

**Dromore Park Pump Station Upgrade
Dromore
Killygordon**

**HABITATS DIRECTIVE ARTICLE 6
SCREENING ASSESSMENT**

June 2021



Chomhairle Chondae Dhun na RíGail

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains a Screening for Appropriate Assessment for the Dromore Park Pump Station Upgrade in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

The project is unlikely to have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 site or qualifying interest due to the nature of the works and the separation distance between the works and the sites.

This report clearly determines that an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

Presented in Figure 1.0 below is the location of the development.

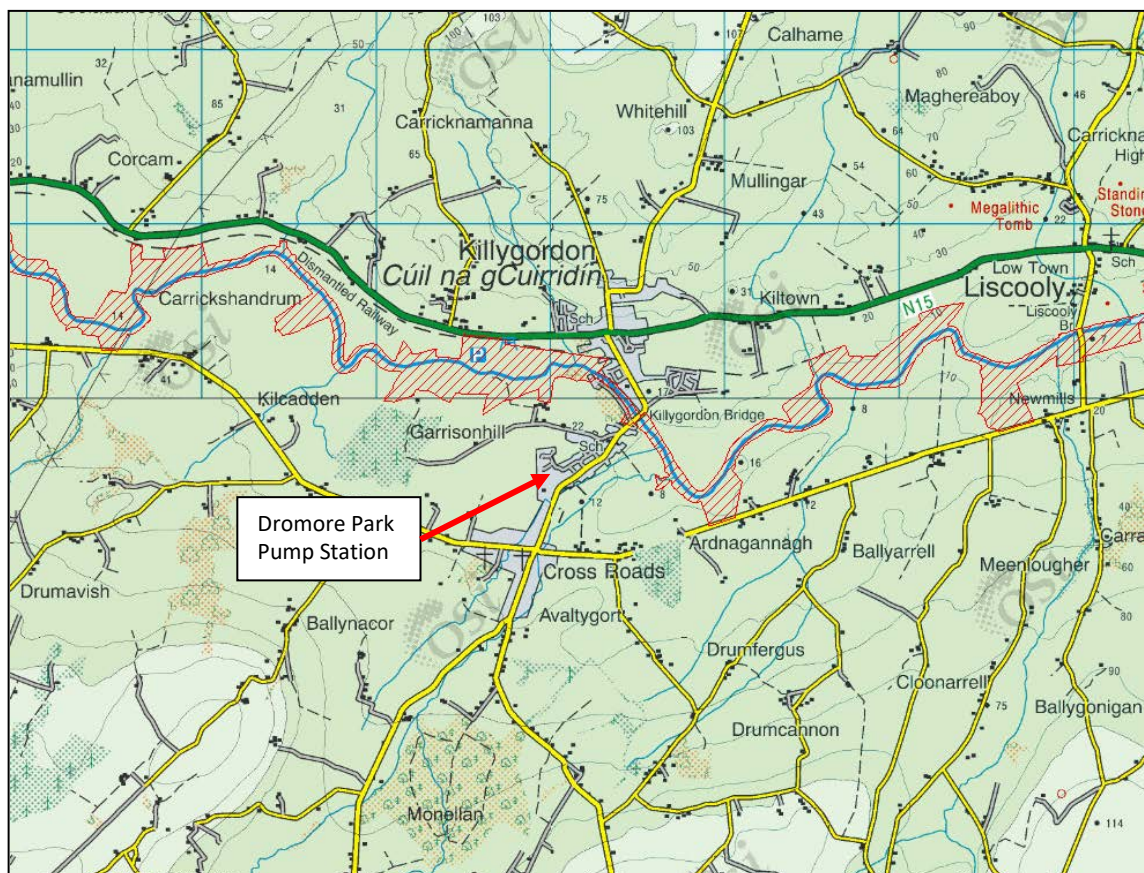


Figure 1.0: Location of the development

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive states the following:

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

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, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of 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 beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest’.

Appropriate Assessment process follows a four stage approach. The outcome of each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. Stages 1-2 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 in Article 6(4).

Appropriate Assessment process comprises of the following stages;

Stage 1 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA)

Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment (AA)

Stage 3 – Alternative Solutions

Stage 4 – Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)/ Derogation.

Screening determines whether Appropriate Assessment (AA) is necessary by examining:

-
1. *'whether a plan or project can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, and'*
 2. *'the potential effects of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects and plans, on a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives, and considering whether these effects will be significant'.*

Screening is an iterative process that involves consideration of the plan or project and its likely effects, and of the Natura 2000 sites and their ecological sensitivities, and the likely interaction of these. If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overly complicated, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 (AA).

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Donegal County Council proposes to carry out development at Dromore, Killygordon, Co. Donegal.

The proposed **Dromore Park Pump Station Upgrade at Dromore, Killygordon** has been developed to provide a permanent solution for the existing non-functioning, defective and environmentally hazardous wastewater pumping station. Currently, the existing pump station is periodically emptied by tanker and occasionally overflows raw sewage to adjoining properties and the public road, and likely reaches the nearby Cross Roads stream (EPA code 01C04), which is hydraulically linked to River Finn Special Area of Conservation.

Donegal County Council proposes to demolish the existing defective and environmentally hazardous wastewater pumping station at Dromore Park estate and construct a new pump station designed and constructed in accordance with current Irish Water specification, in addition to a gravity sewer and rising main in a section of the adjoining L-2944-3 local road.

The project will be carried out in accordance with the drawings associated with this application and will include:

- Construction of underground chambers for wastewater pumping and emergency storage;
- 2 no. 2m high kiosks and 2 no. 1.4m high kiosks for housing of mechanical and electrical plant;
- 6.5m high vent stack;
- 2.4m high Palisade fencing around the pump station for security;
- Approx. 390m of 225mm diameter gravity sewer and 390m of 80mm diameter rising main laid in the adjoining L-2944-3 local road;
- 1 no. 5.5m high lamppost to light the pump station.
- Decommissioning and demolition of existing non-functioning pumping station infrastructure including above ground kiosks, underground chambers and associated pipework.

4.0 NATURA 2000 SITES

The approach to screening follows guidance provided in the document 'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities'.

1. Any Natura 2000 sites **within or adjacent** to the plan or project area.
 - There are no SAC or SPA sites within or adjacent to the proposed project.
2. Any Natura sites **within the likely zone of impact** of the plan or project. A distance of 15km is currently recommended in the case of plans, while for projects, the distance could be much less than 15km, and in some cases less than 100m, and must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects. Due to the nature of the proposed works i.e. replacing and upgrading existing non-functioning infrastructure and works within a paved public road, and the fact that they do not significantly increase the paved surface area, likely surface water runoff or pollutants, it is considered that a zone of likely influence of **5km** will be more than sufficient in this case. The following SAC or SPA sites are located within the likely zone of impact (5km) of the proposed project.
 - **River Finn Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 002301)**

Note that at its nearest point the project lies approximately 110m southwest of the above site, with the pump station located approximately 450m southwest of the site.

County Donegal has 72 Natura sites and together they cover a large area of the county. In particular, watercourses are frequently included within the Natura sites and contribute significantly to the environmental diversity throughout the county. Where a particular watercourse is not directly included within a Natura site then it may often discharge into a Natura site and thus has a direct connector to that site. The following Natura 2000 site is located near the proposed works:

- **River Finn Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 002301)**

This site comprises almost the entire freshwater element of the River Finn and its tributaries the Corlacky, the Reelan sub-catchment, the Sruhamboy, Elatagh, Cummirk and Glashagh, and also includes Lough Finn, where the river rises. The spawning grounds at the headwaters of the Mourne and Derg Rivers, Loughs Derg and Belshade and the tidal stretch of the Foyle north of Lifford to the border are also part of the site. The Finn and Reelan,

rising in the Bluestack Mountains, drain a catchment area of 195 square miles. All of the site is in Co. Donegal. The underlying geology is Dalradian Schists and Gneiss for the most part though quartzites and Carboniferous Limestones are present in the vicinity of Castlefinn. The hills around Lough Finn are also on quartzite. The mountains of Owendoo and Cloghervaddy are of granite felsite and other intrusive rocks rich in silica. There are many towns along the river but not within the site, including Lifford, Castlefinn, Stranolar and Ballybofey. (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2014).

A Site Synopsis of the Natura 2000 site identified in (2) above is attached in Appendix 1 of this report.

Note that there are **no works proposed within the site.**

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing, and the ecological factors that 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 data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced or 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.

3. Natura 2000 sites **that are more than 15km** from the plan and project area depending on the likely impacts of the plan or project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, bearing in mind the precautionary principle.
 - Due to the nature and scale of the works proposed it is considered that the works will not impact on any SAC or SPA sites that are more than 15km from the proposed project.

The project overview and location in relation to Natura 2000 sites are shown in Figure 4.0

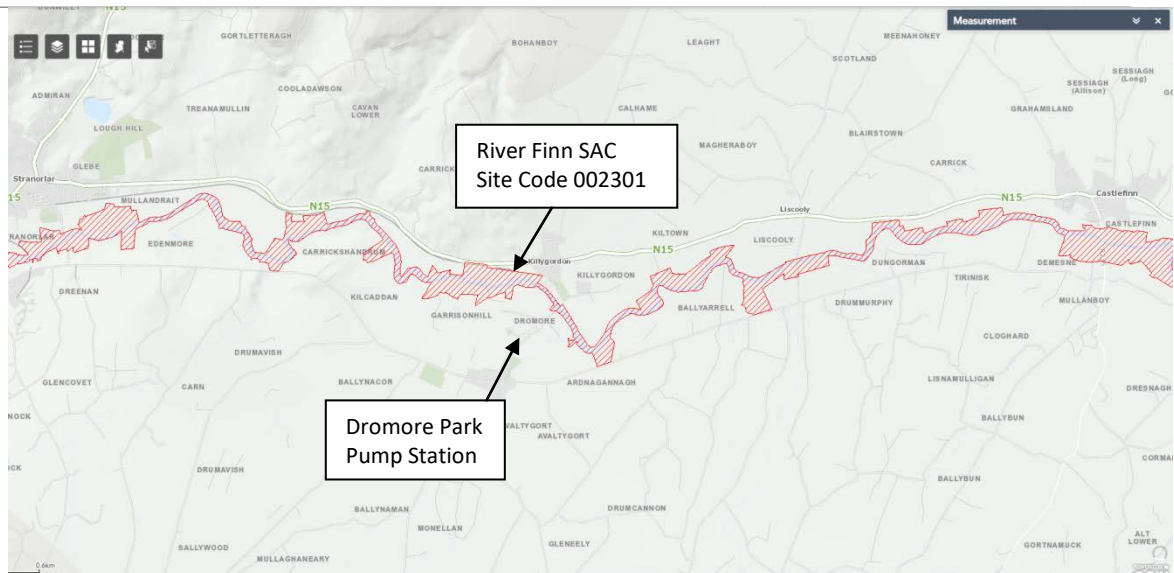


Figure 4.0 – Project overview of Natura 2000 sites identified.

(Source - <https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/>)

4.1 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES FOR NATURA 2000 SITES

Conservation objectives for the various SPA's and SAC's have been set by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. These objectives are generally to maintain or restore the favorable conservation status for habitats and species of community interest within the Natura sites. The specific conservation objectives for the sites are listed below:

- **River Finn Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 002301)**

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 (numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

- Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*) [3110]
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* [4010]
- Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]
- Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]
- *Salmo salar* (Salmon) [1106]
- *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355]

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY EFFECTS

Assessment of likely effects is the process of establishing whether the plan or project is likely to affect a Natura 2000 site or sites. It is based on a preliminary impact assessment using available information and data. This is followed by a determination of whether there is a risk that the effects identified could be significant.

If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially, significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overly complicated, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 (AA).

A preliminary impact assessment using available information and data was undertaken to establish whether the plan or project is likely to have an effect on a Natura 2000 site.

Examples of effects that are likely to be significant are:

- Any impact on an Annex I habitat.
- Causing reduction in the area of the habitat or Natura 2000 site.
- Causing direct or indirect damage to the physical quality of the environment (e.g. water quality and supply, soil compaction) in the Natura 2000 site.
- Causing serious or ongoing disturbance to species or habitats for which the Natura 2000 site is selected (e.g. increased noise, illumination and human activity).
- Causing direct or indirect damage to the size, characteristics or reproductive ability of populations on the Natura 2000 site.
- Interfering with mitigation measures put in place for other plans or projects.

It is concluded the subject project does not have any significant impact on the identified Natura 2000 Site. Appendix 2 contains an Assessment of the Natura 2000 Site identified at Section 4.0 above. No other plans or projects have been identified in respect of which combined effects with the subject project require consideration.

5.1 CUMULATIVE, DIRECT, INDIRECT, SHORT & LONG TERM EFFECTS

The development will not have a direct effect on the Natura 2000 site identified near the proposed project. The development will not lead to loss of habitat, fragmentation or any impact on water resources. In fact, the proposed development will remove an environmentally hazardous situation where periodic overflows of raw sewage may affect the nearby Cross Roads stream (EPA code 01C04), which is hydraulically linked to the River Finn SAC.

The development is located in a residential area. The proposal is to demolish the existing defective and environmentally hazardous wastewater pumping station at Dromore Park estate and construct a new pump station designed and constructed in accordance with current Irish Water specification, in addition to a gravity sewer and rising main in a section of the adjoining L-2944-3 local road.

Of the Natura 2000 site identified near the development, it neither overlaps the development nor come into contact with it.

5.2 OTHER SPECIES – Otter [1029] & Salmon [1106]

Otter and Salmon have been identified in the Site Synopsis for River Finn SAC (002301). As this section of the site is more than 110m from the development and within a well lit residential area, it is extremely unlikely they will be affected by the development. Given that the development will not affect any rivers or streams, rather it will remove the current risk of contamination of a stream hydraulically linked to River Finn SAC, it is therefore considered extremely unlikely that the proposed works will have a significant effect on these species.

5.3 OTHER SPECIES AND LISTS IMPORTANT TO NOTE.

Within the Site Synopsis for the site there are a number of plants, birds and animals listed within the Red Data Book, The Flora (Protection) Order, 1999 & 2015, Annex I of the EU Birds Directive and within Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Although there are a number of plants, birds and animals to note, due to the nature of the works and the proximity to the SAC's it is extremely unlikely that these works will have a direct or indirect impact on these plants, birds or animals.

5.4 PARTICULAR HABITATS

The SAC identified has various habitats including Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*, blanket bogs, transition mires and quaking bogs.

The SAC is outside the development extents and therefore the project will not impact on these areas.

5.5 OTHER POLICIES, PLANS OR PROJECTS

There are no other works, policies, plans or projects known that would impact on the Natura 2000 site identified. As the works are non intrusive on the Natura 2000 site, it is unlikely that the project will have any effect on these species.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Further to the above assessment of the Natura 2000 site (as detailed in Appendix 2) near the area of the proposed works, it is considered that the project will have no adverse effect on the integrity or conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site. The screening process has been undertaken to identify the proximity of Natura sites to the proposed works. The process has considered the qualifying interests of these Natura 2000 sites and potential impacts arising from the proposed project. Because of the type of qualifying interest, the separation between the construction site and Natura sites, the timing of the works, the controls in place, the environmental checks and the use of good site management practices it is considered extremely unlikely that the proposed works will have any significant impact on the integrity on any Natura sites.

The process has shown that it is extremely unlikely that there will be any significant negative effects on Natura 2000 sites arising from the implementation of the project. It is also unlikely that there will be 'in combination' negative effects from any other plans or known developments.

In conclusion the Stage 1 screening for Appropriate Assessment has determined that the **Dromore Park Pump Station Upgrade** will not adversely impact in any significant manner on any Natura 2000 site and the qualifying interests or conservation objectives associated with them.

As such, it is concluded that Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

7.0 REPORT ACCEPTANCE SHEET

The Habitats Directive Article 6 screening report has determined that the proposed **Dromore Park Pump Station Upgrade, Dromore, Killygordon** project is unlikely to have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 site.

Screening Report Prepared and Recommended By:

Seán Toland
Graduate Engineer

Date: June 2021

Screening Report Approved By:

Paddy Mullen
Senior Executive Engineer

Date: June 2021

Appendix 1 – Natura 2000 Site Synopsis



Site Name: River Finn SAC

Site Code: 002301

This site comprises almost the entire freshwater element of the River Finn and its tributaries the Corlacky, the Reelan sub-catchment, the Sruhamboy, Elatagh, Cummirk and Glashagh, and also includes Lough Finn, where the river rises. The spawning grounds at the headwaters of the Mourne and Derg Rivers, Loughs Derg and Belshade and the tidal stretch of the Foyle north of Lifford to the border are also part of the site. The Finn and Reelan, rising in the Bluestack Mountains, drain a catchment area of 195 square miles. All of the site is in Co. Donegal. The underlying geology is Dalradian Schists and Gneiss for the most part though quartzites and Carboniferous Limestones are present in the vicinity of Castlefinn. The hills around Lough Finn are also on quartzite. The mountains of Owendoo and Cloghervaddy are of granite felsite and other intrusive rocks rich in silica. There are many towns along the river but not within the site, including Lifford, Castlefinn, Stranolar and Ballybofey.

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):

[3110] Oligotrophic Waters containing very few minerals; [4010] Wet Heath; [7130] Blanket Bogs (Active)*; [7140] Transition Mires; [1106] Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*); [1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*).

Upland blanket bog occurs throughout much of the upland area of the site along the edges of the river. However, more extensive examples are found at Tullytresna and in the Owendoo/Cloghervaddy bogs. The blanket bog is dominated by Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*), Purple Moorgrass (*Molinia caerulea*) and bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.). Pool and hummock systems are a feature of the flatter areas, with Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), mosses (*Racomitrium lanuginosum*, *Sphagnum capillifolium* and *S. papillosum*), lichens (e.g. *Cladonia portentosa*) and the liverwort *Pleurozia purpurea* occurring abundantly on the hummocks. The scarce bog moss *S. imbricatum* is a component of some hummocks. *Sphagnum magellanicum* is found in wet flats by pools, while *S. cuspidatum* occurs abundantly within the pools themselves.

Towards the base of the northern slope and on the southern slope at Tullytresna flushes occur with bright green lawns of bog mosses and abundant rushes, particularly Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) and Jointed Rush (*J. articulatus*). On the summit is an undulating system of hummocks and hollows, and Heather is more common.

A valley bog fills the low lying areas to the north-east of Lough Finn which is dominated by Deergrass, cottongrass, Purple Moor-grass and Heather. Mossy hummocks occur in the wetter areas.

Transition mires (or quaking bogs or scraws) occur at several locations, usually at the interface between bog and lake or stream. In Owendoo/Cloghervaddy there are many examples of small lakes south of Belshade. Some of the lakes contain floating scraws of the bog moss *S. recurvum*, Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*), Bog-sedge (*C. limosa*) and Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*). West of Owendoo River there is an extensive area of scraw with a similar suite of species but in differing abundances. Quaking areas are also associated with blanket bog at Cronamuck and Cronakerny. At Cronamuck, a small, level flushed area occurs at the base of a slope leading into a flushed stream. Diversity, including diagnostic species, is good.

Wet heath is associated with the blanket bog throughout the site and is found on the shallow peats and better drained slopes. In Owendoo/Cloghervaddy this is mostly characterised by Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Heather, Mat-grass (*Nardus stricta*), Heath Rush (*Juncus squarrosus*) and Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*). The heath often grades into flush vegetation dominated by Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*).

Lowland oligotrophic lakes are found at Loughs Finn, Belshade and Derg, as well as in many of the smaller lakes within the site. Lough Derg is a large oligotrophic lake situated north of Pettigo. An extensive area of blanket bogs and conifer plantations make up the lake catchment. Typical species seen at the three lakes include a sparse covering of Shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*) along the lake shores, Water Lobelia (*Lobelia dortmanna*), the moss *Fontinalis antipyretica*, Bog Pondweed (*Potamogeton polygonifolius*) and Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), with Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*) and Broad-leaved Pondweed (*P. natans*) in the margins.

On the tidal stretches within the site the main habitats are the river itself, mudflats and the extensive reedbeds that have colonised the former mudflats. The habitats found are typically freshwater in nature. The large reedbeds are dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), with some Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*). Succession is demonstrated nicely within a small area, with the change from mudflats to reedbeds, and on to willow (*Salix* spp.) and Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) scrub.

Other habitats present within the site include a fringe of wet grassland/marsh along some river stretches dominated by rushes, grading into species-rich marsh in which sedges are common. Among the other species found in this habitat are Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and Soft Rush. Around Lough Derg wet fen type vegetation occurs in places with Purple Moor-grass, Bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*), Jointed Rush and Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). There is also some Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*) and Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*).

Where banks are steeper, particularly around Lough Derg and along the deep mountain valley of the upper stretches, dry, steep slopes support Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*), Heather, Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*), Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*). There are areas of scrub surrounding parts of the lake margins, along the channels and on the ungrazed islands. These are composed of Alder, willows, Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*). Understorey plants include abundant

ferns and mosses. The rare Narrow-leaved Helleborine (*Cephalanthera longifolia*) occurs on the shores of Lough Derg. This species is listed in the Irish Red Data Book and is protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999.

Small pockets of conifer plantation, close to the lakes and along the strip both sides of the rivers, are included in the site.

Lough Finn holds a population of Arctic Char (*Salvelinus alpinus*). This fish is a relative of salmon and trout, and represents an arctic-alpine element in the Irish fauna. In Ireland this fish occurs only in a few cold, stony, oligotrophic lakes. It is listed in the Irish Red Data Book as threatened. The Arctic Char in Lough Finn are unusual in that they are dwarfed. These only occur in one other lake in Ireland, Lough Coornasahom, Co. Kerry and they are therefore of national importance. Arctic Char are very sensitive to water quality and therefore changes in the catchment such as afforestation should be avoided to maintain this population. Lough Derg is also important for Arctic Char, though the species was last recorded there in 1990/91.

The Finn system is one of Ireland's premier salmon waters. Although the Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) is still fished commercially in Ireland, it is considered to be endangered or locally threatened elsewhere in Europe and is listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Commercial netting on the Foyle does not begin until June and this gives spring fish a good opportunity to get into the Finn. The Finn is important in an international context in that its populations of spring salmon appear to be stable, while they are declining in many areas of Ireland and Europe. The salmon fishing season is 1st March to 15th September. Fishing for spring salmon is best east of Stranolar while the grilse run through to the upper reaches. The grilse run peaks here, depending on water, usually in mid June. The estimated rod catch from the Finn is approximately 500-800 spring salmon and 4,000 grilse annually, producing about 40% of the total Foyle count. The Loughs Agency has a management regime in place called the 'control of fishing regulations'. If enough salmon are not past the counter at Killygordon at a certain key date then both the angling and commercial fishing can be closed for set periods.

The site is also important for Otter (*Lutra lutra*), another species listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive. It is widespread throughout the system. In addition, the site also supports many more of the mammal species occurring in Ireland. Those which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book include the Badger and the Irish Hare. Common Frog, another Red Data Book species, also occurs within the site.

Golden Plover, Peregrine and Merlin, threatened species listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, breed in the upland areas of the site. The Red Listed species Red Grouse occurs on the site, while the scarce Ring Ouzel, another Red List species, is also known to occur.

Agriculture, with particular emphasis on grazing, is the main land use along the Finn and its tributaries. Much of the grassland is unimproved but improved grassland and silage are also present, particularly east of Ballybofey. The spreading of slurry and fertiliser poses a threat to the water quality of this salmonid river, particularly in this region as the river is subject to extensive flooding. Fishing is a main tourist attraction on the Finn and there are a large number of Angler Associations, some with a number of beats. Fishing stands and styles have been erected in places. The River Finn is a designated Salmonid Water under

the E.U. Freshwater Fish Directive. Other aspects of tourism such as boating are concentrated around Lough Finn.

Afforestation is ongoing, particularly along the western sections of the site adjacent to the headwaters and around the shores of Lough Derg. Recent planting has been carried out along the Cronamuck River. Forestry poses a threat in that sedimentation and acidification occurs. Sedimentation can cover the gravel beds resulting in a loss of suitable spawning grounds.

The site supports important populations of a number of species listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive, and several habitats listed on Annex I of this Directive, as well as examples of other important habitats. Blanket bog is a rare habitat type in Europe and receives priority status on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The overall diversity and ecological value of the site is increased by the presence of populations of several rare or threatened birds, mammals, fish and plants.

Appendix 2 –Assessment of Natura 2000 Sites

1. Natura 2000 Site ID & Characteristics	2. Site Importance	3. Site Vulnerability	4. Likely Impact of Proposed Development	5. Cumulative Effects	6. Development Likely to Cause Significant Impact
<p>Site Name: River Finn SAC Site Code: 002301</p> <p>This site comprises almost the entire freshwater element of the River Finn and its tributaries the Corlacky, the Reelan sub-catchment, the Sruhamboy, Elatagh, Cummirk and Glashagh, and also includes Lough Finn, where the river rises. The spawning grounds at the headwaters of the Mourne and Derg Rivers, Loughs Derg and Belshade and the tidal stretch of the Foyle north of Lifford to the border are also part of the site. The Finn and Reelan, rising in the Bluestack Mountains, drain a catchment area of 195 square miles. All of the site is in Co. Donegal. The underlying geology is Dalradian Schists and Gneiss for the most part though quartzites and Carboniferous Limestones are present in the vicinity of Castlefinn. The hills around Lough Finn are also on quartzite. The mountains of Owendoo and Cloghervaddy are of granite felsite and other intrusive rocks rich in silica. There are many towns along the river but not within the site, including Lifford, Castlefinn, Stranolar and Ballybofey.</p> <p>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):</p> <p>[3110] Oligotrophic Waters containing very few minerals [4010] Wet Heath [7130] Blanket Bogs (Active)* [7140] Transition Mires [1106] Atlantic Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1355] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)</p>	<p>This extensive site contains good examples of the Annex 1 habitats lowland oligotrophic lakes, blanket bog, transition mires and wet heath. Water quality of the lakes is good, as is that in most of the rivers and streams (majority classified as unpolluted). The blanket bog, which is best developed in the Owendoo/Cloghervaddy area, is typical upland bog and is fairly extensive in area. The Finn is an important system for <i>Salmo salar</i>, being an excellent grilse river with extensive spawning habitats. The Finn system sustains one of the only stable spring salmon populations in the country. The rivers and lakes support important populations of <i>Lutra lutra</i>. The upland habitats support a number of important bird species, notably <i>Falco peregrinus</i> and <i>Falco columbarius</i> (Annex I species) and <i>Lagopus lagopus</i> and <i>Turdus torquatus</i> (both Red Data Book species). Lough Derg supports the largest colony of <i>Larus fuscus</i> in Ireland. The section of the River Foyle within the site, along with a contiguous stretch in of the river in Northern Ireland, supports important populations of waterfowl in autumn and winter, with an internationally important population of <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>, and nationally important numbers of <i>Anser anser</i>, <i>Anas crecca</i> and <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>. <i>Salvelinus alpinus</i> occurs in Lough Finn and possibly Lough Derg. A Red Data Book plant species, <i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i>, is known from the site. <i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i>, is known from the site.</p>	<p>Site is extensive and primarily vulnerable to effects of surrounding agricultural activities and urban residential and industrial development.</p> <p>During construction, the potential risk factor is the entry of pollutants into the drainage network and particularly nutrient pollution of waters/streams that may be hydraulically linked to the SAC.</p> <p>During the operational stage, the presence of emergency storage capacity and controls/alarms will significantly reduce the current threat to the Site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal is to upgrade the existing environmentally hazardous pump station as detailed above. • The SAC is located outside the development extents. With normal construction controls and best practice in place impact on the SAC is unlikely. <p>Consideration: Scheme does not impact the SAC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are no other works planned for the area. ▪ The works do not constitute a change in the land use of the area. <p>Consideration: Scheme does not have a cumulative impact on the SAC.</p>	<p>Consideration: The scheme does not have a significant impact on the Natura 2000 Site. This is due to the separation distance between the works and the qualifying interests contained in the SAC and the normal controls that will be in place during construction. In addition, the development will remove an ongoing threat to the Site by removing the non-performing pump station.</p>