

**Sligo County Council**

**Proposed Tobercurry Local Area Plan 2015-2021  
Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Statement**

**Prepared by the Heritage Office, Sligo County Council**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Legislative Context

Sligo County Council intends to prepare the Tobercurry Local Area Plan 2015-2021(LAP) in line with the provisions of the Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017. The review follows the procedure set out in Sections 18-20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) relating to the preparation and adoption of local area plans.

An important aspect of the Development Plan is how the Plan may impact on European Sites designated for nature conservation, i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as “The Habitats Directive”, provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. These are SACs and SPA’s designated under the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive (Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/ECC)).

In accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive (43/92/EEC) and EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), the impacts of the policies and objectives of all statutory land use plans on certain sites that are designated for the protection of nature (Natura 2000 sites<sup>1</sup>), must be assessed as an integral part of the process of drafting of the plan. This is to determine whether or not the implementation of plan policies could have negative consequences for the habitats or plant and animal species for which these sites are designated. This assessment process is called an Appropriate Assessment (AA) and must be carried out on all stages of the plan making process.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA):

*Article 6(3): “Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”*

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

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<sup>1</sup> Natura 2000 sites include Special Areas of Conservation designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas designated under the Birds Directive. Special Areas of Conservation are sites that are protected because they support particular habitats and/or plant and animal species that have been identified to be threatened at EU community level. Special Protection Areas are sites that are protected for the conservation of species of birds that are in danger of extinction, or are rare or vulnerable. Special Protection Areas may also be sites that are particularly important for migratory birds. Such sites include internationally important wetlands.

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

This document provides a record of the first phase of the Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) process for the proposed Tobercurry Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021 (LAP). All Natura 2000 sites within the potential impact zone of the plan have been screened to determine whether there is potential for significant impacts on qualifying features of Natura 2000 sites to arise out of implementation of the Plan.

### **Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017**

Sligo County Development Plan came into force on 13 June 2011. It will remain operational for a maximum period of six years. The Plan sets out the Council’s policies and objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County of Sligo.

The undertaking of Appropriate Assessment (AA) is mandatory in the case of development plans. The AA of the CDP 2011-2017 was undertaken by environmental consultants CAAS on behalf of Sligo County Council. The resultant Appropriate Assessment Screening Report was published alongside the CDP 2011-2017.

The Appropriate Assessment informed the policies and objectives of the Plan and also suggested appropriate mitigation measures, which were incorporated into the relevant chapters of the Plan upon its adoption in 2011.

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report should be read in conjunction with the CDP 2011-2017 and the associated Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

Sligo CDP and its associated Appropriate Assessment Screening Report are available at [www.sligococo.ie/cdp](http://www.sligococo.ie/cdp).

## **1.2 Stages of the Appropriate Assessment**

This document has been prepared in accordance with the European Commission Environment DG document *“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”*, referred to as the *“EC Article 6 Guidance Document”*. The guidance document provides a non-mandatory methodology for carrying out assessments required under Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive, and is viewed as an interpretation of the EU Commission’s document *“Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC”*, referred to as *“MN2000”*. In addition, *“Appropriate Assessment Guidance for Planning Authorities”* was published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in December 2009 (DEHLG, 2009) and amended in March 2010. Cognisance has been taken of this document in carrying out this assessment. In complying with the obligations under Article 6(3) and with reference to the guidance documents mentioned above, this AA has been broadly structured as follows:

### 1) Stage 1 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment

- Description of the plan;
- Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites potentially affected;
- Identification and description of individual and cumulative impacts likely to result from implementation of the Plan;
- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified above on site integrity.
- Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects.

### 2) Stage 2 –Appropriate Assessment

- Description of the Natura 2000 sites that will be considered further in the AA;
- Description of significant impacts on the conservation features of these sites likely to occur from the Plan;
- Mitigation Measures; and
- Conclusions.

### 3) Stage 3- Assessment of Alternative Solutions

### 4) Stage 4 – Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain (Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest and Compensation Measures).

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. In the first instance, the Plan should aim to avoid any negative impacts on European sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan-making, and writing the plan in order to avoid such impacts. Following that, mitigation measures should be applied, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If the Plan 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 Plan is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI test) under Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effect.

## 1.3 Terminology

A number of different terms have been used in the recent past to describe the process and outputs associated with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. These include Appropriate Assessment (AA), Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA), Habitats Directive Assessment Report, Natura Impact Statement (NIS), Natura Impact Report (NIR).

In an effort to provide consistency and transparency in the planning process and to come into line with the terminology used in the most recent DEHLG guidance, it has been decided to use just two terms throughout this document.

For the purposes of this report the following terms have been adopted:

- **Appropriate Assessment (AA)** has been used to refer to the process and includes the various stages outlined in Section 1.2 above.

- **Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Statement** has been used to refer to the output from Stage 1 of the AA process and includes the information necessary for the competent authority to carry out an appropriate assessment of the implications of the Plan.

It should also be noted that the Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017 also uses the term Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) in addition to the term Appropriate Assessment to describe the process and outputs associated with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. These terms are used interchangeably throughout the Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Approach**

Appropriate Assessment of the proposed Local Area Plan (LAP) was undertaken and the findings of the assessment are presented in this Habitats Directive Screening Report. The approach taken in the making of this assessment follows *European Communities, 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, 2002*, and *Local Government and Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland, Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009*. As the LAP is progressed through the plan making process the appropriate assessment process will continue in tandem and will inform the decision making process in terms of any likely significant impacts arising from the LAP on Natura 2000 sites.

### **2.2 Data Sources**

The appropriate assessment of potential impacts on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites in this report is based on a desktop review of information relating to these sites and to the habitats and species that they support. References and data used are cited in the back of this report.

### **2.3 Consultation**

This report will be placed on public display with the proposed Local Area Plan and will be referred to Government Departments and other statutory consultees for consideration during the consultation process. Submissions on same will be taken into consideration in the drafting of the final plan and accompanying Appropriate Assessment.

### **3 STAGE 1 – SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT**

#### **3.1 Description of the draft Plan**

Sligo County Council has prepared a Draft Local Area Plan (LAP) for Tobercurry for the period 2015-2021, in line with the provisions of Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017.

The CDP earmarks Tobercurry as a Key Support Town, in order to build on its strengths and existing scale of development. As recommended in the CDP, the strategy for Tobercurry will be to consolidate the town through the provision of an appropriate range of services including social infrastructure, retail, office, commercial and enterprise facilities to enable it to serve its residents and those in the rural catchment in an appropriate manner.

#### **Tobercurry Local Area Plan – purpose and structure**

The development of Tobercurry is guided by the following vision:

To promote the development of a socially and economically successful town, with a renewed and extended town centre, served by an effective circulation system, in a healthy natural environment.

To achieve the vision, the following strategic aims will be pursued:

- SA-1** Promote the sustainable and consolidated development of Tobercurry as a Key Support Town with a diverse and sustainable local economy.
- SA-2** Ensure that the people of Tobercurry have access to affordable housing, education, community and recreational facilities.
- SA-3** Pursue the enhancement of Tobercurry's town centre through the removal of dereliction, the refurbishment of Wolfe Tone Square and the creation of an urban streetscape along Circular Road.
- SA-4** Seek the development of a more efficient and integrated circulation system, including walking and cycling links.
- SA-5** Promote tourism by facilitating the development of tourism-related infrastructure, to allow for the expansion of existing businesses and the setting up of new ones.
- SA-6** Recognise the importance of natural, archaeological and architectural heritage in the LAP area as factors which contribute to Tobercurry's attractiveness.

The Draft Tobercurry Local Area Plan is structured under the following main headings:

Chapter 1	Plan context
Chapter 2	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
Chapter 3	Core Strategy
Chapter 4	Economic development
Chapter 5	Housing
Chapter 6	Community facilities
Chapter 7	Heritage
Chapter 8	Transport
Chapter 9	Infrastructure
Chapter 10	Environmental quality
Chapter 11	Urban design

**Note:** All the policies and objectives contained in Chapters 3 to 12 of the CDP are applicable to all settlements in County Sligo. These policies and objectives have already been assessed for effects on Natura 2000 Sites through the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process in preparing the CDP 2011-2017.

### **3.2 Features of the Draft Plan that Could Impact on Natura 2000 Sites**

The key aspects of the Plan which could give rise to direct/indirect impacts to Natura 2000 sites will principally be related to zonings, the Local Area Plan objectives, infrastructural provision and upgrades as well as recreational infrastructure and activities.

The main threats to Natura 2000 sites in general arise from the density of population present in the Tobercurry area in close proximity to the sites. Human pressure on the sites can be manifested in a number of ways either directly in the form of land take, trampling and disturbance by people themselves; or indirectly, for example, in the form of water quality deterioration resulting from sewage effluent and storm water discharges. The relative importance of these potential impacts will vary from site to site depending on the particular circumstances of the site and the human pressure in the vicinity.

Related to the draft Local Area Plan for Tobercurry is the need for adequate recreational/tourism facilities which can include provision of recreational infrastructure. If located in or adjacent to a protected site, such developments can have likely significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites. Similarly, provision of footpaths and cycleways within and close to Natura 2000 sites can have predicted and unforeseen negative impacts.

The provision of infrastructure is also a key consideration including wastewater treatment, drainage systems and waste management facilities. The Natura 2000 sites within the Tobercurry Draft Local Area Plan area may be directly impacted by land take for infrastructural development or through pollution of these sensitive sites; therefore, it is essential that zonings take account of the direct and indirect impacts on Natura 2000 sites particularly where inadequate or insufficient

wastewater treatment or drainage may be involved. Impacts arising from the implementation of objectives of the draft plan which could cause significant impacts on the integrity and conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites include activities which give rise to:

- direct impacts on habitats listed on Annex I of the Habitats Directive and for which the site is designated;
- reduction in the area of any habitats within the site;
- direct or indirect damage to the physical quality of the environment (e.g. water quality) in the Natura 2000 site;
- serious or ongoing disturbance to species or habitats for which the Natura 2000 site is selected (e.g. increased noise, illumination, human activity);
- direct or indirect damage to the size, characteristics or reproductive ability of populations of species for which the Natura 2000 site is designated;
- activities which interfere with mitigation measures put in place for other plans or projects.

All of the proposed objectives and zonings were reviewed as part of the screening process. Consideration was given to direct and indirect impacts which may arise from activities which could be encouraged by objectives contained in the draft plan. Such activities could include new residential, commercial, infrastructural, recreational or other development which may give rise to direct impacts on habitats or species (loss of habitat, disturbance to species); as well as activities which could have indirect impacts (e.g. activities which could affect water quality or hydrology which could in turn affect the status/health of populations of water dependant habitats or species).

### **3.3 Brief description and identification of the Natura 2000 sites to be screened**

Natura 2000 sites which were considered in relation to the potential for the plan and its policies to have an impact on them. This includes Natura 2000 sites within the plan boundary area and Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the plan boundary. The potential for Natura 2000 sites that are >15km from the plan boundary area to be impacted by plan policy was also considered. This could include sites which are hydrologically connected to watercourses or water bodies within the plan boundary area.

Nine Natura 2000 sites were identified during the screening of the proposed Local Area Plan that could potentially be impacted by the draft Plan. These were:

Special Areas of Conservation:

- Ox Mountains Bogs (Site Code 002006)
- Lough Hoe Bog (Site Code 000633)
- River Moy (Site Code 002298)
- Templehouse and Cloonacleigha Loughs (Site Code 000636)
- Lough Nabrickkeagh Bog (Site Code 000634)
- Turloughmore (Site Code 000637)
- Flughany Bog (Site Code 000497)
- Doocastle Turlough (Site Code 000492)
- Cloonakillina Lough (Site Code (001899)

Special Protection Areas:

- None

Screening of the proposed Local Area Plan focused on the above sites. Screening was based on a desktop review of information relating to these sites and to the habitats and species that they support. Figures 1 and 2 below provide the locations of the SACs and SPAs within 15km of the Plan boundary, respectively. These sites along with their qualifying interests and principal threats are listed in Table 1 (SACs) below.

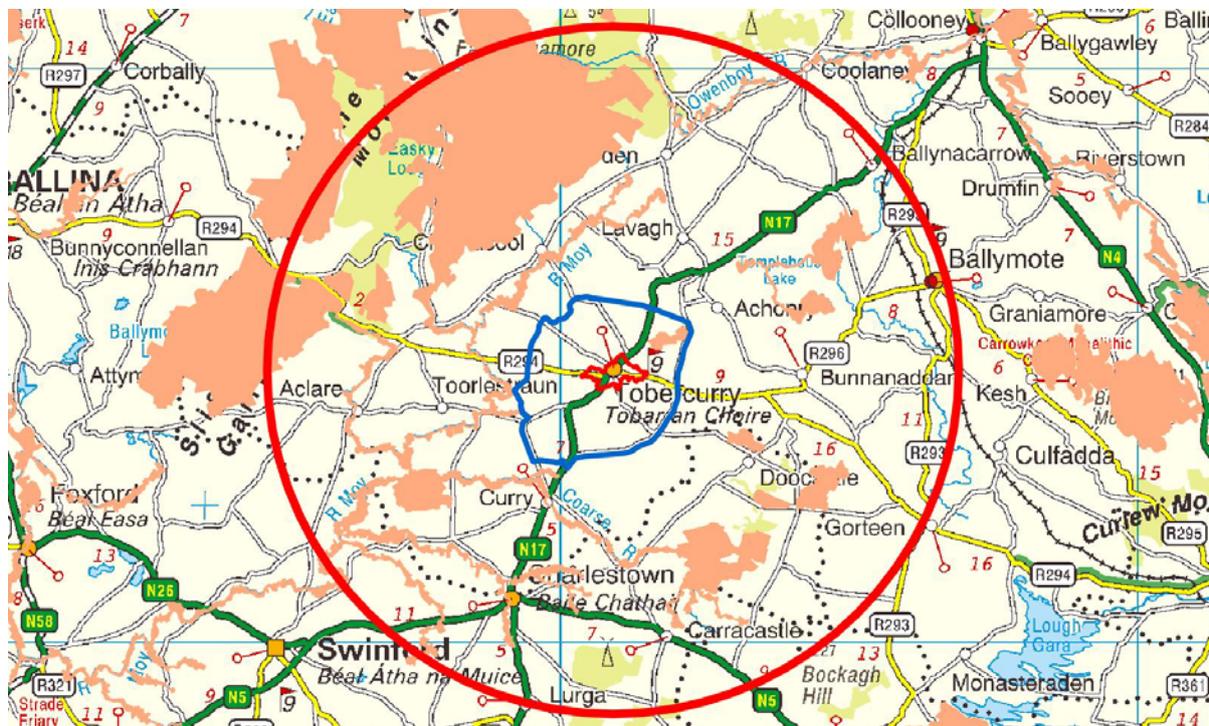


Fig. 1 Special Areas of Conservation (orange) within 15km (red circle) of Tobercurry.

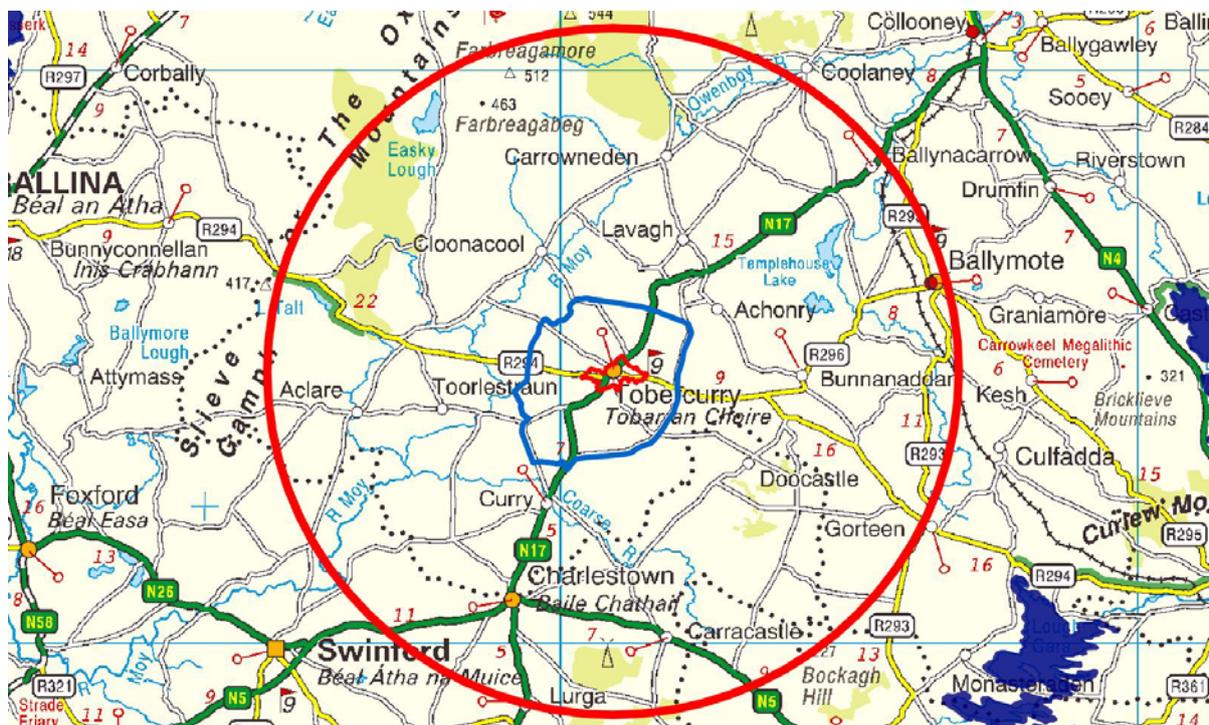


Fig. 2 Special Protection Areas (blue) within 15km (red circle) of Tobercurry.

**Table 1 List of Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation) within 15km of the Tobercurry Local Area Plan area including known threats.**

Site Name	Qualifying Feature		Potential Threats
	Annex I Habitat	Annex II Species	
Ox Mountains Bogs SAC 002006	7130 Blanket bog (*active only) 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix 3160 Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds 3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion	1013 Vertigo geyeri Geyer's Whorl Snail	Changes in local hydrology including drainage Peat Extraction Overgrazing Forestry Burning Direct loss of habitat to development Arterial drainage/water abstraction/lowering of the regional water table Agricultural reclamation Introduction of alien invasive species Illegal Dumping Increased pollution/reduction in water quality
Lough Hoe SAC 000633	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) [3110]  Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]	Vertigo geyeri (Geyer's Whorl Snail) [1013]  Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]	Changes in local hydrology including drainage Peat Extraction Overgrazing Forestry Burning Direct loss of habitat to development Arterial drainage/water abstraction/lowering of the regional water table Agricultural reclamation Introduction of alien invasive species Illegal Dumping Increased pollution/reduction in water quality
River Moy SAC 002298	Active raised bogs [7110]  Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]  Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]  Alkaline fens [7230]  Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]  Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]	Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]  Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095]  Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096]  Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]  Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]	Decrease in water quality/Increased pollution Changes in water flow rates Arterial drainage/water abstraction/lowering of the regional water table Siltation Loss of fringe vegetation Changes in seasonal water levels/fluctuations Direct loss of habitat to development Loading from effluents(WWTP) Recreation/amenity use Developments – marinas Introduction of alien invasive species Illegal Dumping Felling/Removal of Trees Crayfish Fishing
Templehouse and Cloonacleigha	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140]  Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion	None	Decrease in water quality/Increased pollution Changes in water flow rates Arterial drainage/water abstraction/lowering of the regional water table Siltation Loss of fringe vegetation

Lough SAC 000636	fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260]		Changes in seasonal water levels/fluctuations Direct loss of habitat to development Loading from effluents(WWTP) Recreation/amenity use Developments – marinas Introduction of alien invasive species Illegal Dumping
Lough Nabrickkeagh Bog SAC 000634	Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]	None	Changes in local hydrology including drainage Peat Extraction Overgrazing Forestry Burning Direct loss of habitat to development Arterial drainage/water abstraction/lowering of the regional water table Agricultural reclamation Introduction of alien invasive species Illegal Dumping
Turloughmore SAC 000637	Turloughs [3180]	None	Agricultural improvements /Reclamation Drainage/Changes in local hydrology water quality/pollution (including groundwater) Agricultural abandonment Overgrazing/Undergrazing Direct loss of habitat to development Bracken and scrub encroachment Impacts to local geology/geomorphology eg quarrying/rock blasting Introduction of alien invasive species Illegal Dumping
Flughany Bog SAC 000497	Active raised bogs [7110]  Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]  Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]	None	Introduction of alien invasive species Illegal Dumping Changes in local hydrology including drainage Peat Extraction Overgrazing Forestry Burning Direct loss of habitat to development Arterial drainage/water abstraction/lowering of the regional water table Agricultural reclamation Introduction of alien invasive species Increased pollution/reduction in water quality
Doocastle Turlough SAC 000492	Turloughs [3180]	None	Hunting Grazing Fertilisation
Cloonakillina Lough SAC 001899	Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]	None	Moving/cutting of grassland Leisure fishing Grazing Fire and fire suppression Sylviculture/forestry Grazing

**Note** A number of species and habitats are given ‘Priority’ status in the Habitats Directive by the EU because they are considered to be particularly vulnerable and are mainly, or exclusively, found within the European Union. There are no ‘Priority Species’ currently known from Ireland. Priority Habitats are present in Ireland and are present within the Natura 2000 Sites adjoining Tobercurry. These are prefixed with an asterisk (for example, ‘\*Fixed Dunes (2130)’) in **Table 1** above and in subsequent tables in this report. The importance of Priority Habitat is emphasised at several places in the Directive (Articles 4 and 5 and Annex III), not only in terms of the selection of sites, but also in the measures required for site protection under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

### 3.4 Conservation Objectives

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is in the process of preparing Conservation Management Plans for all Natura 2000 sites in the country. These plans will have a range of conservation objectives which relate to the protection and enhancement of habitats and populations of species for which these sites are designated. In relation to appropriate assessment, regard must be had to potential impacts arising from the plan on the conservation objectives for all Natura 2000 sites.

A Natura 2000 site's conservation objectives are defined by DAHG and are, "intended to ensure that the relevant Annex I habitats and Annex II species present on a site are maintained in a favourable condition" (DEHLG, 2010). The DEHLG guidelines state that, "The Conservation Objectives derive from the qualifying interests, the Natura 2000 standard data form, and the management plan for the site, with summary information also available in the site synopsis." Whilst the Natura 2000 standard data forms and site synopses do present details of the qualifying features of Natura 2000 sites, and list the generic threats to those features, they do not define the conservation objectives of the site.

For the purposes of this assessment, information on the conservation objectives for the sites has been gained from existing information available on [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie) and NPWS generic Conservation Objectives for Natura 2000 Sites where no Management Plan is yet available.

For cSACs, generic Conservation Objectives are as follows:

- To maintain Annex I habitats and Annex II species for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status;
- To maintain the extent of species richness and biodiversity of the entire site; and
- To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat can be described as being 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 as defined below.

The favourable conservation status of a species can be described as being 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.

### 3.5 Documented Threats to the Special Areas of Conservation

Documented threats to Habitats Directive Annex I habitats and Annex II species in Ireland are presented in the 'backing documents' and 'Natura 2000 Data Form' for each habitat and species which are available from NPWS in [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie). Not all of these threats will apply to all cSACs in which these habitats and species are present; however gathering information on the documented perceived threats to the qualifying features of the sites (and therefore to the conservation objectives

of the sites and the integrity of the sites) is an important prerequisite for assessing what are the 'likely significant effects' on the sites resulting from the Plan. Threats include:

- Reduction in Habitat Area
- Disturbance to Key Species
- Habitats or Species Fragmentation
- Reduction in Species Density
- Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value (Water Quality etc.)

It is important to realise that many of these threats do not necessarily represent activities that occur within the boundary of the Natura 2000 site. This applies in particular to aquatic and marine features and systems which can be affected by impact sources that occur a large distance from the site.

### **3.6 Plan Analysis: Screening of Draft Plan**

Impacts arising from the implementation of the draft plan which are likely to cause significant impacts on the integrity and conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites include activities which give rise to:

- direct impacts on habitats listed on Annex I of the Habitats Directive and for which the site is designated;
- reduction in the area of any habitats within the site;
- direct or indirect damage to the physical quality of the environment (e.g. water quality) in the Natura 2000 site;
- serious or ongoing disturbance to species or habitats for which the Natura 2000 site is selected (e.g. increased noise, illumination, human activity);
- direct or indirect damage to the size, characteristics or reproductive ability of populations of species for which the Natura 2000 site is designated;
- activities which interfere with mitigation measures put in place for other plans or projects.

All of the draft plan policies, objectives and proposed zonings were reviewed to identify potential likely significant effects of the draft Plan on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites. Consideration was given to direct and indirect impacts which may arise from activities which could be encouraged by objectives contained in the draft plan. Such activities could include new residential, commercial, infrastructural, recreational or other development which may give rise to direct impacts on habitats or species (loss of habitat, disturbance to species); as well as activities which could have indirect impacts (e.g. activities which could affect water quality or hydrology which could in turn affect the status/health of populations of water dependant habitats or species).

**Table 3** below provides the plan analysis/screening matrix for the draft Tobercurry Local Area Plan objectives with an Appropriate Assessment Screening Response provided in each case. Those sites for which potential effects and impacts are identified are taken forward to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment where that is required. Those for which no potential impacts are anticipated as a result of implementation of the Plan do not require Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and are 'screened-out' in Stage 1 of the Appropriate Assessment.

**Table 3 Plan Analysis for the Draft Tobercurry Local Area Plan**

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Plan Policies Which Might Give Rise to Impacts on Natura 2000 sites</b>	<b>Potential for impact on Natura 2000 sites</b>	<b>Natura 2000 site(s) which could be affected</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Plan Context</b>	Sets context for Plan	No impacts identified	n/a
<b>Chapter 2 Strategic Environmental Assessment</b>	Outlines SEA screening process, consultation with environmental authorities and concludes that the proposed Plan is not likely to have significant effects in the environment.	No impacts identified	n/a
<b>Chapter 3 Core Strategy</b>	Outlines the pre-existing CDP provisions, including a recommended population level and the amount of land to be zoned residential in compliance with the core strategy. The Plan provides a moratorium on multi-unit housing developments during the life of the LAP.	No impacts identified.	n/a
	RESP-1 to RESP 3: Residential Phasing Policies	No impacts identified	n/a
	SLRP-1 to SLRP-3: Strategic Land Reserve Policies	No impacts identified	n/a
	BZP-1 to 2: Buffer Zone Policies	No impacts identified	n/a
<b>Chapter 4 Economic Development</b>	IEP-1 to IEP-4: Industry and Enterprise Policies	No impacts identified	n/a

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Plan Policies Which Might Give Rise to Impacts on Natura 2000 sites</b>	<b>Potential for impact on Natura 2000 sites</b>	<b>Natura 2000 site(s) which could be affected</b>
<b>Chapter 4 Economic Development Contd.</b>	RDP-1 to RDP – 5: Retail Development Policies	No impacts identified	n/a
	TOP-1 to TOP-4: Tourism Policies	No impacts identified	n/a
<b>Chapter 5 Housing</b>	HP-1 to HP-4: Housing Policies	No impacts identified	n/a
	HP-5 to HP-6: Housing in buffer zone	No impacts identified	n/a
	HO-1: Housing Objective	No impacts identified	n/a
<b>Chapter 6 Community Facilities</b>	CFP-1 to CFP-5: Community facilities Policies	No impacts identified	n/a
	OSO-1 to OSO-2: Open Space Objectives Public Parks OSO-3 to OSO-4: Open Space Objectives New Walkways	No impacts identified	n/a
<b>Chapter 7 Heritage</b>	NHP – 1 to NHP – 5: Natural Heritage Policies	No impacts identified	n/a
	NHO – 1 to NHO – 3: Natural Heritage Objectives.	No impacts identified	n/a
	AHP -1 to AHP-4: Archaeological Heritage Policies	No impacts identified	n/a
	ARP – 1 to ARP – 3: Architectural Heritage Policies	No impacts identified	n/a

Chapter	Plan Policies Which Might Give Rise to Impacts on Natura 2000 sites	Potential for impact on Natura 2000 sites	Natura 2000 site(s) which could be affected
<b>Chapter 7 Heritage Cont.</b>	ARO – 1 to ARO – 2: Architectural Heritage Objectives.	No impacts identified	n/a
	LCO – 1: Landscape Character Objective	No impacts identified	n/a
<b>Chapter 8 Transport and circulation</b>	TCP – 1 to TCP – 3: Transport and Circulation Policies	No impacts identified	n/a
	TCO-1 to TCO – 2: Transport and Circulation Objectives (new roads and access points)	No impacts identified	n/a
	TCO-3 to TCO – 4: Transport and Circulation Objectives ( Traffic Management Plan town centre zone)	No impacts identified	n/a
	TCO-5 to TCO – 6: Transport and Circulation Objectives (one-way systems and access restrictions)	No impacts identified	n/a
	TCO-7 to TCO – 10: Transport and Circulation Objectives (Traffic Management Plan - parking )	No impacts identified	n/a

Chapter	Plan Policies Which Might Give Rise to Impacts on Natura 2000 sites	Potential for impact on Natura 2000 sites	Natura 2000 site(s) which could be affected
<b>Transport and circulation Contd.</b>	TCO-11 to TCO – 12: Transport and Circulation Objectives (Walking and cycling)	No impacts identified	n/a
	TCO-13 to TCO – 14: Transport and Circulation Objectives (Public transport)	No impacts identified	n/a
	TCO-15 to TCO – 16: Transport and Circulation Objectives ( National road N-17 current and planned)	No impacts identified	n/a
<b>Chapter 9 Infrastructure</b>	Provides for water supply, wastewater collection and treatment, surface water collection and disposal and communications infrastructure. IP-1: Water and waste water provision.	<p><b>Water Supply</b></p> <p>Existing water supply is sourced from Lough Talt, a designated Natura 2000 site. Current WTP design capacity is 8,500m<sup>3</sup>/day, with supply averaging to serve a population of 11,000 and a large agricultural demand. Subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive Sligo County Council is pursuing the construction of a new water treatment plant with a capacity of 12,500 m<sup>3</sup>/day, storage reservoirs and intake works, in partnership with Irish Water (IW). In parallel, the Council is discussing with IW the possibility of an interim upgrade of the water treatment plant to address inadequate treatment for Cryptosporidium as identified by the EPA.</p> <p>No impacts identified Positive impacts on the environment generally.</p>	n/a

Chapter	Plan Policies Which Might Give Rise to Impacts on Natura 2000 sites	Potential for impact on Natura 2000 sites	Natura 2000 site(s) which could be affected
<p><b>Chapter 9 Infrastructure Contd.</b></p>	<p>Provides for water supply, wastewater collection and treatment, surface water collection and disposal and communications infrastructure. IP-2 to IP-4: Wastewater treatment</p>	<p><b>Wastewater Collection and Treatment</b></p> <p>The existing Tobercurry wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) has a design PE (population equivalent) of only 1,400 which is inadequate for the population and businesses of Tobercurry. The collection network consists of a combined system which includes two storm water overflows. The final effluent is discharged into the Maiden River, which has a very low assimilation capacity and has a hydrological link to the River Moy SAC.</p> <p>Under Irish Water’s proposed Capital Investment Plan (CIP) for 2014–2016, it is proposed to construct a 3,500 PE wastewater treatment plant and to relocate the outfall to the Moy River, which has adequate assimilation capacity. Consent for the project has been approved by An Bord Pleanála.</p> <p>All new developments will be required to provide separate drainage systems, including SUDs (sustainable urban drainage systems), as appropriate, to protect the capacity of the upgraded treatment plant.</p> <p>No impacts identified Positive impacts on the environment generally.</p>	<p>n/a</p>

Chapter	Plan Policies Which Might Give Rise to Impacts on Natura 2000 sites	Potential for impact on Natura 2000 sites	Natura 2000 site(s) which could be affected
<p><b>Chapter 9 Infrastructure Contd.</b></p>	<p>Provides for water supply, wastewater collection and treatment, surface water collection and disposal and communications infrastructure. IP-5 to IP-6: Drainage</p>	<p><b>Surface Water Collection and Disposal</b></p> <p>Historically Tobercurry town centre and adjoining areas occasionally suffered from flooding for short periods of time (1 to 2 days) and caused by extensive rainfall together with the limited assimilation capacity of the storm system within this area of Tobercurry.</p> <p>In 2007, a surface water pipe was laid from Springvale housing estate along the N-17, Humbert Street, Murphy Lane and Circular Road, eventually discharging to the Maiden River. An additional pipe is required along Circular Road to reduce the pressure on the storm water system in the centre of the town.</p> <p>There is currently no petrol interceptor on the existing outfall at the Maiden River. In order to improve the quality of surface water entering the Maiden River it is proposed to require the installation of a petrol interceptor at the surface water discharge point to the Maiden River for any upgrade of the surface water network.</p> <p>In order to control the volume of surface water going into the Maiden River and to remove the threat of flooding in the centre of Tobercurry, it is proposed to use SUDS (Sustainable Urban Water Drainage Systems) to dispose of storm water from all new developments.</p>	<p>n/a</p>

Chapter	Plan Policies Which Might Give Rise to Impacts on Natura 2000 sites	Potential for impact on Natura 2000 sites	Natura 2000 site(s) which could be affected
<b>Chapter 9 Infrastructure Contd.</b>	Provides for water supply, wastewater collection and treatment, surface water collection and disposal and communications infrastructure. IP-7 to IP-8: Waste Management	No impacts identified. Positive impacts on the environment generally.	n/a
	Provides for water supply, wastewater collection and treatment, surface water collection and disposal and communications infrastructure. IP -9: Energy	No impacts identified.	n/a
<b>Chapter 10 Environmental Quality</b>	Provides for water quality, air quality, noise and odour control and flood risk assessment. WQP-1 to WQP-5: Water quality policies	No impacts identified. Positive impacts on the environment generally.	n/a
	Provides for water quality, air quality, noise and odour control and flood risk assessment. WQO-1 to WQO-2: Water quality objectives	No impacts identified. Positive impacts on the environment generally.	n/a
	Provides for water quality, air quality, noise and odour control and flood risk assessment. NCP-1 to NCP-2: Noise and odour control	No impacts identified. Positive impacts on the environment generally.	n/a
	Provides for water quality, air quality, noise and odour control and flood risk assessment. FRMO-1: Flood risk management objective	No impacts identified. Positive impacts on the environment generally.	n/a

Chapter	Plan Policies Which Might Give Rise to Impacts on Natura 2000 sites	Potential for impact on Natura 2000 sites	Natura 2000 site(s) which could be affected
<b>Chapter 11 Urban Design</b>	Provides for urban design UDP-1 to UDP-5: Urban design policies	No impacts identified	n/a
	Provides for urban design UDO-1 to UDO-2: Town centre	No impacts identified	n/a
	Provides for urban design UDO-3: Derelict sites	No impacts identified	n/a
	Provides for urban design UDO-4 to UDO-8: Circular Road	No impacts identified	n/a
	Provides for urban design UDO-9 to UDO-10: Larger opportunity sites	No impacts identified	n/a
	Provides for urban design UDO-11: Public Realm	No impacts identified	n/a

### 3.7 SCREENING CONCLUSION

The Habitats Directive Screening analysis undertaken on the Draft Tobercurry Local Area Plan examined the key environmental factors that could potentially affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network e.g. disturbance, habitat loss, etc. In undertaking the screening, there was a focus on determining if the implementation of the Plan would give rise to any likely significant effect on Natura 2000 sites in view of any site’s conservation objectives and integrity.

**Table 4** below summarises the findings of the screening assessment in a screening matrix for the nine Natura 2000 sites that were screened. The tables indicates “None” for sites where no negative impact is predicted on the conservation objectives or on the overall integrity of the site and “Potential Impact” for those sites where it is certain, likely or uncertain at the screening stage that impacts on the site may arise as a result of implementation of the Plan.

On the basis of this report, it is concluded therefore, that there is no potential for impacts on any Natura 2000 site, arising from the implementation of the draft Tobercurry Local Area Plan.

**Table 4 Summary of HDA Screening Matrix for the Draft Tobercurry Local Area Plan**

Site Name	Reduction in Habitat Area	Disturbance to Key Species	Habitats for Species Fragmentation	Reduction in Species Density	Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value (Water Quality etc.)
Ox Mountains Bogs SAC 002006	None	None	None	None	None
Lough Hoe Bog SAC 000633	None	None	None	None	None
River Moy SAC 002298	None	None	None	None	None
Templehouse and Cloonacleigha Lough SAC 000636	None	None	None	None	None
Lough Nabrickkeagh Bog SAC 000634	None	None	None	None	None
Turloughmore SAC 000637	None	None	None	None	None
Flughany Bog SAC 000497	None	None	None	None	None
Doocastle Turlough SAC 000492	None	None	None	None	None
Cloonakillina Lough SAC 001899	None	None	None	None	None

#### 4.0 Finding of No Significant Effects Report Matrix and Screening Conclusion Statement

Plan Name	Draft Tobercurry Local Area Plan 2015-2021
Name and location of Natura 2000 sites subject to screening for appropriate assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ox Mountains Bogs SAC (Site Code 002006)</li> <li>• Lough Hoe Bog SAC (Site Code 000633)</li> <li>• River Moy SAC (Site Code 002298)</li> <li>• Templehouse and Cloonacleigha Loughs SAC (Site Code 000636)</li> <li>• Lough Nabrickkeagh Bog SAC (Site Code 000634)</li> <li>• Turloughmore SAC (Site Code 000637)</li> <li>• Flughany Bog SAC (Site Code 000497)</li> <li>• Dooastle Turlough SAC (Site Code 000492)</li> <li>• Cloonakillina Lough SAC (Site Code (001899)</li> </ul>
Description of the proposed draft Plan	See section 3.2 above.
Is the proposed draft plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the Natura 2000 sites identified above	No
Are there other projects or plans that together with the plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)	<p>Tobercurry is hydrologically linked to the River Moy SAC through the Maiden River and, Turloughmore SAC through groundwater. All surface water drains into the Maiden River and all waste water is discharged into the Maiden River and on into the River Moy SAC. Development is guided by the relevant statutory plans adopted by Sligo County Council. The County Development Plan may give rise to projects which may take place within and adjacent to the plan area. This may result in increased pressure on SACs, particularly in terms of water quality, pressure to infill and reclaim parts river floodplain, increase in recreational activity as well as recreational activity along the Maiden River and adjacent to Turloughmore SAC. Any such projects could contribute to habitat loss and give rise to significant disturbance to species within SACs when considered cumulatively. The proposed upgrade of the N17 also has the potential to impact on Natura 2000. All plans and projects with a potential for significant impact on Natura 2000 sites will be subject to appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive.</p>
Assessment of Significant Effects	
Describe how the proposed Plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect Natura 2000 sites	No aspect of the draft Plan has been identified which could give rise to impacts which could be considered to be significant.
Explain why these effects are not considered significant	<p>The draft plan does not direct development within or near any Natura 2000 site. There are no increased demands on existing water or wastewater infrastructure.</p> <p>On the basis of this assessment, it is concluded therefore, that no potential for impacts has been identified for any Natura 2000 site arising from the implementation of the draft plan.</p>

List of agencies consulted	This screening report will be available to the public during the consultation process on the draft plan, and will be referred to statutory consultees for review during this period.
Response to the consultation	Submissions made during the consultation process will be reviewed and considered at the end of the consultation process for the draft plan.
<b>Data Collected to Carry Out the Assessment</b>	
Who carried out the assessment	Siobhán Ryan, Heritage Officer, Sligo County Council
Sources of data	National Parks and Wildlife Service Site Synopses and other data relating to Natura 2000 sites.
Level of assessment completed	Screening
Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed	This report
Date assessment completed	March 2015

## **5.0 Relevant Documents and References**

Environment, Heritage and Local Government, National Parks and Wildlife Service. 2008. The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland.

Environment, Heritage and Local Government, National Parks and Wildlife Service. Various Years. Natura 2000 Site Synopses.

Environment, Heritage and Local Government. 2009. Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities.

European Communities. 2000. Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. Luxembourg.

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. Luxembourg.