable conservation status, particularly those listed in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive (Golden Plover, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin), Red Grouse, Ring Ouzel and the populations of rare and notable plant species
- To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities

### **Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA [004039]**

Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA overlaps Cloghernagore and Glenveagh National Park SAC but its closest location to the proposed works is 300 m east (upstream) overlapping

Fawnboy Bog/Lough Nacung SAC. This is an extensive upland site (9592 ha) with blanket bog and heath being the principal habitats present. The site supports good examples of both upland and woodland bird communities with breeding merlin (*Falco columbarius*), peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), red-throated diver (*Gavia stellata*) and dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzii*) all listed on Annex I of the Birds Directive, as well as ring ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*) and red grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*), both Red-listed species in Ireland. The lakes and the woods provide important habitats for these bird species.

The objective of this designated site is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats and Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.

- *Gavia arctica* [breeding]
- *Falco columbarius* [breeding]
- *Falco peregrinus* [breeding]
- *Pluvialis apricaria* [breeding]
- *Calidris alpina schinzii* [breeding]

#### **Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA [001141]**

Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA is located on the eastern and western sides of Ballyness Bay on the north-west coast of Co. Donegal. This relatively large site (315 ha) follows the coastline from Falcarragh to Meenlaragh and encompasses three areas of mixed agricultural grassland. The site is a SPA under the EU Birds Directive, and is of special conservation interest for the following species:

- *Crex crex* (corncrake) [Breeding]

Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA is one of a suite of sites along the western seaboard that is regularly utilised by nationally important numbers of breeding corncrake. Corncrake winter in southern and eastern Africa, migrating northwards to arrive on their breeding grounds from early April onwards, departing again in August and September. They require the cover of tall vegetation throughout their breeding cycle and are strongly associated with meadows that are harvested annually, where they nest and feed. Annual cutting of these meadows creates a sward that is easy for the birds to move through. Corncrake is listed on the 2010 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red-list of Threatened Species. This is due to population and range declines of more than 50 % in the last 25 years across significant parts of its range. Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA is of high ornithological importance as it supports a nationally

important population of corncrake, a globally threatened species. Corncrake is also listed in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

### **4.3 Identification of potential impacts**

Only those features of the development that have the potential to impact on the features and conservation objectives of the identified European sites are considered. The following issues were examined in relation to the potential impacts of the development of the site (either alone or cumulative) on the identified European sites:

➤ **Disturbance to birds**

Disturbance near a SPA can result in loss of bird numbers using the area and therefore the construction works, and long-term use of the path could affect local bird populations.

➤ **Habitat loss/degradation via water quality degradation**

Disturbance of habitats near a European site may affect the designated habitats or associated species (birds) via indirect linkages via habitat disturbance or deterioration (e.g. water quality deterioration).

### **4.4 Assessment of significance**

#### ***Impacts on habitats within Muckish SAC***

The proposed path is close to the northern border of Muckish SAC where the main habitat is 'heath' and under 'active management' via a Commonage Framework Plan to reduce stock and relieve pressure on the habitat. The path is confined to the railway located above this habitat and therefore will not impinge on any habitat of conservation value. Moreover, the Alpine and Boreal Heath habitat as well as the Silicious rocky slopes are found near the summit of the mountain, more than 2km from the proposed path. In addition, the surface flow is directed north, flowing down the mountain away from the SAC border and therefore no hydrological pathway exist between the source (path) and receptor (SAC habitats). There are no direct or indirect negative impacts predicted as a result of this project due to the small scale, localised works on the existing railway outside the SAC.

#### ***Impacts on birds associated with Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA***

This SPA is one of only a few locations where red-throated diver breed in Ireland and the birds also use a number of lakes within the site for feeding. However, there are no records for red-throated diver from Lough Agher (Ger O'Donnell, NPWS, 23/05/2019). The nearest records close to the old railway line are from Lough Akeo located 1.5 km east of the starting point of the path in another valley.

The extensive bog and heath habitats located around the vicinity of the path provide an excellent foraging habitat for both peregrine and merlin. Peregrine nest on the crags and cliffs, whilst merlin nest in the heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) or in old crows' nests in trees. This SAC is also very important for breeding golden plover and dunlin. However, the proposed upgrading of the path will be confined to the existing railway path and immediate verges (grassy or low heather shrubs), which are not suitable for breeding in the first instance. The railway path is already in use by walkers and, therefore, any potential impacts are deemed non-significant.

With regards to the relevant threats and pressures posed to the site, the proposed project does not incorporate any of the mentioned categories of pressures identified other than 'walking'. No previous data exist vis-à-vis the existing activities but given that the density of visitors to this area may increase, the impact via noise or rubbish should be minimised via the use of interpretive signs (agreed by NPWS). Those have been found to have a positive impact on the conservation objectives of European Sites. Overall, the functionality of the habitats in supporting the breeding of these species will be retained in the long-term and the integrity of this SPA will also be sustained.

Other Red-list species associated with this SPA but which are not Qualifying Interests are ring ouzel, red grouse and golden eagle, which was re-introduced in Glenveagh National Park in 2000. The National Park is located c. 11 km on the other side of Muckish; Lorcan O'Toole from the Golden Eagle Trust was contacted in regard to the potential impacts of the proposed development on this bird species. It is deemed that no impact is foreseen as a result of this project, which is within the footprint of an existing railway line already in use for amenity purposes. Ring ouzel, a rare species of the uplands, breeds sparingly, with at least two pairs recorded in a 2002 survey: six pairs of ring ouzels were recorded at three different locations in grid square B91 in 2002 as part of the Uplands bird surveys (2002-2004). The closest records for ring ouzel from the Upland bird surveys 2002-2004 were recorded just over 10 km from the site (see green squares in Appendix 4, Bird Records in vicinity of project). Therefore, it can be concluded that the proposed project would not impact the integrity of the **Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA**.

### ***Impacts on birds associated with Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA***

This SPA is designated solely for corncrakes. Disturbance near a European site can result in loss of bird numbers using the area due to noise during construction or long-term use thereby preventing effective use of feeding habitats.

The corncrake records (see colour circles by years in Appendix 4) shows 8 calls within the Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA, located 3-5 km west on the proposed project. The closest record (within 1-3 km of the proposed project) were two calls recorded back in 2016. Both the upgraded path (old railway) and proposed car park and roads are not used by populations of corncrake for which this SPA is designated. In addition, the western end of the path (closest to the SPA) is comprised mostly of habitats that are not suitable for corncrake. If the species were to make occasional use of the small area of wet grassland to the north of the path (c. middle) for feeding, it is deemed that no significant impacts would arise given the project's small footprint. Therefore, due to the limited scale of the works and specifications of the development: namely upgrading of existing railway path, and the type of surrounding habitats and distance to existing records, it is anticipated that the proposed project would not result in any direct or indirect disturbance to corncrake. Therefore, it can be concluded that both the construction and the operation of the development would not impact on the integrity of the **Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA.**

### ***Impacts on habitats via water quality degradation***

#### Baseline condition

The path upgrade starts just east of Lough Agher, which is recognised as being located within a High-Status catchment. Lough Agher is a reservoir for Creeslough, and a treatment plant is located due east of the Lough, c. 90 m from the proposed path (see Appendix 5). The Lough is not currently monitored but its 2010 oligotrophic status was deemed not threatened and will comply with Water Framework Directive targets (see Appendix 5). The Ray Water Management Unit confirmed that Lough Agher stream (NW\_38\_1295, Status 2015) as being of 'good' status, being satisfactory, although a drop in quality was noted compared with 2003 and 2000 (Ray WMU, 2015, see Appendix 5).

#### Potential impacts

Disturbance associated with construction activities can potentially involve contaminating material, as well as hazardous waste and risk of spillage with a risk of pollution to the nearby

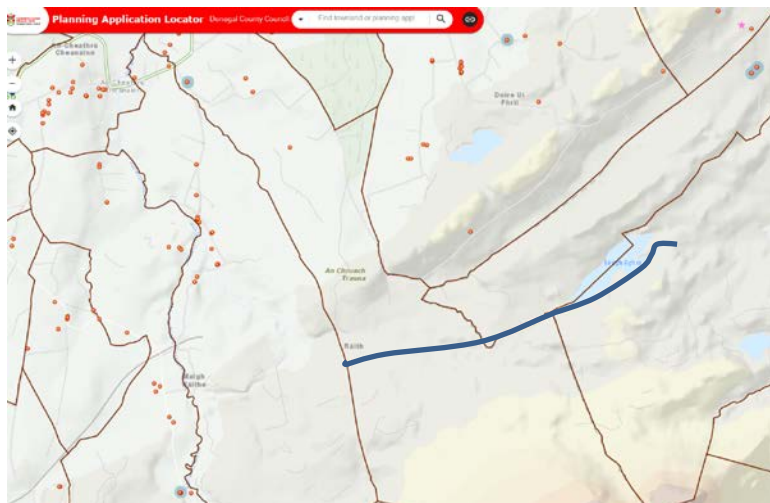
streams. However, the proposed development involves a working corridor that does not encroach on the shore of Lough Agher. The existing level of the road is either higher ground surrounded by elevated verges of heather shrubs or at the same level of the Lough but separated by a wetland verge (see photos in Appendix 6). In the latter section, the path will be elevated with natural gravel and rocks to avoid flooding. No in-stream work will be carried out as the old Railway path crosses the Lough Agher streams in two locations where the bridges have been adequately built for the old railway and are deemed fit for purpose. The path uses the local road that is currently bridged over the Ray River and, therefore, no impacts are foreseen in either of those crossings. In addition, the use of light machinery with no storage of fuel on site and all associated safety procedures associated with works near a river (as per EPA guidelines) will be followed.

Thus, this proposed project does not pose any risks to the Water Framework Directive status of either Lough Agher, Lough Agher Stream or Ray River due to 1) distance to aquatic bodies of conservation values; 2) existing infrastructure with no in-stream works required and 3) the small footprint of the project and methods of construction.

#### **4.5 Cumulative or in-combination impacts**

The other principal activities/land use within or nearby to the proposed project are farming and private dwellings. Proliferation in recent years of sewage package plants for multiple housing schemes and septic tanks) have led to problems that have been identified in the Ray River by the EPA (Ray WMU, 2015). Other pressures include future abstractions licensing programme and the Muckish landfill. There are few past planning permission applications in the vicinity of the path (especially the eastern part) and the closest and most recent dwelling was granted permission in 2017 with a tertiary wastewater treatment system (see below). No other major developments are foreseen in the vicinity. It is concluded that no cumulative or in-combination impacts associated with this development on **Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA** are foreseen.





Planning Permissions screenshot (Donegal County Council, June 2019). Proposed path in blue.

**Table 2.** Finding of No Significant Effects report matrix.

Information about the project	
<b>Brief description of the project</b>	Path upgrade of a section of the old Burtonport Railway (Greenway project) between Creeslough and Falcarragh
<b>Brief description of European sites within the likely scope of influence of the project</b>	<p>The site is not located within any European sites. It borders Lough Agher, which is designated as part of the larger Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA that was designated for a range of bird species namely merlin, peregrine, golden plover, red-throated diver and dunlin. It is also close to the northern boundary of Muckish SAC which is designated for Alpine heath and scree, located on the mountain itself. Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA is also located c. 3 km from the site and has been designated for corncrake. The scope of influence of the project is regarded to be relatively small due to the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-distance to European sites and distance to closest protected bird records</li> <li>-small footprint (use of existing railway and bridges) and limited scale of works including fencing</li> </ul>

	-the absence of relevant habitats on site
<b>Is the project or plan directly connected with the management of any European site?</b>	No.
<b>Are there other projects or plans that together with the project being assessed could affect the site</b>	No. There are no other known projects to be developed in the same location that would contribute with the proposed development to the deterioration of any European sites.
<b>Assessment of significance of effects</b>	Due to the limited scale of the works and specifications of the development: namely upgrading of existing railway path, and the type of surrounding habitats and distance to existing records, it is anticipated that the proposed project would not result in any direct or indirect disturbance to corncrake, ring ouzel, peregrine, merlin, golden plover, dunlin and red-throated diver.
<b>Describe the individual elements of the project likely to give rise to impacts on the European site.</b>	No negative impacts are foreseen.
<b>Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of:</b>	
<b>-reduction of habitat area within European sites:</b>	-None
<b>-disturbance to key species:</b>	-None
<b>-habitat fragmentation:</b>	-No species effect
<b>-reduction in species density:</b>	
<b>-changes in key indicators of conservation value:</b>	-No change
<b>Describe any likely impacts on the European site as a whole in terms of interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of the site.</b>	No likely significant impacts have been predicted due to the small scale of the development and the distance to any of the nearest European sites.

## 5 Recommendations

1. An ecologist and /or NPWS staff should be present at the start of the project to instruct the contractor and inform the personnel so that they familiarise themselves with areas of ecological importance (Lough Agher and Lough Agher streams) and the working corridor that should be clearly marked so that no damage to any of the surrounding habitats will occur.
2. No unauthorised motorised vehicles should use the path and adequate gates must be erected at crossings and properly maintained.
3. No refuelling and maintenance of vehicles must occur on site to eliminate the potential risk of contamination of nearby habitats and watercourses.
4. Natural surface finish should be used that blends with the local environment.
5. Signage describing the natural value of the surrounding habitats should be erected at appropriate locations to alert walkers and the general public of the importance of the area from a nature conservation perspective (i.e. only the path should be used; leave no trace as already on the signs at start/finish).

## 6 Conclusion

In order to determine the potential impacts, if any, of the development on any European Sites, an Appropriate Assessment Screening Exercise was undertaken and resulted in a statement of Appropriate Assessment (i.e. this Screening Report). The conclusion of the Screening process is that

1. The project is **not** directly connected to or necessary for the protection of a High-Status catchment;
2. The project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects is **not** likely to have significant effects on a High-Status catchment in view of its environmental objectives under the Water Framework Directive;
3. Negative impacts from the project are not foreseen on population of birds for which the closest SPAs, namely **Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA** and **Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA**, have been designated.
4. Overall, there are no likely significant effects predicted as a result of this proposed path upgrade due to the small scale and nature of the development, and the distance to

European sites. Therefore, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is **not required for this project.**

## **References**

NPWS (2018) Conservation objectives for Muckish Mountain SAC [001179]. Generic Version 6.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2005) Management conservation plan Muckish SAC.

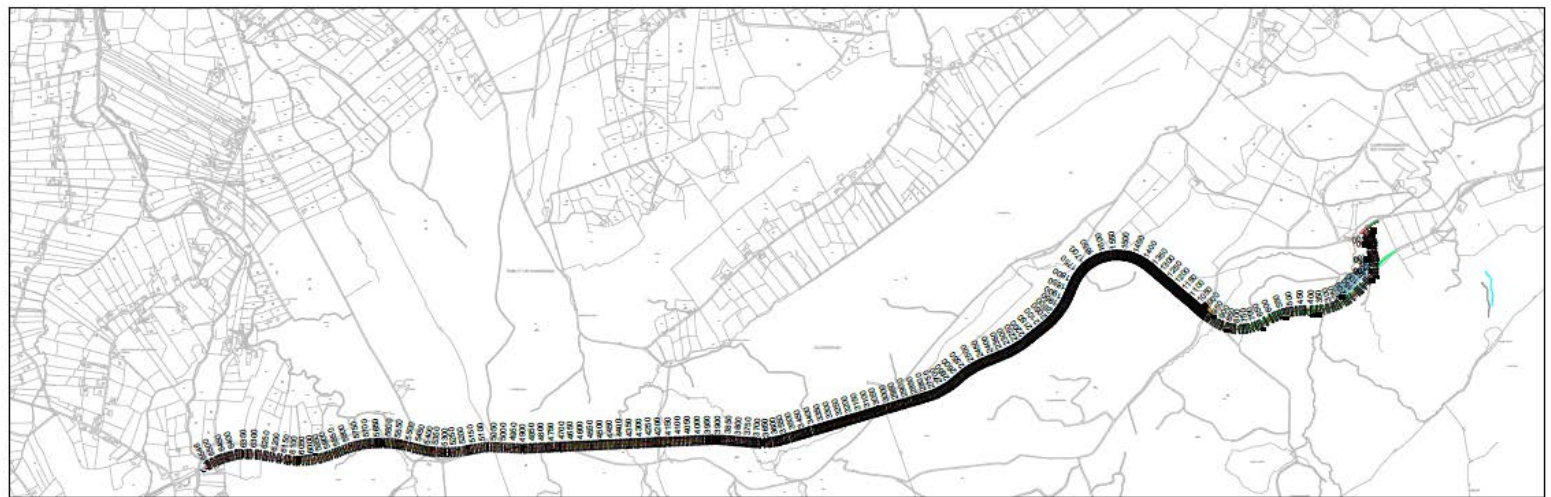
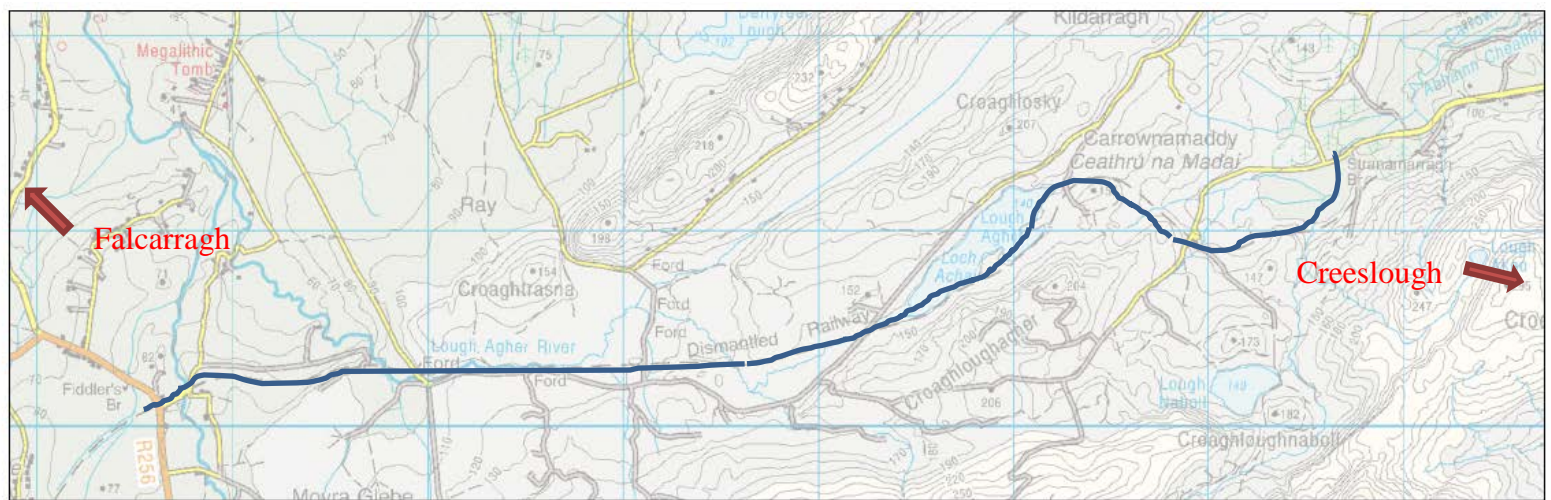
NPWS (2018) Conservation objectives for Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA [004039]. Generic Version 6.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2018) Conservation objectives for Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA [004149]. Generic Version 6.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Ray Water Management Unit. 2015.

[http://www.wfdireland.ie/docs/1\\_River%20Basin%20Management%20Plans%202009%20-%202015/NWIRBD%20RBMP%202010/Water%20Management%20Unit%20Action%20Plans/Ray%20WMU%20Action%20Plan%20March%202010.pdf](http://www.wfdireland.ie/docs/1_River%20Basin%20Management%20Plans%202009%20-%202015/NWIRBD%20RBMP%202010/Water%20Management%20Unit%20Action%20Plans/Ray%20WMU%20Action%20Plan%20March%202010.pdf)

**Appendix 1a:** Proposed Creeslough to Falcarragh greenway path. Chainage location for subsequent detailed drawings.



**Comhairle Contae Dún na nGall**  
Donegal County Council  
Community Development & Planning Service



Rev	No	Date	Description

**Purpose of Drawing**  
 Information  Construction  Safety Site  
 Part B  Tender  Other  
 Prepared: AMM Date: Apr 2010  
 Checked: Date:  
 Approved: Date:

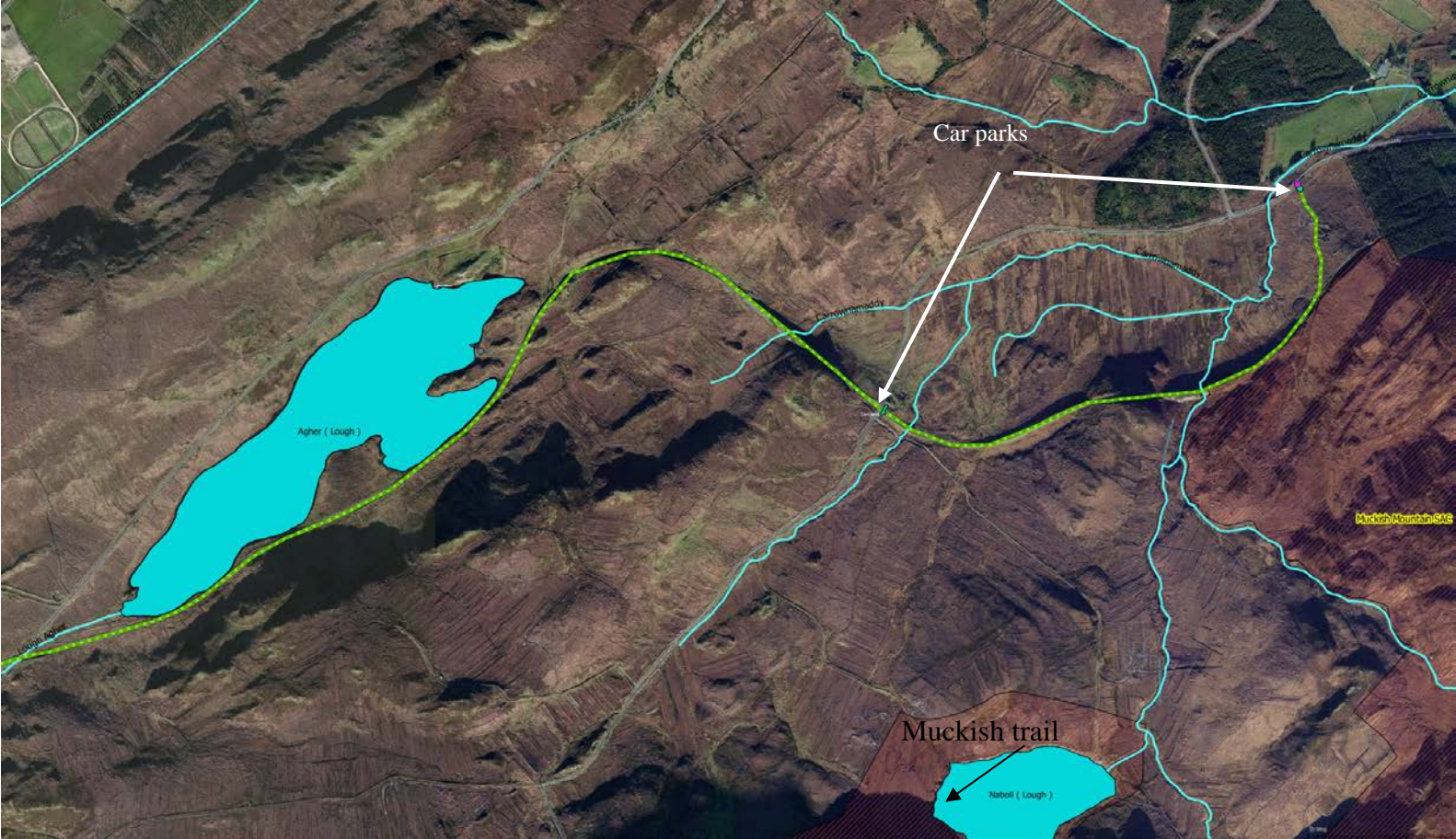
Horizontal Scale: 1:250 @ A1  
1:500 @ A2  
Vertical Scale:  
Title No.:

Project: Creeslough to Falcarragh Greenway Project  
 Location: Following the route of the Old Railway Line between Creeslough and Falcarragh  
 Drawing Title:

Date:  
 Draw No.:

**Appendix 1b:** Aerial view of habitats in proximity of path and associated proposed car park.

1) Eastern section showing car park at start of trail and at Muckish Head trail.



2) Middle section of the path showing crossing Lough Agher stream.

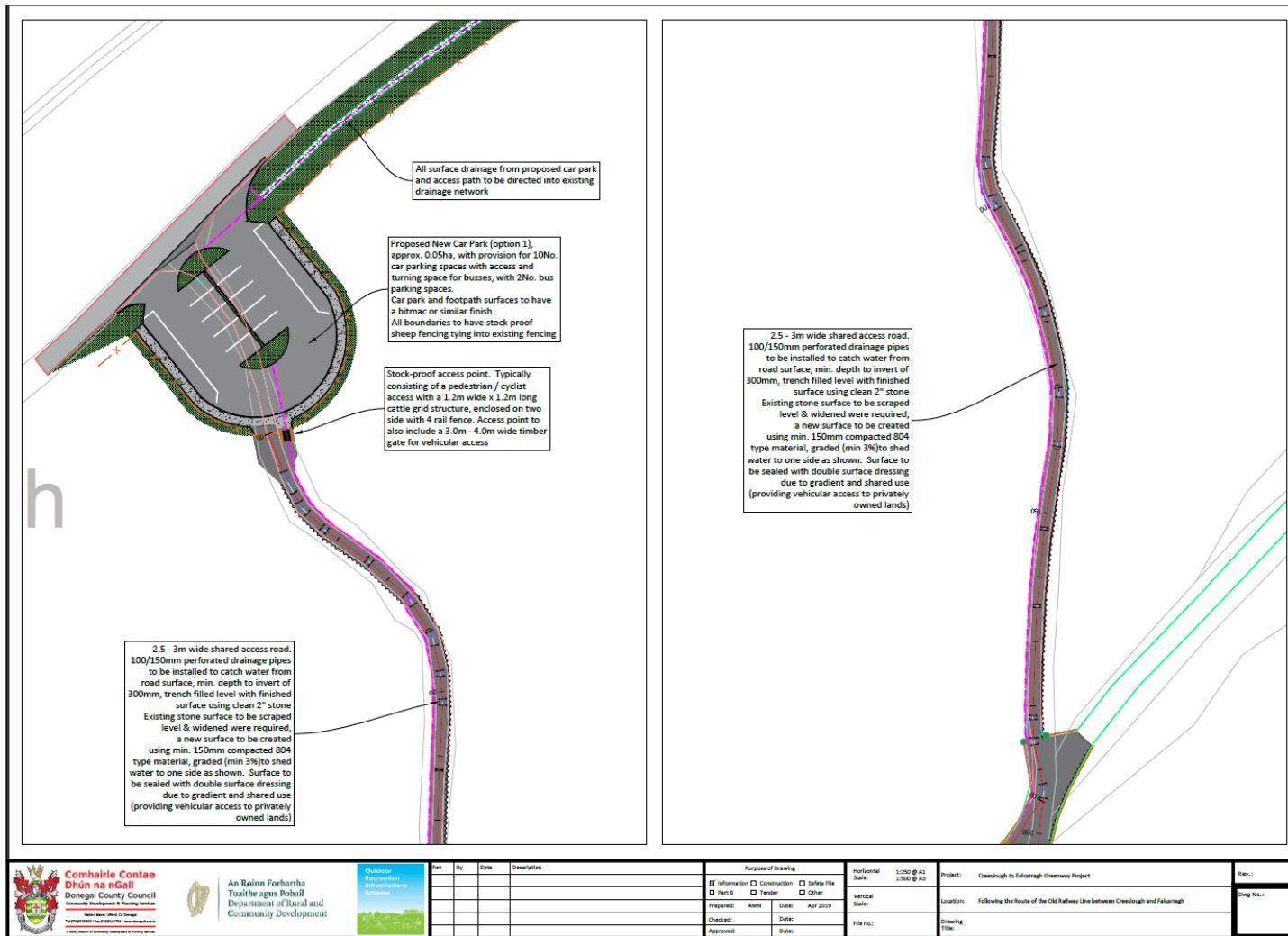


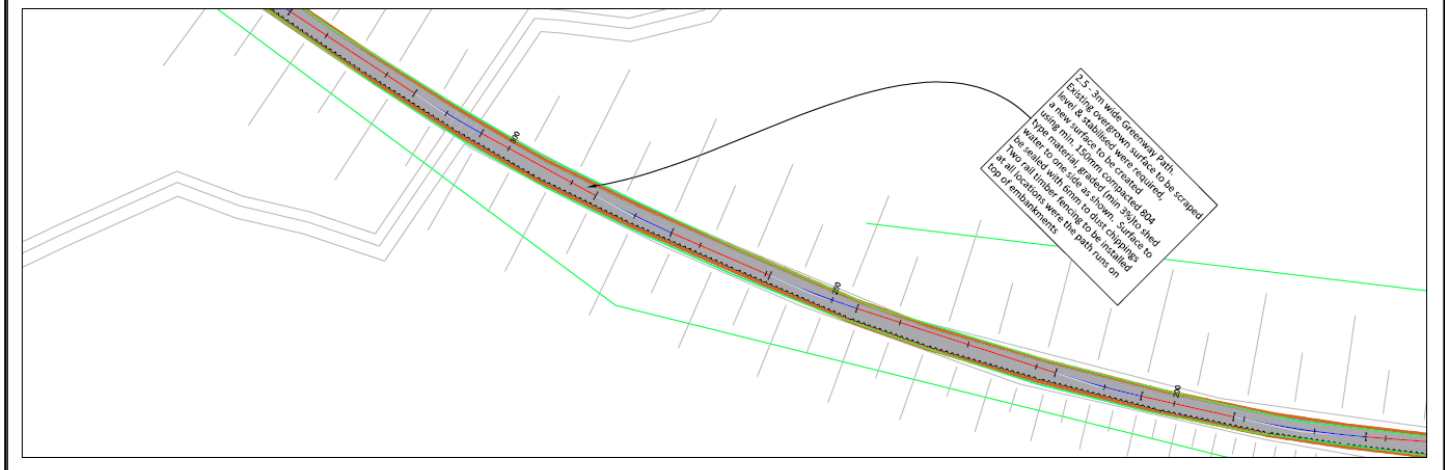
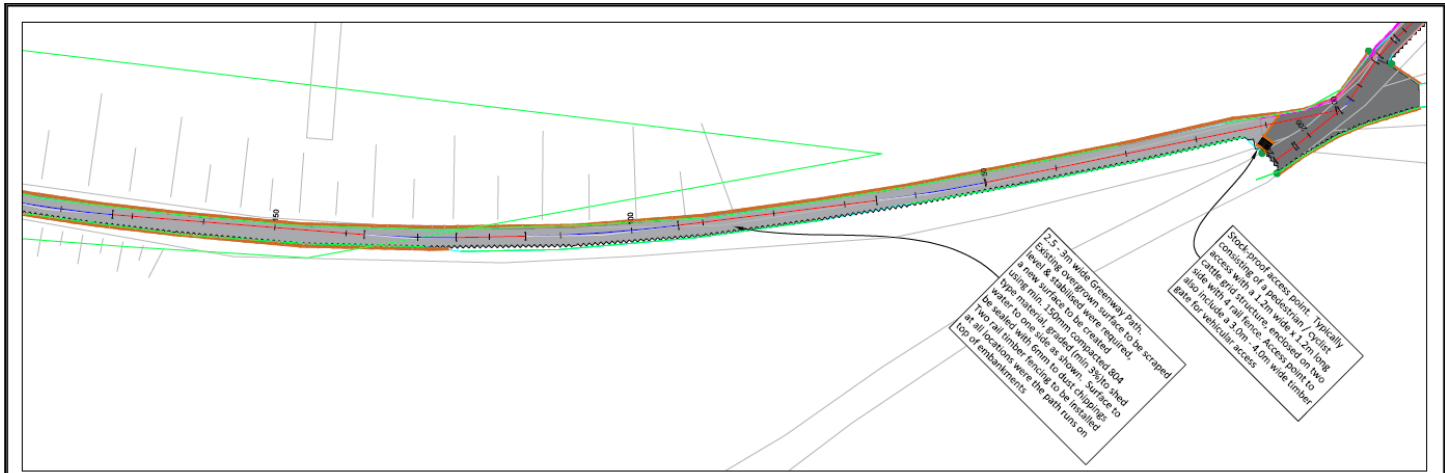
3) Western section of the proposed path showing crossings at Lough Agher stream and Ray River.






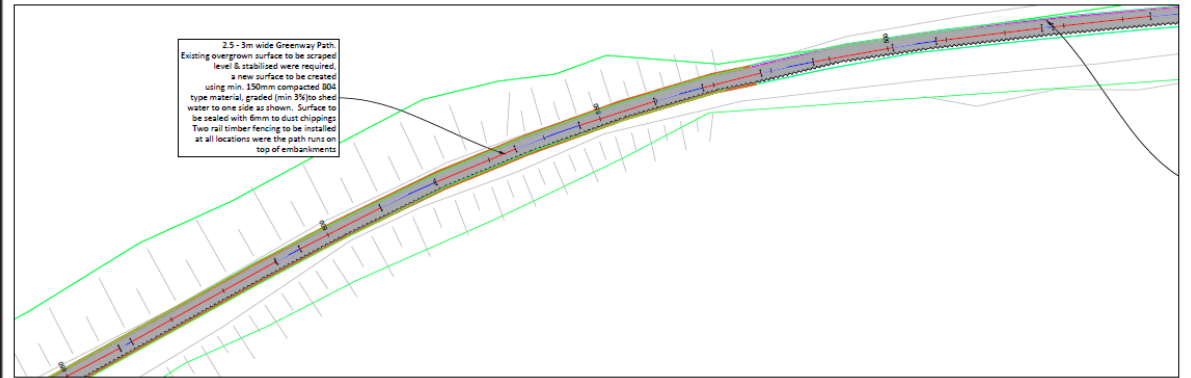
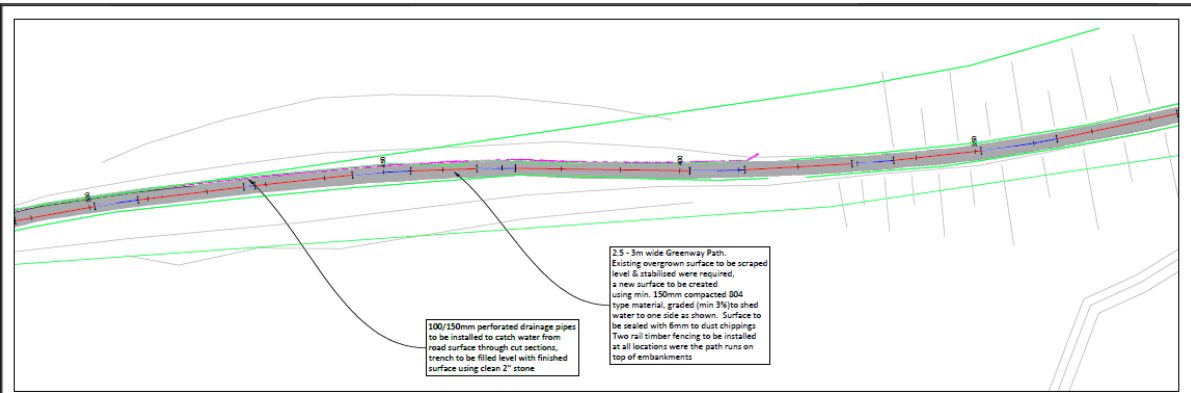


**1c:** Site layout showing most relevant section of the path where fencing, drainage cleaning or controlled access points will be located starting at the eastern end.





 <b>Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall</b> Donegal County Council <small>Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall</small> Donegal County Council <small>Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall</small>	 <b>An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe agus Pobail</b> Department of Rural and Community Development	 Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Schemes	Rev:    By:    Date:    Description:	Purpose of Drawing: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information <input type="checkbox"/> Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Safety File <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part B <input type="checkbox"/> Tender <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Horizontal Scale: 1:250 @ A1 1:500 @ A3 Vertical Scale:	Project: Creadhúil to Falaragh Greenway Project Location: Following the route of the Old Railway Line between Creadhúil and Falaragh	Rev.: Dwg No.:
			Prepared: AMB    Date: Apr 2019 Checked:    Date: Approved:    Date:	File no.: Drawing Title:			



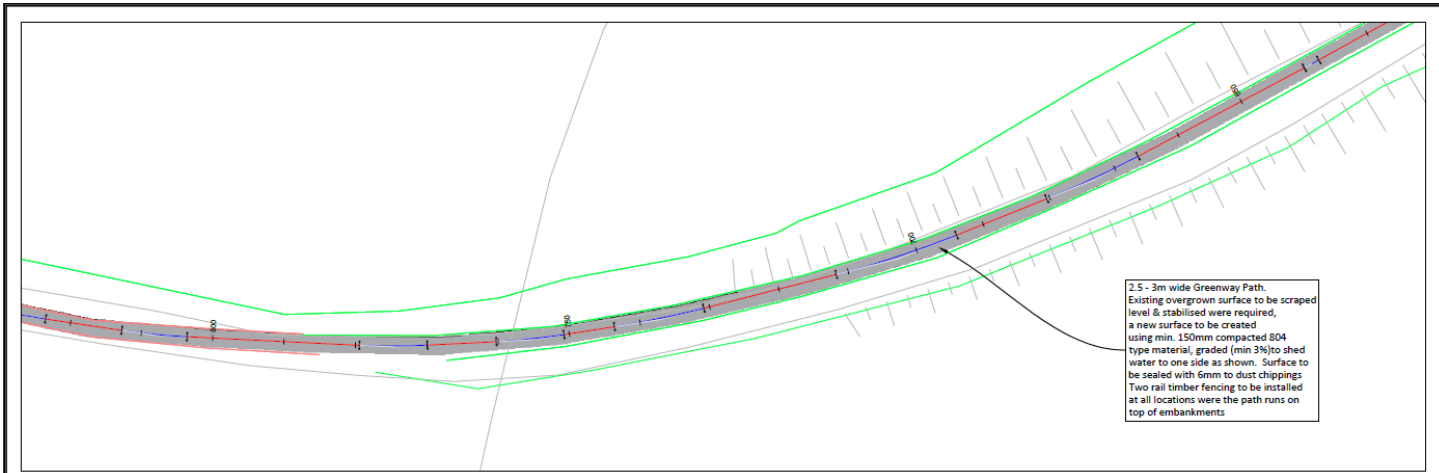
An tAinm Foirbertha  
Tuille agus Pobail  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development



No.	By	Date	Description

Revision of Drawing			
<input type="checkbox"/> Information	<input type="checkbox"/> Correction	<input type="checkbox"/> Change No.	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Prepared: AMB	Date: Apr 2019	Checked: [ ]	Drawn: [ ]
Approved: [ ]	Date: [ ]	File no.: [ ]	Drawing Title: [ ]

Subsistent Scale: 1:500 @ A1 1:500 @ A2	Project: Creadhagh to Falcarragh Greenway Project	Rev: [ ]
Location: Following the Route of the Old Railway Line between Creadhagh and Falcarragh	Drawing Title: [ ]	



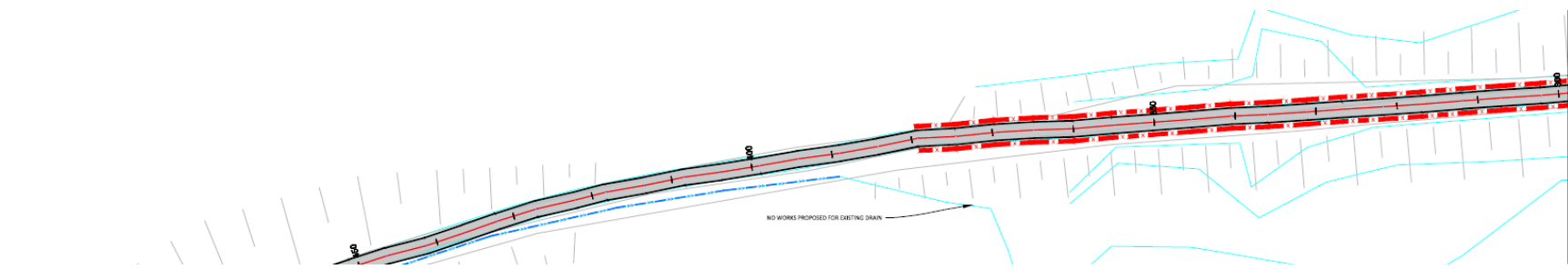
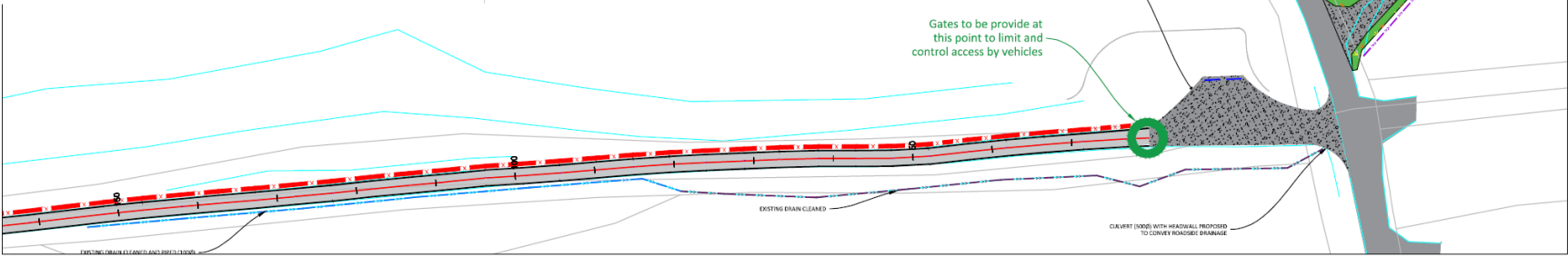
on No.2] spaces. leveled hed with dressing. be used undaries nts to be io match ounding.

Rock-paved access point. Typically consisting of a pavement 1.2m wide, 1.2m long and with a 1.2m wide 1.2m long side with rail fence. Access on two sides also include 2.0m x 4.0m wide timber gate for vehicular access.

2.5 - 3m wide Greenway Path. Existing overgrown surface to be scraped level & stabilised were required, a new surface to be created using min. 150mm compacted B04 type material, graded (min 3%) to shed water to one side as shown. Surface to be sealed with 6mm dust chippings. Two rail timber fencing to be installed at all locations where the path runs on top of embankments.

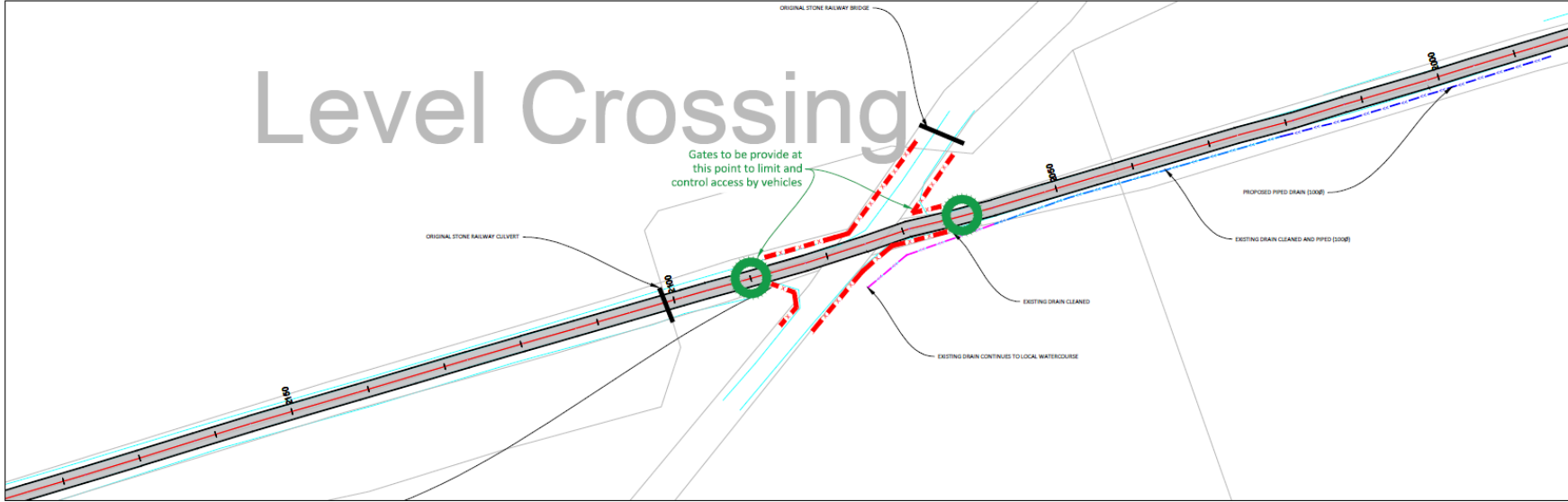
<p><b>Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall</b> Donegal County Council Community Development &amp; Planning Services</p>	<p><b>An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe agus Pobail</b> Department of Rural and Community Development</p>	<p>Division: Infrastructure Sub-division: Infrastructure Schemes</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rev</th> <th>By</th> <th>Date</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Rev	By	Date	Description													<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Purpose of Drawing</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Construction</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Part 8</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Tender</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Safety File</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Purpose of Drawing		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information	<input type="checkbox"/> Construction	<input type="checkbox"/> Part 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Tender	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety File	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Horizontal Scale:</td> <td>1:250 @ A1 1:500 @ A3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vertical Scale:</td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>File no.:</td> <td> </td> </tr> </table>	Horizontal Scale:	1:250 @ A1 1:500 @ A3	Vertical Scale:		File no.:		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Project:</td> <td>Creeblagh to Falcarragh Greenway Project</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Location:</td> <td>Following the Route of the Old Railway Line between Creeblagh and Falcarragh</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Drawing Title:</td> <td> </td> </tr> </table>	Project:	Creeblagh to Falcarragh Greenway Project	Location:	Following the Route of the Old Railway Line between Creeblagh and Falcarragh	Drawing Title:		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Rev.:</td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dwg No.:</td> <td> </td> </tr> </table>	Rev.:		Dwg No.:	
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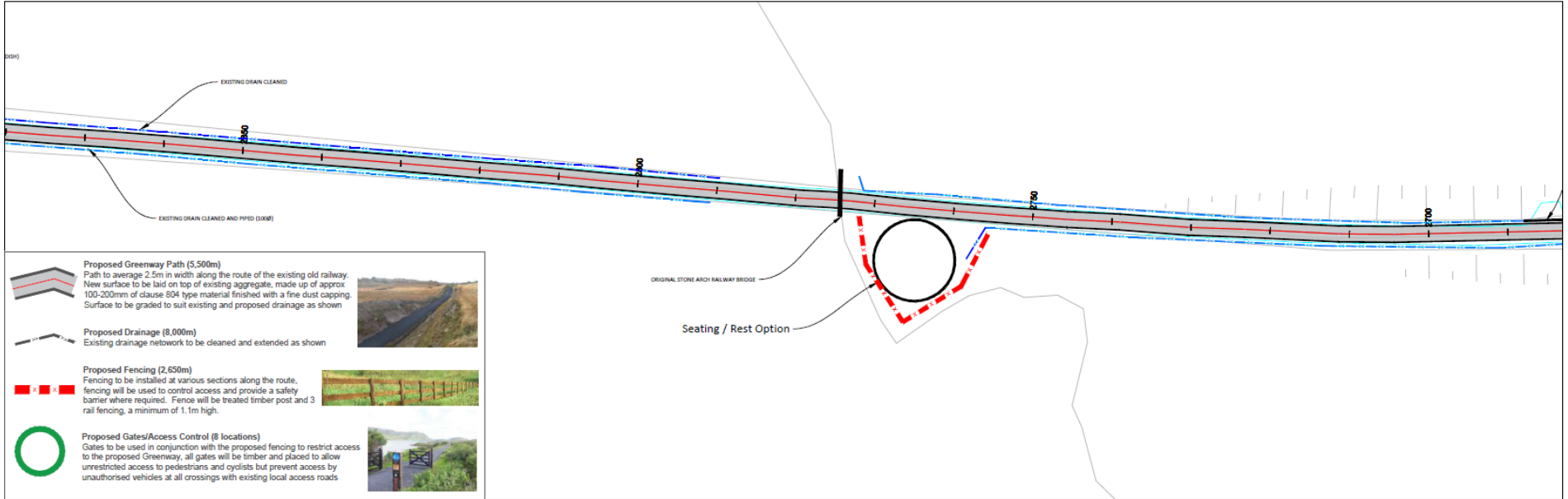
- Proposed Greenway Path (5,500m)**  
Path to average 2.5m in width along the route of the existing old railway. New surface to be laid on top of existing aggregate, made up of approx. 100-200mm of clause 504 type material finished with a fine dust capping. Surface to be graded to suit existing and proposed drainage as shown
- Proposed Drainage (8,000m)**  
Existing drainage network to be cleaned and extended as shown
- Proposed Fencing (2,650m)**  
Fencing will be installed at various sections along the route, fencing will be used to control access and provide a safety barrier where required. Fence will be treated timber post and 3 rail fencing, a minimum of 1.1m high.
- Proposed Gates/Access Control (8 locations)**  
Gates to be used in conjunction with the proposed fencing to restrict access to the proposed Greenway, all gates will be timber and placed to allow unrestricted access to pedestrians and cyclists but prevent access by unauthorised vehicles at all crossings with existing local access roads



# Level Crossing

Gates to be provide at this point to limit and control access by vehicles





EXISTING DRAIN CLEANED

EXISTING DRAIN CLEANED AND PIPED (1006)

**Proposed Greenway Path (5,500m)**  
 Path to average 2.5m in width along the route of the existing old railway. New surface to be laid on top of existing aggregate, made up of approx 100-200mm of class 504 material finished with a fine dust capping. Surface to be graded to suit existing and proposed drainage as shown

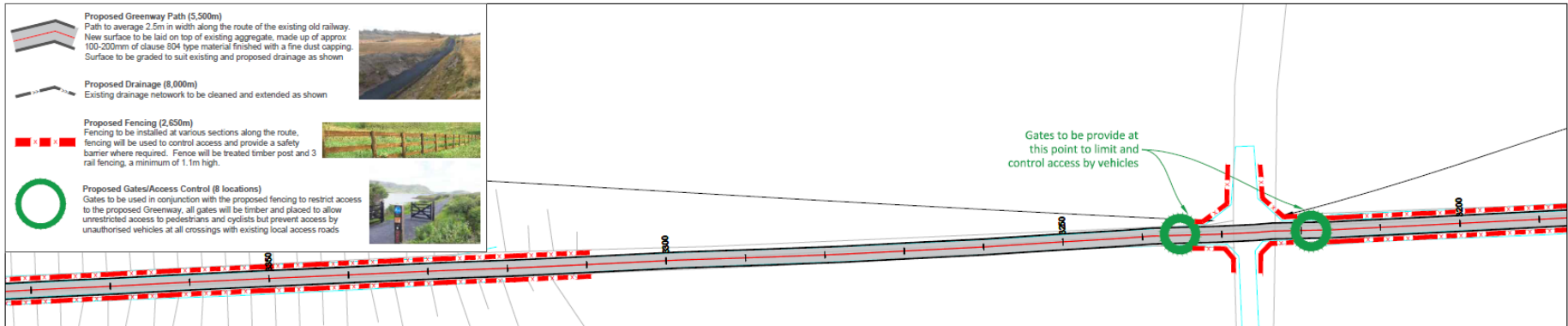
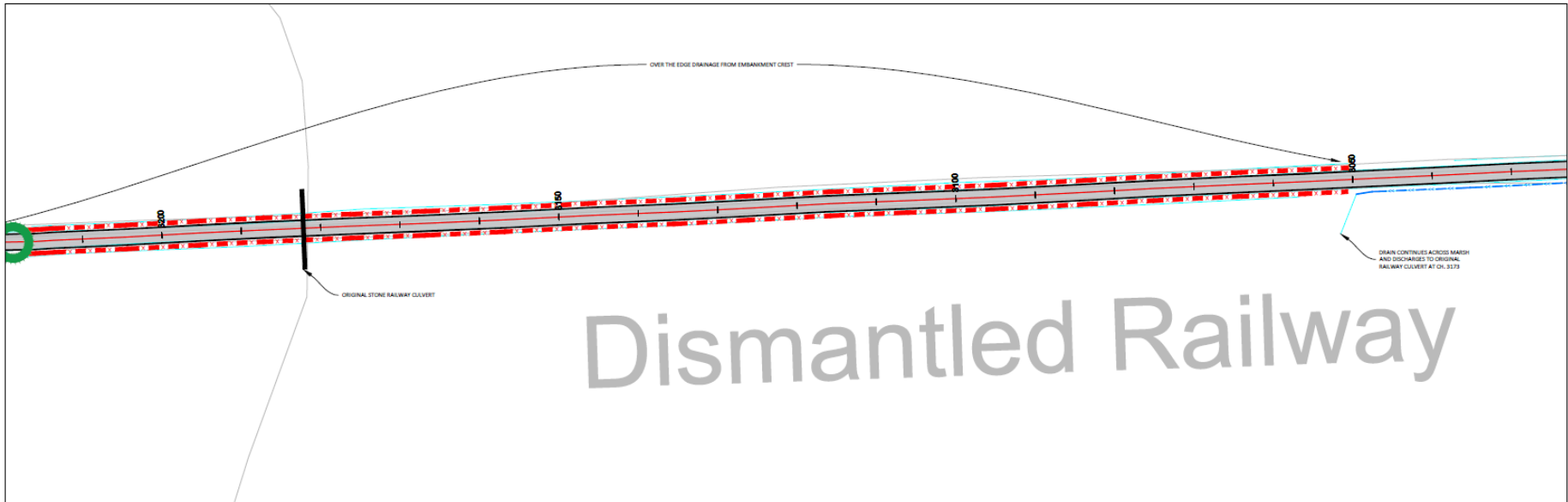
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ORIGINAL STONE ARCH RAILWAY BRIDGE

Seating / Rest Option



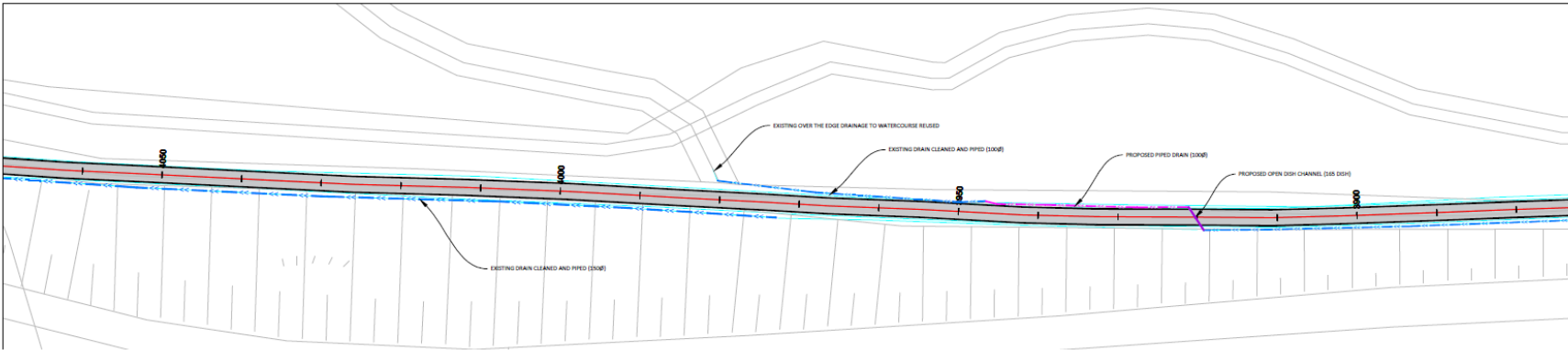
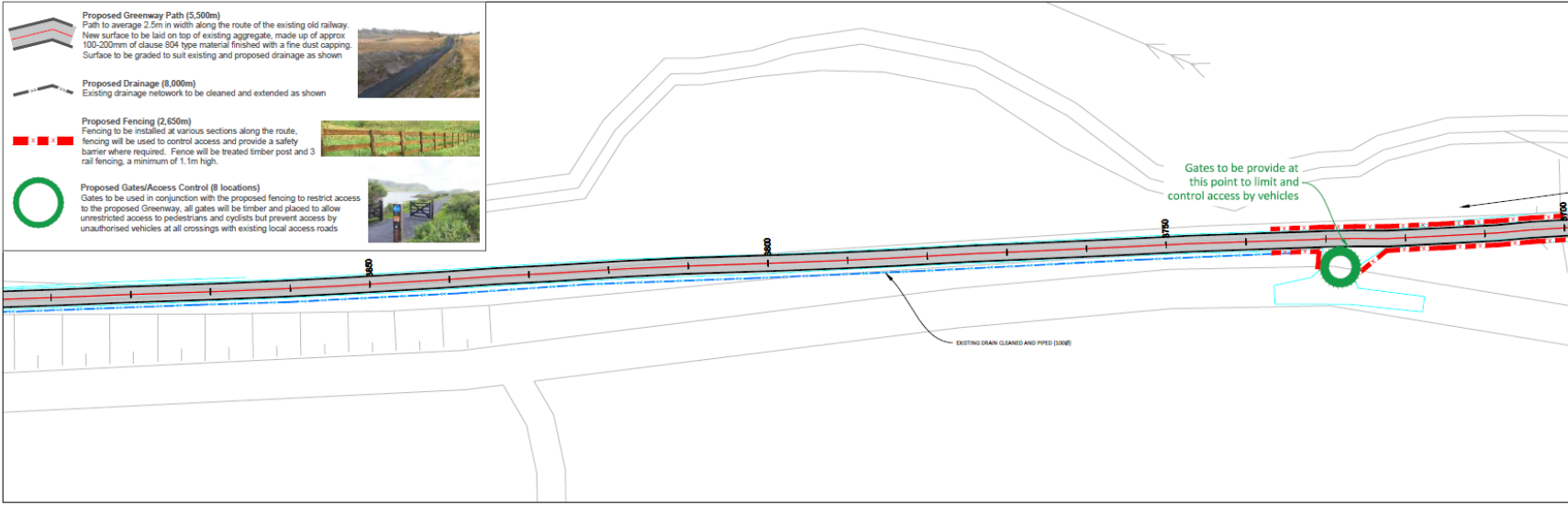


**Proposed Greenway Path (5,500m)**  
 Path to average 2.5m in width along the route of the existing old railway.  
 New surface to be laid on top of existing aggregate, made up of approx. 100-200mm of clause 804 type material finished with a fine dust capping.  
 Surface to be graded to suit existing and proposed drainage as shown

**Proposed Drainage (8,000m)**  
 Existing drainage network to be cleaned and extended as shown

**Proposed Fencing (2,850m)**  
 Fencing to be installed at various sections along the route, fencing will be used to control access and provide a safety barrier where required. Fence will be treated timber post and 3 rail fencing, a minimum of 1.1m high.

**Proposed Gates/Access Control (8 locations)**  
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



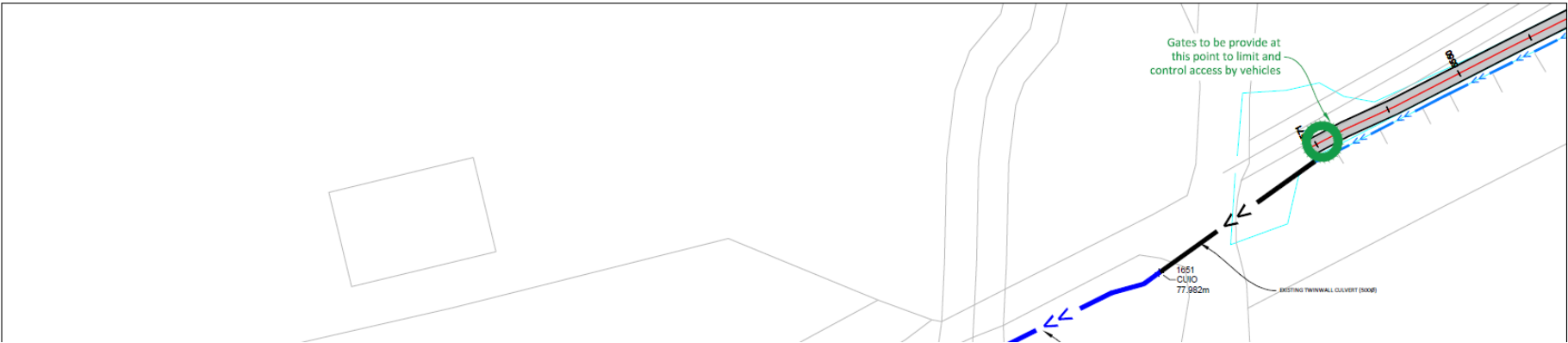
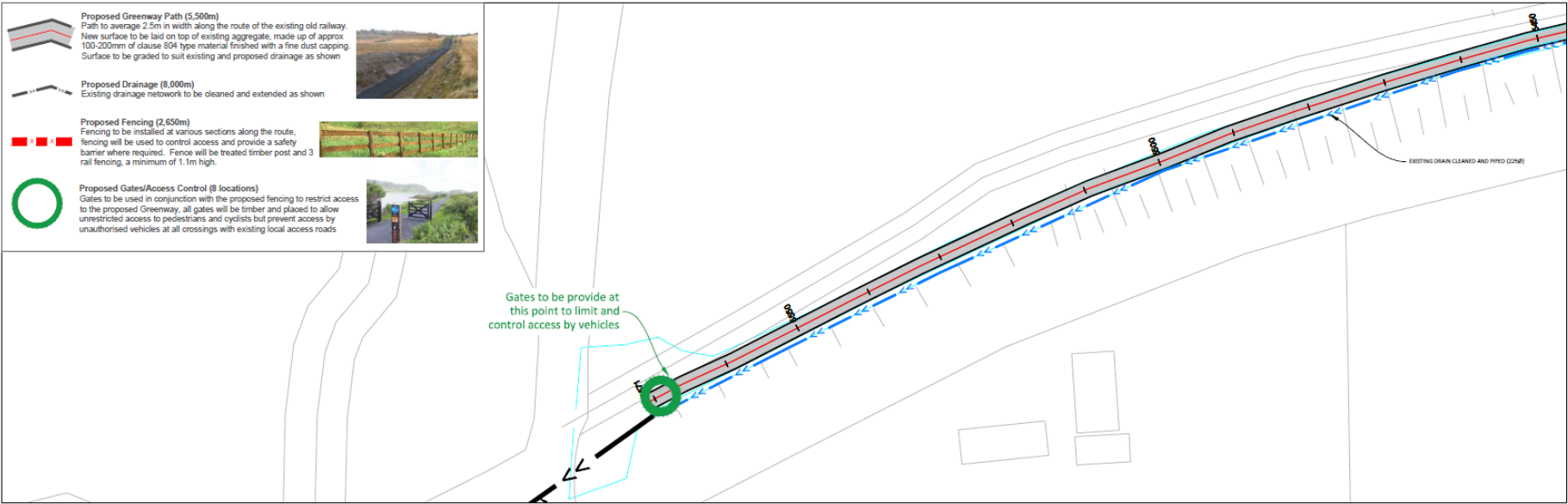



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**Appendix 2a:** Proposed path location vis-à-vis European sites within 5 km radius of start/finish (buffer) of the path.



**Appendix 2c:** Proposed path location vis-à-vis European sites within 10 and 15 km radius of the path.

**Appendix 3:** Site Synopsis and Natura 2000 Data Forms for identified European sites (www.npws.ie).

## **SITE SYNOPSIS**

**SITE NAME: DERRYVEAGH AND GLENDOWAN MOUNTAINS SPA SITE**

**CODE: 004039**

Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA is an extensive upland site in north-west Co. Donegal, comprising Glenveagh National Park, a substantial part of the Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains and a number of the surrounding lakes. Much of the site is over 300 m above sea level, rising to a peak of 678 m at Slieve Snaght. The solid geology is predominantly quartzite. The substrate over much of site is peat, with blanket bog and heath comprising the principal habitats.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Red-throated Diver, Merlin, Peregrine, Golden Plover and Dunlin.

This site is one of only a few locations where Red-throated Diver breed in Ireland and the birds also use a number of lakes within the site for feeding. A survey in 2010 recorded 6 pairs at the site. The extensive bog and heath habitats provide excellent foraging habitat for both Peregrine (5-6 pairs in 2002) and Merlin (estimated 6-11 pairs). Peregrine nest on the crags and cliffs, whilst Merlin nest in the heather or in old crows' nests in trees. The site is very important for breeding Golden Plover and Dunlin (subsp. *schinzii*) with 18 and 5 pairs respectively recorded in 2002.

Red Grouse is also widespread on the bogs and Ring Ouzel, a rare species of the uplands, breeds sparingly, with at least 2 pairs recorded in a 2002 survey. Several pairs of Whinchat, a scarce Irish species, breed within the site. Goosander is also a regular visitor to the lakes, though breeding within the site has not been proved. Snowy Owl has also attempted to breed within the site - a clutch of eggs was laid but these did not hatch. Wood Warbler is present annually, with perhaps three pairs occurring. Redstart has bred on at least one occasion but there have been few sightings in recent years and it is not known if breeding occurs regularly.

Glenveagh National Park is the central location for the Golden Eagle re-introduction programme, which commenced in 2000. With time, this species may become successfully re-established as a breeding species in Ireland.

The site is of high ornithological importance with nationally important breeding populations of five species. Of particular note is that five of the species that occur regularly are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, i.e. Red-throated Diver, Peregrine, Merlin, Golden Plover and Dunlin (subsp. *schinzii*). A large proportion of Lough Barra Bog, a Ramsar Convention site and a Statutory Nature Reserve, is within the Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA.

7.7.2014

# Conservation objectives for Derryveagh and Glendowan

## Mountains SPA [004039]

The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as the Natura 2000 network. European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network at favourable conservation condition. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites. The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable. The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:
  - population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
  - the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
  - there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

Bird Code	Common Name	Scientific Name
A001	Red-throated	<i>Gavia stellata</i>
A098	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>
A103	Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
A140	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>
A466	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>

---

**Citation:** NPWS (2018) Conservation objectives for Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA [004039]. Generic Version 6.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

## **SITE SYNOPSIS**

**SITE NAME: FALCARRAGH TO MEENLARAGH SPA**

**SITE CODE: 004149**

Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA is located on the eastern and western sides of Ballyness Bay on the north-west coast of Co. Donegal. This large site follows the coastline from Falcarragh to Meenlaragh and encompasses three areas of mixed agricultural grassland.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Corncrake.

Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA supports a breeding population of Corncrake (7 pairs - five year mean peak between 2003 and 2007, based on records of calling males).

Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA is one of a suite of sites along the western seaboard that is regularly utilised by nationally important numbers of breeding Corncrake.

Corncrake winter in southern and eastern Africa, migrating northwards to arrive on their breeding grounds from early April onwards, departing again in August and September. They require the cover of tall vegetation throughout their breeding cycle and are strongly associated with meadows which are harvested annually, where they nest and feed. Annual cutting of these meadows creates a sward which is easy for the birds to move through. Other habitats, which can provide cover for Corncrake in the early and late stages of the breeding season, are also important for this species.

Corncrake is listed on the 2010 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. This is due to population and range declines of more than 50% in the last 25 years across significant parts of its range.

Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA is of high ornithological importance as it supports a nationally important population of Corncrake, a globally threatened species.

Corncrake is also listed in Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

18.2.2011

## Conservation Objectives for Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA [004149]

The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as the Natura 2000 network.

European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network at favourable conservation condition. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites.

The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

- ♦ *Crex Crex* [breeding]

**Citation:**

*NPWS (2011) Conservation objectives for Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA [004149].  
Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.*

*For more information please go to:*

*[www.npws.ie/protectedsites/conservationmanagementplanning](http://www.npws.ie/protectedsites/conservationmanagementplanning)*



## SITE SYNOPSIS

**Site Name: Muckish Mountain SAC Site**

**Code: 001179**

Muckish Mountain is situated 7 km west of Creeslough in Co. Donegal. It is a large flat-topped quartzite mountain with deposits of sand around it, which have been formed by the weathering of quartzite. Large areas of quartzite and schist scree occur on the mountainsides.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (\* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

[4060] Alpine and Subalpine Heaths
------------------------------------

[8220] Siliceous Rocky Slopes
-------------------------------

The top of Muchish Mountain is covered with eroded quartzite rubble with a sparse covering of Dwarf Willow (*Salix herbacea*), Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) and the moss *Racomitrium lanuginosum*. Much of the steeper slopes of the mountain are almost completely devoid of vegetation, being covered with loose scree. The north face of the mountain has several gullies and buttresses. Here, on rock ledges, are found Mountain Avens (*Dryas octopetala*), St. Patrick's- cabbage (*Saxifraga spathularis*) and Thrift (*Armeria maritima*). The bases of the slopes are covered with thin peat and are dominated by Heather. Some hand cutting of turf occurs here. Several pool and hummock bog systems and oligotrophic lakes add diversity to the site.

Alpine Saw-wort (*Saussurea alpina*), a Red Data Book species considered to be threatened in Ireland, occurs within the site. The site also includes several rare bryophyte (mosses and liverworts) species.

The main land uses within the site are grazing by sheep and hand-cutting of peat. The sands formed from the eroded quartzite have a uniform grain size and a low iron content and are ideal for glass manufacture. These deposits are not currently being quarried, although they have been exploited in the past. A stone quarry is located near Muckish Gap.

This highly scenic site is of ecological and conservation importance for the occurrence of two habitats that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive and for the presence of rare vascular plant and bryophyte species.

## **Conservation objectives for Muckish Mountain SAC [001179]**

The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as the Natura 2000 network.

European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network at favourable conservation condition. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites.

The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

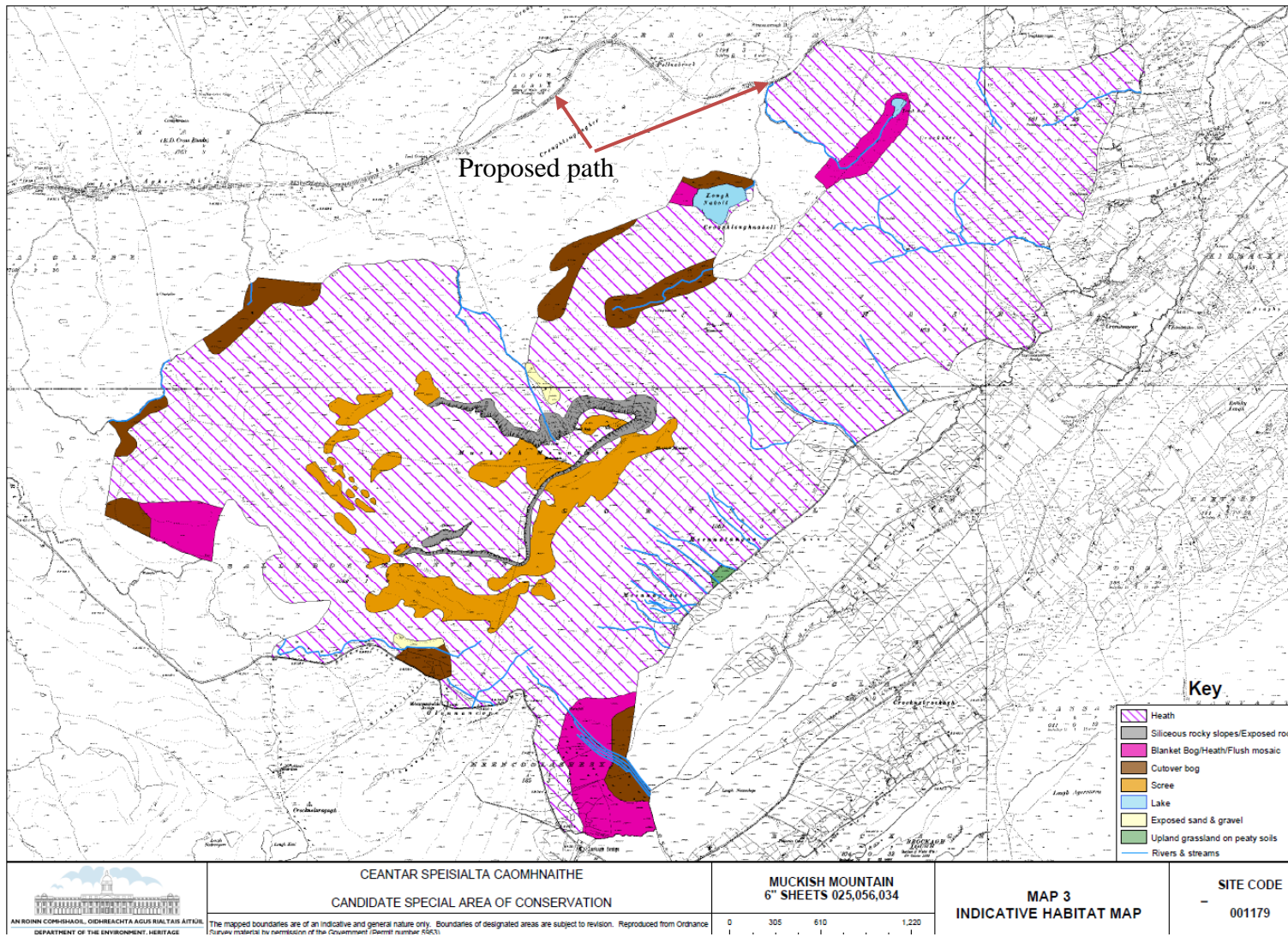
The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

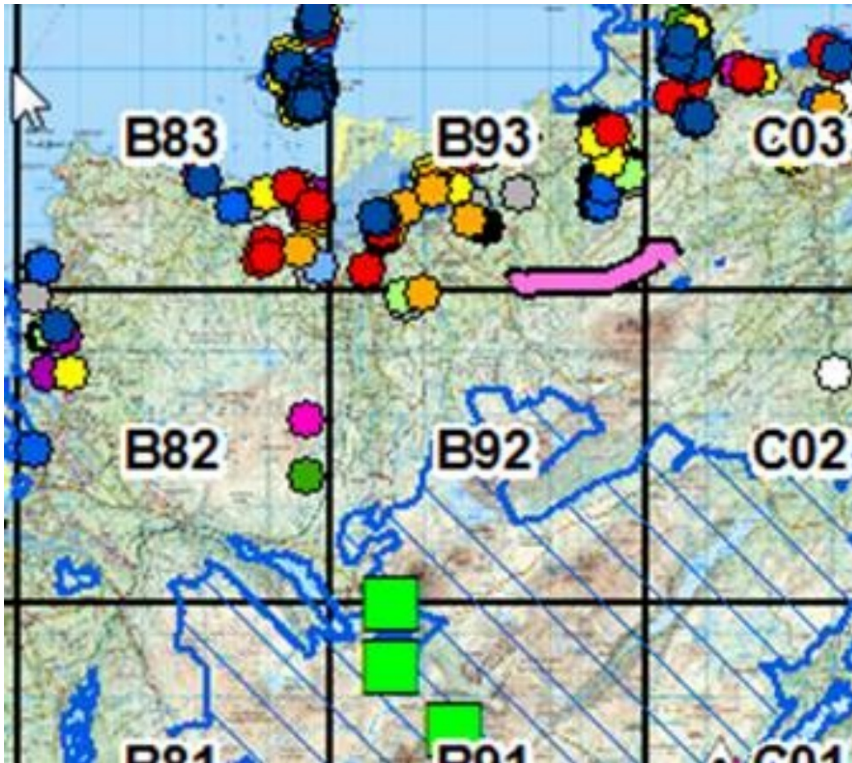
<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
4060	Alpine and Boreal heaths
8220	Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation

# Muckish mountain SAC Indicative habitat map (NPWS Conservation Plan 2005)



**Appendix 4:** Bird records in the vicinity of the proposed path upgrade (in pink).

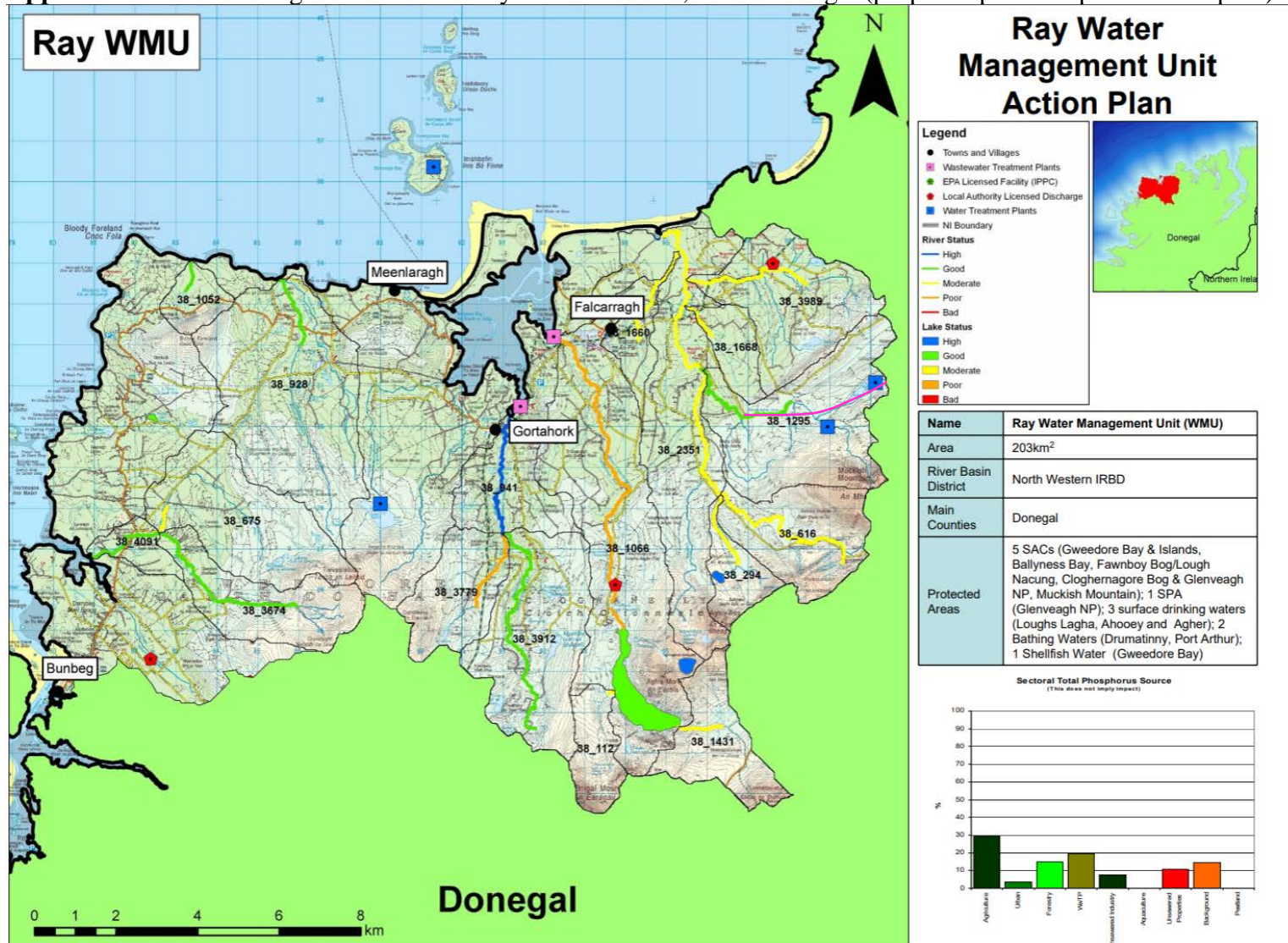
Green Square are records of location of ring ouzel from the Upland bird surveys 2002-2004. Coloured circles represent records of corncrake for different survey years (where calling males were confirmed for > 5 nights). Data from NPWS (Jochen Roller, 2019)



Breakdown of **corncrake** records for the area in the vicinity of the proposed path from the different survey years.

<u>1-3 km from path:</u>	<u>3-5 km from path:</u>
2016: 2 records	2018: 8 records
2013: 1 record	2017: 9 records
2008: 2 records	2016: 9 records
2007: 6 records	2015: 12 records
2006: 4 records	2014: 2 records
	2013: 4 records
	2012: 20 records
	2011: 4 records
	2010: 2 records
	2008: 2 records
	2006: 8 records

Appendix 5: Water Management Unit for Ray Sub-catchment, North Donegal (proposed path is represented in pink).



EPA Lake No.	Lake Name	Local Authority Responsible	Baseline Trophic Status	1998-2000 Trophic Status	2001/02 Trophic Status	Standard to be Achieved Trophic Status	1998-2000 Total P (ug/l P)	2001/02 Total P (ug/l P)	Standard to be Achieved Total P (ug/l P)	Has Either Standard Been Achieved?	Compliance Target Date
194	Inchiquin	Clare	M	M	M	M		19.7	20	Yes	2007
198	Keagh	Clare	M	M	M	M		40.2	20	Yes	2010
211	Knockerry	Clare	M	M	O	M			20	Yes	2010
217	Lickeen	Clare	E	M	E	M		21.5	20	No	2007
256	Naminna	Clare	O	O	O	O			10	Yes	2010
1	Abisdealy	Cork	E	M	M	M		31	20	Yes	2007
5	Aderry	Cork	E	E	M	M		56	20	Yes	2010
29	Atarrif	Cork	M	M	M	M		49.5	20	Yes	2010
42	Avaul	Cork	E	E	M	M		18	20	Yes	2010
45	Ballin	Cork	E	E	H	M		47	20	No	2007
66	Bofinna	Cork	M	O	M	M		14.9	20	Yes	2007
81	Carrigadrohid Reservoir	Cork	M	M	M	M		24.6	20	Yes	2010
86	Castlemhigan	Cork	M	M	M	M		25	20	Yes	2010
92	Cluir	Cork	E	E	E	M		51.5	20	No	2010
97	Coolkelure	Cork	H	H	E	E		52	50	Yes	2010
116	Curraghlichy	Cork	M	M	M	M		27	20	Yes	2010
117	Curramore	Cork	M	M	M	M		15.6	20	Yes	2010
129	Derryvegal	Cork	M	M	O	M		21	20	Yes	2010
134	Drumindry	Cork	E	E	E	M		108	20	No	2010
137	Drumbrow	Cork	M	M	M	M		18	20	Yes	2010
153	Fadda	Cork	E	E	O	M		19	20	Yes	2010
169	Glen	Cork	M	M	O	M		29	20	Yes	2010
172	Glenbeg	Cork	M	M	O	M		21	20	Yes	2010
195	Inniscarra Reservoir	Cork	E	M	E	M		26.9	20	No	2007
252	Nambrackderg	Cork	O	O	O	O		12	10	Yes	2010
284	Shreelane	Cork	E	E	E	M		26	20	No	2010
287	Skeagh	Cork	E	E	E	M		26	20	No	2010
292	Tooreen	Cork	E	E	M	M		24	20	Yes	2010
	Lough	Cork City	M		H	M		47.5	20	No	2007
9	Agher	Donegal	O	O		O			10		2010
12	Akibbon	Donegal	O	O		O	20		10	Yes	2007
15	Anillanowen namarve	Donegal	O	O		O			10		2010
16	Anna	Donegal	O	O	O	O			10	Yes	2010
21	An Iuir (Amure)	Donegal	O	O	M	O			10	No	2010
27	Ardpatten	Donegal	O	O		O			10		2010

**Appendix 6:** Plate of photos (taken 14<sup>th</sup> May or 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019).  
Location of first car park within field entrance (facing south)



Start of path from road to old railway line (facing south)



Junction at the old railway line and view of dense bracken on the embankment (facing west).



Habitat bordering railway line within Muckish mountain SAC (background) showing dense area of bracken



Grassy path coming to the junction where the second car park is proposed (facing west)





Location of second proposed car park at foot of Muckish Trail where levelling and surfacing of parking area is proposed (facing north).



High embankment section (left) and 'canyon' section (right) (both facing west).



Lough Agher (eastern end) showing slight embankment vis-à-vis existing path (facing west).



Lough Agher (middle section) showing shore wetland vegetation and similar elevation with the Lough causing some water pooling on the path (facing west).



Lough Agher (western end) (facing east).



Middle section of the path showing various natural surfaces (facing west).



Middle section of the path at crossing with existing local road (facing east).



Bridge at with Lough Agher stream (facing north).



Path going along the Lough Agher stream for a short distance (facing east).



Bridge at crossing with Lough Agher stream (facing north).



Verge and surfaced path of western section.



Path around Ford (facing east).



Path joining local road at Ford showing existing car park area and bridge over Ray River.



Ray River view from bridge at Ford (facing north).



End of path at Dunmore upper (facing west).



End of document.



# Appendix C

## Drawings

<b>Drawing No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
2018/ORIS/MR/001	Site Location & Layout
2018/ORIS/MR/002	Chainages & Elevations
2018/ORIS/MR/003	Car Park No.1 & Access Path
2018/ORIS/MR/004	Ch. 0-330m
2018/ORIS/MR/005	Ch. 330-650m
2018/ORIS/MR/006	Ch. 650-1000m
2018/ORIS/MR/007	Ch. 1000-1260m & Car Park No.2
2018/ORIS/MR/008	Ch. 1260-1560m
2018/ORIS/MR/009	Ch. 1560-2000m
2018/ORIS/MR/010	Ch. 2000-2350m
2018/ORIS/MR/011	Ch. 2350-2650m
2018/ORIS/MR/012	Ch. 2650-2980m
2018/ORIS/MR/013	Ch. 2980-3330m
2018/ORIS/MR/014	Ch. 3330-3680m
2018/ORIS/MR/015	Ch. 3680-4020m
2018/ORIS/MR/016	Ch. 4020-4350m
2018/ORIS/MR/017	Ch. 4350-4690m
2018/ORIS/MR/018	Ch. 4690-5040m
2018/ORIS/MR/019	Ch. 5040-5390m
2018/ORIS/MR/020	Ch. 5390-5730m
2018/ORIS/MR/021	Ch. 5730-6070m
2018/ORIS/MR/022	Ch. 6070-6430m
2018/ORIS/MR/023	Ch. 6430-6540m
2018/ORIS/MR/024	Access Control (1of2)
2018/ORIS/MR/025	Access Control (2of2)
2018/ORIS/MR/026	Bridge Structures