



## AA Screening Report & Determination in respect of Letterkenny Cultural Corridor (forming part of LK Green Connect)

### STEP 1. Description of the project/proposal and local site characteristics:

(a) File Reference No:	LK2040/LKCC
(b) Brief description of the project or plan:	<p>The proposed Part 8 scheme entitled 'Letterkenny Cultural Corridor (forming part of LK Green Connect)' comprises the enhancement of existing and construction of new walking, cycling and public realm infrastructure connecting an Grianan Theatre, the Regional Cultural Centre, Donegal County Museum, Letterkenny Tennis Club and Letterkenny Boxing Club inclusive of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Removal of existing public realm environment at the forecourt of An Grianan Theatre and construction of a new public realm environment integrated with the forthcoming 'Eat Out' Outdoor Dining Infrastructure Project.</li><li>▪ Modification to public road L-10042-0 from Ramelton Road to the Regional Cultural Centre to include construction of shared surface scheme and enhanced pedestrian infrastructure.</li><li>▪ Enhancement of existing steps and pathway at the Regional Cultural Centre inclusive of resurfacing/ colour change.</li><li>▪ Enhancements to existing pathway adjoining Letterkenny Boxing Club including resurfacing, reconfiguration of Boxing Club service area/ fenceline, management of trees together with elevational enhancements to Boxing Club building and installation of shared surface at south-west facing gable.</li><li>▪ Enhancements to John McLaughlin Way inclusive of resurfacing, repair of steps, surface water drainage, management of trees and vegetation, painting of gable elevations.</li></ul>

- Construction of new ramped access for emergency/court maintenance/pedestrian access to Letterkenny Tennis Club and installation of signage/public art on Tennis Club building.
- Construction of new combined walking/cycling infrastructure from Letterkenny Courthouse/Regional Cultural Centre to High Road inclusive of ramped and stepped access, and amphitheatre seating.
- Modification to carriageway and footpath infrastructure at High Road to enhance pedestrian accessibility and installation of controlled crossing point, raised table and resurfacing.
- Installation of public art inclusive of Letterkenny 2040 brand logo and historical/heritage and place-related information.
- All associated ancillary works throughout to include enhancements to public lighting, drainage and utilities, connection to services, landscaping, nature-based solutions to rainwater management, wayfinding and development related signage & public art.

All associated ancillary site works shall be located within the townland of Letterkenny in the Letterkenny-Milford Municipal District.

**(c) Brief description of site characteristics:**

The site of the proposed development comprises 0.87ha (2.1acres) in area and is located within the urban area of Letterkenny town centre, in the townland of Letterkenny, County Donegal.

The site is characterized as comprising of existing and long-established walkways, carriageways, paved areas and public realm. A new walking and cycling connection is proposed within an area of developed land/ buildings and curtilage.

The baseline ecological condition of the site in its current state as per the habitat classifications and codes set out in 'A Guide to Habitats in Ireland' (Fossitt, 2000) are categorized as (i) Artificial Surfaces (BL3), having regard to the extent of existing and long-established walkways, carriageways, paved areas and public realm and; (ii) disturbed ground specifically spoil and bare ground (ED2) having regard to ongoing disturbance and maintenance as a result of the temporary activity of Colaiste Ailigh in its former occupation of Sprackburn House and existing temporary portacabins prior to relocation to new school building and the continued ongoing residential uses at this part of the site.

	<p>The subject site is located within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) catchment 39 Lough Swilly and falls within the Swilly_SC_010 WFD sub-catchment. There are no river or lake water bodies occurring within the proposed works area.</p> <p>The topography across the site varies with levels reducing North to South from existing ground level at High Road of circ 46m, to existing ground level at Ramelton Road/An Grianan public realm of circa 16m.</p> <p>The site is surrounded on all boundaries by built-up, long established urban infrastructure of mixed-use type including cultural, recreational, commercial, residential, retail, service, financial and entertainment, reflective of its town centre location.</p> <p>The subject site is not located within or immediately adjacent to any Natura/European site.</p>
(d) Relevant prescribed bodies consulted: e.g. DHLGH (NPWS), EPA, OPW	--
(e) Response to consultation:	--

## STEP 2. Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model and compilation of information on Qualifying Interests and conservation objectives.

European Site (code)	List of Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest <sup>1</sup>	Distance from proposed development <sup>2</sup> (km)	Connections (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
Lough Swilly SAC [002287]	<p><b>Habitats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [1130] Estuaries</li> <li>▪ [1150] Coastal lagoons</li> <li>▪ [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</li> <li>▪ [6410] <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>)</li> <li>▪ [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</li> </ul> <p><b>Species</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [1355] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002287.pdf">https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002287.pdf</a></p>	1.2km	<p>Yes</p> <p>Weak hydrological connection exists through:</p> <p>(i) Location of the site within the same hydrological catchment as the Lough Swilly SAC.</p> <p>and</p> <p>(ii) Surface water and</p>	Yes- see step 3

			wastewater from the site passes through Letterkenny Wastewater Treatment Plant which discharges via outfall to the upper reaches of Lough Swilly Estuary.	
Leannan River SAC [002176]	<p><b>Habitats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [3110] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>)</li> <li>▪ [3130] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Species</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>)</li> <li>▪ [1106] Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>)</li> <li>▪ [1355] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)</li> <li>▪ [1833] Slender Naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>)</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002176.pdf">https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002176.pdf</a></p>	6.9km	<p>No</p> <p>Leannan River SAC lies in a separate hydrological sub catchment and groundwater area to the proposed works area and is remote from the proposed site and separated by existing roads, buildings and agricultural lands therefore there is no direct hydrological link to the subject site and no avenue of connectivity.</p>	No
Ballyarr Wood SAC [000116]	<p><b>Habitats</b></p> <p>[91A0] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</p> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000116.pdf">https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000116.pdf</a></p>	8.0km	<p>No</p> <p>Due to distance of the Ballyarr Woods SAC from the proposed works area and its separation from the proposed works area by existing roads, buildings and agricultural lands and the nature of designated Qualifying Interests as terrestrial only, there is no direct hydrological link to the subject site and no avenue of connectivity.</p>	No
Cloghernagore Bog And Glenveagh National Park SAC [002047]	<p><b>Habitats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [3110] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>)</li> <li>▪ [3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation</li> <li>▪ [4010] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></li> </ul>	12.8km	<p>No</p> <p>Cloghernagore Bog And Glenveagh National Park SAC lies in a separate hydrological sub catchment and</p>	No

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [4030] European dry heaths</li> <li>▪ [4060] Alpine and Boreal heaths</li> <li>▪ [6410] <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>)</li> <li>▪ [7130] Blanket bogs (* if active bog)</li> <li>▪ [7150] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i></li> <li>▪ [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</li> </ul> <p><b>Species</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>)</li> <li>▪ [1106] Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>)</li> <li>▪ [1355] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)</li> <li>▪ [1421] Killarney Fern (<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>)</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002047.pdf">https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002047.pdf</a></p>		groundwater area to the proposed works area and is remote from the proposed site and separated by existing roads, buildings and agricultural lands therefore there is no direct hydrological link to the subject site and no avenue of connectivity.	
River Finn SAC [002301]	<p><b>Habitats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [3110] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>)</li> <li>▪ [4010] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></li> <li>▪ [7130] Blanket bogs (* if active bog)</li> <li>▪ [7140] Transition mires and quaking bogs</li> </ul> <p><b>Species</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [1106] Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>)</li> <li>▪ [1355] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002301.pdf">https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002301.pdf</a></p>	13.2km	No	No
Meentygrannagh Bog SAC [000173]	<p><b>Habitats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [7130] Blanket bogs (* if active bog)</li> <li>▪ [7140] Transition mires and quaking bogs</li> <li>▪ [7230] Alkaline fens</li> </ul> <p><b>Species</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [6216] Slender Green Feather-moss (<i>Hamatocaulis vernicosus</i>)</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000173.pdf">https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000173.pdf</a></p>	14.9km	No	No

<p>Lough Swilly SPA [004075]</p>	<p><b>Birds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [A005] Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A028] Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A038] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A043] Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A048] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A050] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A052] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A053] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A056] Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A062] Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A067] Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A069] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A125] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A130] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A143] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A149] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A160] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A162] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A164] Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A179] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A182] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A191] Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A193] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A395] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Habitats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004075.pdf">https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004075.pdf</a></p>	<p>2.0km</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Weak hydrological connection exists through:</p> <p>(iii) Location of the site within the same hydrological catchment as the Lough Swilly SPA.</p> <p>And</p> <p>(ii) Surface water and wastewater from the site passes through Letterkenny Wastewater Treatment Plant which discharges via outfall to the upper reaches of Lough Swilly Estuary.</p> <p>There is no habitat connection as there is no supporting habitat for the SCI species of the SPA on or surrounding the site of the proposed development.</p>	<p>Yes- see step 3</p>
<p>Lough Fern SPA [004060]</p>	<p><b>Birds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [A059] Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Habitats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004060.pdf">https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004060.pdf</a></p>	<p>9.5km</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Lough Fern SPA lies in a separate hydrological sub catchment and groundwater area to the proposed works area and is remote from the proposed site and separated by existing roads, buildings and agricultural lands therefore there is no direct hydrological link to the subject site and no avenue of connectivity.</p> <p>There is no habitat connection as there is no</p>	<p>No</p>

			supporting habitat within the footprint of the works area for SCI species associated with this SPA.	
Derryveagh And Glendowan Mountains SPA [004039]	<p><b>Birds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ [A001] Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A098] Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A103] Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A140] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)</li> <li>▪ [A466] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina schinzii</i>)</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004039.pdf">https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004039.pdf</a></p>	11.6km	<p>No</p> <p>Derryveagh And Glendowan Mountains SPA lies in a separate hydrological sub catchment and groundwater area to the proposed works area and is remote from the proposed site and separated by existing roads, buildings and agricultural lands therefore there is no direct hydrological link to the subject site and no avenue of connectivity.</p> <p>There is no habitat connection as there is no supporting habitat within the footprint of the proposed works area for SCI species associated with the Derryveagh And Glendowan Mountains SPA.</p>	No

<sup>1</sup> Short paraphrasing and/or cross reference to NPWS is acceptable – it is not necessary to reproduce the full text on the QI/SCI.

<sup>2</sup> If the site or part thereof is within the European site or adjacent to the European site, state here.

## STEP 3. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

(a) Identify all potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the project under the following headings:

Impacts:	Possible Significance of Impacts: (duration/magnitude etc.)
<p><b>Construction phase e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetation clearance</li> <li>• Demolition</li> <li>• Surface water runoff from soil excavation/infill/landscaping (including borrow pits)</li> <li>• Dust, noise, vibration</li> <li>• Lighting disturbance</li> <li>• Impact on groundwater/dewatering</li> <li>• Storage of excavated/construction materials</li> <li>• Access to site</li> <li>• Pests</li> </ul>	<p>Having regard to (i) the scope of the proposed works as predominantly enhancement of existing pathways, carriageway and public realm and only limited associated demolition; (ii) the location of the proposed works within an urban environment, outside the boundary of the Lough Swilly SAC and SPA and served by urban drainage systems and; (iii) the absence of any watercourse on the site with the potential to have hydraulic connectivity to any sensitive watercourses, it is concluded that the construction phase will not result in significant environmental impacts that could affect the Lough Swilly SAC or SPA or European Sites within the wider catchment area.</p> <p>The works area also does not contain any supporting habitat for the qualifying interests of the SAC or SPA nor any Annex 1 Habitat.</p> <p>In addition, the construction phase will be carried out in accordance with detailed design methodologies to ensure that any potential impacts on water by any construction activities are eliminated. While detailed design methodologies will be engaged during the construction phase, these are not required to avoid or reduce any effects on a European site. These measures are not relied upon to reach a conclusion of no likely significant effects on any European site during the construction phase. Based on this scientific observation, the entire proposal can be screened out of any further studies.</p>
<p><b>Operational phase e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct emission to air and water</li> <li>• Surface water runoff containing contaminant or sediment</li> <li>• Lighting disturbance</li> <li>• Noise/vibration</li> <li>• Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage or abstraction</li> <li>• Presence of people, vehicles and activities</li> <li>• Physical presence of structures (e.g. collision risks)</li> <li>• Potential for accidents or incidents</li> </ul>	<p>All surface water runoff once the development is operational will be contained on site and discharged to urban drainage systems. There is no wastewater discharge arising from the development given the nature of it as walking, cycling and public realm infrastructure.</p> <p>The proposed development will predominantly result in enhancement of an existing urban environment of public realm and accessibility infrastructure typology therefore there will be no significant change in the operational phase.</p> <p>The hydrological connections are therefore indirect and weak such that there is no ecological pathway or functional link between the proposed development and European sites that would result in the potential for significant effects during the operational phase. Based on this scientific observation, the entire proposal can be screened out of any further studies.</p>
<p><b>In-combination/Other</b></p>	<p>All extant developments and future phase(s) of development permitted or planned under the Councils wider Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration programme for the town centre are or will be similarly served by urban drainage systems and the Letterkenny</p>



Wastewater Treatment Plant including recent Part 8 approval (November 2022) for outdoor dining infrastructure within the subject site at the front of An Grianan Theatre. Therefore, no recent or historical approvals are predicted to combine with the proposed development to culminate in a negative effect on the SAC.

An NIR was prepared for the County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 which included a 'town centre' zoning objective for the subject site. No likely significant effects on any European site were identified.

No likely significant in-combination effects are identified.

**(b) Describe any likely changes to the European site:**

Examples of the type of changes to give consideration to include:

- Reduction or fragmentation of habitat area
- Disturbance to QI species
- Habitat or species fragmentation
- Reduction or fragmentation in species density
- Changes in key indicators of conservation status value (water or air quality etc.)
- Changes to areas of sensitivity or threats to QI
- Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site

None.

The works areas do not contain any qualifying interests of the SAC or SPA nor any Annex 1 habitat.

The location of the proposed development is within an established built-up town centre urban environment that currently functions as areas of existing paved public realm, carriageways and paved walkways. It is located outside the boundary of the SAC and SPA and the absence of any watercourse on or in the vicinity of the site, results in a weak and indirect ecological pathway such that the proposal will not result in any likely changes to the European sites that comprise part of the Natura 2000 network. No direct effects such as habitat loss or fragmentation are likely to occur, no indirect effects such as habitat degradation are likely to occur as a result of the proposed works.

**(c) Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening?**

Yes  No

No

While detailed design methodologies will be engaged during the construction phase, these are not required to avoid or reduce any effects on a European site. These measures are not relied upon to reach a conclusion of no likely significant effects on any European site during the construction phase.

## Step 4. Screening Determination Statement

### The assessment of significance of effects:

Describe how the proposed development (alone or in-combination) is/is **not likely** to have **significant** effects on European site(s) in view of its conservation objectives.

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

- the nature and scale of the proposed development on fully serviced urban lands,
- the nature and scale of the proposed development as predominantly enhancement of existing paved public realm, carriageways and paved walkways and associated infrastructure,
- the location of the proposed works area outside of a Natura 2000 site and the existence of physical barrier(s) and distance between same,
- the absence of Annex 1 habitat or qualifying interests within the works area, and
- the lack of direct connections with regard to the Source-Pathway-Receptor model,

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

### Conclusion:

	Tick as Appropriate:	Recommendation:
(i) It is clear that there is <b>no likelihood</b> of significant effects on a European site.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The proposal can be screened out: Appropriate assessment not required.
(ii) It is <b>uncertain</b> whether the proposal will have a significant effect on a European site.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Request further information to complete screening <input type="checkbox"/> Request NIS <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse planning permission
(iii) <b>Significant effects</b> are likely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Request NIS <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse planning permission

**Signature and Date of Recommending Officer:**

*Ruth O'Leary*

12<sup>th</sup> September 2023

**Signature and Date of the Decision Maker:**

*Sinead McCauley*

12<sup>th</sup> September 2023