



23260-15/05/2023-Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

Proposed Sand & Gravel Pit at Murragh, Co. Cork

Prepared for: Keohane Readymix Ltd

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PLANNING (WEST) DEPT

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BASIS OF REPORT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

SLR Consulting Ireland (SLR) was commissioned by Keohane Readymix Ltd. to prepare an Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening report in support of a Section 34 planning application to Cork County Council for the development of a sand & gravel pit on lands at Murragh, Enniskeane, Co. Cork.

1.1. Background

This AA Screening report has been prepared in support of a Section 34 planning application for the proposed development of a c. 32 hectares site for sand and gravel extraction, installation of a fixed processing plant and closed water management system (including water storage lagoons), a new access to the R586 regional road, ancillary facilities, and phased / final site restoration at Murragh, Co. Cork.

1.2. General Description of the Site

The proposed site ("the Site") is located at approximate ITM coordinates 537888 X 554558 Y, 2 km east of Enniskeane and approximately 12 km west of Bandon, within the townland of Murragh, Co. Cork (Figure AA1). The northern site boundary extends for approximately 600 metres along the R586 Bandon to Enniskeane regional road. The overall site is bounded by agricultural lands to the west, the River Bandon and agricultural land are to the south and the L2015 local road to the east.

1.3. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide supporting information to assist the competent authority, in this Cork County Council, to carry out screening for likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites as a result of the proposed sand and gravel pit at Murragh, County Cork.

1.4. Evidence of Technical Competence and Experience

SLR Graduate Ecologist Brogan Costello prepared this report and SLR Associate Ecologist Michael Bailey carried out the technical review of this report.

Brogan holds a BSc. in (Botany) from the National University of Galway and an MSc. in Global Change, Ecosystem Science and Policy from the University College Dublin and Justus Liebig Universität. She has recently joined SLR having previously completed traineeships with the European Commission and Galway County Council.

Michael Bailey holds a BSc. in Biology and Ecology from the University of Ulster and an MSc. in Quantitative Conservation Biology from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. He has extensive experience in ecological studies and assessments across a range of sectors in Ireland and of agricultural, mining and renewable energy projects across Africa. He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM)

1.5. Relevant Legislation

1.5.1. European Nature Directives (Habitats and Birds)

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora) forms the basis for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). Similarly, Special Protection Areas (SPA) are classified under the Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds). Collectively, SACs and SPAs are referred to as the Natura 2000 network. The Natura 2000-Network is the minimum required to conserve certain habitats and species which are listed in the Directives.

Under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) must be undertaken for any plan or project that is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site but is likely to

have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. An AA is an evaluation of the potential impacts of a plan or project on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site, and the identification, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude adverse effects on the integrity of the site.

Article 6, paragraph 3 of the European Commission Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (“the Habitats Directive”) states that:

“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”.

1.5.2. European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011

Pursuant to the Habitats Directive, Part 5 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, similarly sets out the requirements for screening assessments and the circumstances under which an AA is required.

Regulation 42(1) requires that ‘a screening for Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project for which an application for consent is received, or which a public authority wishes to undertake or adopt, and which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site, shall be carried out by the public authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the site, if that plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.’ Regulation 42(2) expands on this, stipulating that a public authority must carry out a screening for AA before consent for a plan or project is given, or a decision to undertake or adopt a plan or project is taken.

Regulation 42(6) requires that ‘the public authority shall determine that an Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project is required where the plan or project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site and if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective scientific information following screening under this Regulation, that the plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site’.

Regulation 42(3)(a) gives the public authority the power to direct a third party to provide a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and Regulation 42(3)(b) allows it to request any additional information that it needs to complete the screening assessment or AA. Regulation 42(5) goes on to make clear that the NIS should include such information as the public authority considers necessary to enable it to undertake the AA and to ascertain if a project or plan will affect the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. In addition to the information, Regulation 2(1) provides a definition of a Natura Impact Statement as ‘a report comprising the scientific examination of a plan or project and the relevant European Site or European Sites, to identify and characterise any possible implications of the plan or project individually or in combination with other plans or projects in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites, and any further information including, but not limited to, any plans, maps or drawings, scientific information or data required to enable the carrying out of an Appropriate Assessment’.

Regulation 42(11) makes clear that the AA must be carried out by the public authority and that it must include its conclusion as to whether the project or plan would adversely affect the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, and that this must be done prior to consenting the project.

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1.5.3. Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

These processes have been further enshrined in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), in sections 177T, 177U and 177V, which are as follows:

s177T(1)(b) A Natura impact statement means a statement, for the purposes of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, of the implications of a proposed development, on its own or in combination with other plans or projects, for one or more than one European site, in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), a Natura impact report or a Natura impact statement, as the case may be, shall include a report of a scientific examination of evidence and data, carried out by competent persons to identify and classify any implications for one or more than one European site in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites.

177U. — (1) A screening for appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or application for consent for proposed development shall be carried out by the competent authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.

(4) The competent authority shall determine that an appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or a proposed development, as the case may be, is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the draft Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

177V. — (1) An appropriate assessment carried out under this Part shall include a determination by the competent authority under Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive as to whether or not a draft Land use plan or proposed development would adversely affect the integrity of a European site and an appropriate assessment shall be carried out by the competent authority, in each case where it has made a determination under section 177U(4) that an appropriate assessment is required, before — **REG No.** consent is given for the proposed development.

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1.6. Methodology

1.6.1 General Approach

The methodology used in this report is based on guidance provided by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS, 2010), the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR, 2021) and EC Guidance (EC, 2018) (EC, 2020) (EC, 2021) on the application of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. The 2021 EC guidance describes a series of stages and steps which should be completed when carrying out the assessment and these are followed here with minor modifications. The assessment applies only to Natura 2000 sites (SPAs and SACs). More specifically, it only applies to the qualifying interest features of such sites i.e. the features which are the reason that the site was designated.

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1.6.2 Stage One: Screening

Stage One is a screening assessment, the purpose of which is to determine whether a plan or project requires more detailed assessment. There are two principal tests. The first considers whether the plan or project is needed for the management of a European site for the purpose of maintaining or restoring its conservation interest. Any such plans or projects can usually be screened out of further assessment. The second test considers whether the plan or project, without specific mitigation measures, would be likely to have a significant effect on any European Site. This requires consideration of the project on its own and in combination with other plans or projects. A project can only be screened out of further assessment if it is certain (beyond reasonable scientific doubt and on the basis of the best scientific knowledge) that there would be no significant effects on any Natura 2000 site without mitigation designed specifically to address potential impacts on the qualifying interest of such sites. Significant effects in this assessment are those which could undermine the conservation objectives of a qualifying

interest feature. The process is used to determine which Natura 2000 Sites should be included in the later stages of the assessment. It can also be used to determine which qualifying interest features require further assessment.

1.6.3 Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment

Stage Two is a more detailed assessment, known as an “Appropriate Assessment” due to the terminology in the legislation. This essentially repeats the second test of the screening assessment but in more detail and considering mitigation measures before reaching a conclusion. At this stage, the test is whether the project or plan will have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site. This must be done in the light of the conservation objectives for each of the sites and qualifying interest features that have been ‘screened in’ by the earlier stage of assessment. Any effect which could undermine the conservation objectives is considered an adverse effect on the integrity of the site, and vice versa. If the project is predicted to lead to adverse effects upon the integrity of the site, further stages of assessment are required before the project can be authorised.

1.6.4 Sources of Information

- Sources of information for the assessment of the Project ‘alone’ include:
- Article 17 and Article 12 reports completed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service¹;
- Site Synopses, Conservation Objectives and Standard Data Forms for the Natura 2000 sites²;
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Maps³.
- Relevant chapters of the EIAR for the project were also reviewed.

Sources of information for the plans and projects for the ‘in combination’ assessment were as above and also include:

- Cork County Development Plan 2022 – 2028.
- Cork County Council planning portal⁴ and myplan.ie⁵ were accessed for information on other projects and plans.

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¹ <https://www.npws.ie/publications/article-17-reports?msclid=0c19d260b00a11ecaf5a935da63f219b> (last accessed 03 May 2022)

² <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites> (last accessed 03 May 2022)

³ <http://gis.epa.ie/> (last accessed 03 May 2022)

⁴ <https://www.corkcoco.ie/planning/> (last accessed 03 May 2022)

⁵ <https://myplan.ie/> (last accessed 03 May 2022)

2.0 STAGE 1: SCREENING

2.1. Step 1: Management of Natura 2000 Sites

The proposed project consists of the development of a site for sand and gravel extraction; Installation of a fixed processing plant and closed water management system (including water storage lagoons); new access to the R586 regional road; and phased / final restoration of the site. The project is not connected with, or necessary for, the management of a Natura 2000 site.

2.2. Step 2, Part 1: Brief Project Description

The proposed development at the Site comprises of an establishment and operation of a new sand & gravel pit (refer to Figure AA2). The establishment and operational phases consist of;

- Construction of new access onto the R586 regional road
- Provision of internal road and installation of all required site facilities, consisting of an office / canteen (including toilet facilities with a proprietary wastewater treatment system and infiltration), garage, ESB substation & generator, a bunded fuel storage & refuelling area with hydrocarbon interceptor, a weighbridge and a wheel wash;
- Installation of a fixed processing plant and closed water management system (including water management lagoons) in the Phase 1 area. There is no discharge to surface waters;
- Phased extraction of sand and gravel by dry & wet working;
- Processing of extracted sand & gravel including washing and screening with crushing of oversize materials;
- Product stockpile area adjacent to the processing plant; and
- Operational landscaping including provision of screening berms and perimeter planting.

The extraction phase extends to an area of c. 25.9 hectares and will be worked (extracted and restored) on a phased basis, refer to Figure AA2. Internal hedgerows removed will be compensated by the operational landscaping planting. The full proposed operational landscaping around the site perimeter including screening berms and perimeter planting will be undertaken during Phase 1. This will maximise the time available for planting to mature in advance of subsequent extraction phases, and will compensate for sections of existing hedgerows removed over the life of the development.

The proposed development will include both dry working areas (where extraction takes place above the underlying groundwater table) and wet working areas (where extraction takes place below the groundwater table). Wet working will not require groundwater pumping or lowering of the groundwater table, and is an established practice at a number of existing sand & gravel pits in county Cork.

Restoration will be undertaken on a phased basis. Phase 1 area will remain operational until extraction activities are complete. Phase 2 (Part), 4 and 5 areas will be restored to agricultural use after extraction is complete. Topsoil and subsoil stripped during extraction phase will be used for restoration. Wet working areas in Phases 2 (Part), 3 and 6 will be restored to natural water-based habitat.

The proposed operational period is for 25 years plus 2 years to complete restoration (total duration sought 27 years).

Rainfall across the application site generally percolates down through the existing ground surface as recharge to groundwater.

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2.3. Step 2, Part 2: Potential Impact Factors

The proposed the sand and gravel pit has the potential to result in the following impacts:

- loss of habitat (construction phase)
- water discharge (construction and operation phases)
- noise & vibration (construction and operation phases)
- dust (construction and operation phases)

The habitats and species listed as features of interest of any Natura 2000 sites within zone of influence of the project must therefore be accessed for affects from loss of habitat, water discharge, noise & vibration and dust from the proposed development project, and these effects are considered further below.

2.4. Step 3: Identification of Natura 2000 Sites

The first step in identification of Natura 2000 sites is to determine the potential zone of influence of the project. The zone of influence is identified through a review of the nature and scale of the project, the project location relative to Natura 2000 sites, presence of ecological and landscape connectivity, such as along waterways, hedgerows and treelines between the Site and the Natura 2000 sites, known impacts and effects likely to arise as a result of this type of project, distance from Natura 2000 sites and the qualifying interests of the Natura 2000 sites.

The nearest Natura 2000 sites to the Site are Courtmacsherry Estuary SAC (001230) and Courtmacsherry Bay SPA (004219) at c. 12.2 km to the south-west (Figure AA3).

The next nearest, on-shore Natura 2000 sites are Bandon River SAC at c. 12.1 km to the west, and Clonakilty Bay SAC and Clonakilty Bay SPA at c. 13 km south-west of the proposed site (Figure AA3).

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Table 2.1: Designated Sites within the zone of Influence of the project

Natura Site	2000	Distance ⁶	Qualifying Interests ⁷	Brief Description	Connections (Source-Pathway-Receptor)
Bandon River SAC (002171)		c. 12.1 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [3260] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096] 	<p>The Bandon River SAC consists of relatively short adjoining stretches of the Bandon and Caha Rivers. These rivers flow in a southerly direction to the east of Dunmanway, Co. Cork. Towards the southern end of the site the Bandon River takes an easterly course. The predominant rock formations are Old Red Sandstone to the north and Carboniferous slate stretching south of Dunmanway. Soils in the northern section consist of peats, podzols and skeletal soils. The southern section consists of alluvial soils and Brown Podzolics. This site contains good examples of two habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive - alluvial forest and floating river vegetation - and supports populations of four Annex II species - Otter, Salmon, Brook Lamprey and Freshwater Pearl Mussel. The presence of a number of Red Data Book plant and animal species adds further interest to the site</p>	<p>The proposed development will not lead to a direct loss of SAC habitat.</p> <p>There is no hydrological link to any Natura 2000 site, as the SAC is 12.1 km upstream of the project site.</p> <p>There are no receptors (QIs of this SAC) likely to be affected by noise or vibration.</p> <p>There is a potential dust [Source] - Atmospheric [Pathway] - sensitive habitats and/or vegetation [Receptor] link.</p>
Courtmacsherry Estuary SAC (001230)		c. 12.2 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] 	<p>This site is located in west Cork, some 12 km south of Bandon and immediately east of the village of Timoleague. is an important site for the complex of coastal habitats and for the large numbers of birds that use the area. The presence of rare and scarce plant species adds further interest and value to the site. The estuary consists of the drowned valley of the Argideen River, which is now filled with sediments, resulting in an extensive area of mudflats and tidal channels. Most of</p>	<p>The proposed development will not lead to a direct loss of SAC habitat.</p> <p>There is no hydrological link to any Natura 2000 site, different catchment</p>

⁶ When measured in a straight line over the shortest distance between the project site and Natura 2000 site.

⁷ For SPAs, the bird species that are the reason for designation are Species of Conservation Interest (SCIs) and for SACs the habitats and species that are the reason for designation are its Qualifying Interests (QIs). For convenience, the term qualifying interest or QI is used here for both SPAs and SACs.

Natura 2000 Site	Distance ⁶	Qualifying Interests ⁷	Brief Description	Connections (Source-Pathway-Receptor)
<p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">REG. NO. PLANNING (WEST) DEPT 15 MAY 2023</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">CORK COUNTY COUNCIL NOT IN HOUSE, SKIBBEREN, CO. CORK</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] 	<p>the mudflat at Courtmacsherry is unvegetated, although in places cord-grass (<i>Spartina</i> sp.) occurs. Saltmarsh has developed in a number of areas, with the most abundant species being Sea Club-rush (<i>Scirpus maritimus</i>), Common Scurvygrass (<i>Cochlearia officinalis</i>), Sea Arrowgrass (<i>Triglochin maritima</i>), Sea Plantain (<i>Plantago maritima</i>), Thrift (<i>Armeria maritima</i>) and Saltmarsh Rush (<i>Juncus gerardi</i>). The site also supports sand dune systems including Embryonic, Marram and Fixed dunes, as well as small areas of sand dune, sandy and shingle beaches, reedbeds of Common Reed (<i>Phragmites australis</i>). The site is of ornithological importance for the many waders and wildfowl that feed on the mud- and sandflats. The spread of cord-grass on parts of the mudflats poses a threat to the quality of the area for feeding birds, and pollution is an ever-present threat in such a wetland.</p>	<p>There are no receptors (QIs of this SAC) likely to be affected by noise or vibration.</p> <p>There is a potential dust [Source] – Atmospheric [Pathway] – sensitive habitats and/or vegetation [Receptor] link.</p>
<p>Courtmacsherry Bay SPA (004219)</p>	<p>c. 12.2 km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) [A003] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] 	<p>Courtmacsherry Bay SPA is located approximately 12 km south of Bandon and immediately east of the village of Timoleague in west Co. Cork. The site, which is largely estuarine in nature, consists of the drowned valley of the Argideen River which is now filled with sediments, resulting in extensive mudflats and areas of saltmarsh. It is an important site for wintering birds and holds internationally important numbers of Black-tailed Godwit and nationally important numbers of a further eleven species, three of which are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, i.e. Great Northern Diver, Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit.</p>	<p>The proposed development will not lead to a direct loss of SAC habitat.</p> <p>There is no hydrological link to any Natura 2000 site, different catchment</p> <p>There is a potential noise & vibration [Source] – Atmospheric [Pathway] – sensitive bird species [Receptor] link.</p> <p>There is a potential dust [Source] – Atmospheric</p>

Natura 2000 Site	Distance ⁶	Qualifying Interests ⁷	Brief Description	Connections (Source-Pathway-Receptor)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] • Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] • Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] • Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 		<p>[Pathway] – sensitive bird species [Receptor] link.</p>
<p>Clonakilty Bay SAC (000091)</p> <p>CORK COUNTY COUNCIL NORTON HOUSE, SKIBBEREEN, Co. CORK</p> <p>15 MAY 2023</p>	<p>REG. No. PLANNING (WEST) DEPT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] • Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] • Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] • Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] • Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea) [2150] 	<p>Clonakilty Bay in west Cork is an intertidal expanse that stretches from Clonakilty to the open sea, and comprises two small estuaries separated by Inchydoney Island. The site also includes adjacent sand dunes and inland marshes, and therefore is a coastal complex with a good diversity of habitats. This site is of considerable scientific interest because it contains a good diversity of coastal habitats. These habitats show a succession from salt to freshwater influences and include six which are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Its value is enhanced considerably by the birdlife it supports. The occurrence of Black-tailed Godwit in internationally important numbers is particularly significant. The site also supports nationally important numbers of seven other species of waterfowl as well as two species listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.</p>	<p>The proposed development will not lead to a direct loss of SAC habitat.</p> <p>There is no hydrological link to any Natura 2000 site, different catchment</p> <p>There are no receptors (QIs of this SAC) likely to be affected by noise or vibration.</p> <p>There is a potential dust [Source] – Atmospheric [Pathway] – sensitive habitats and/or vegetation [Receptor] link.</p>

Natura 2000 Site	Distance ⁶	Qualifying Interests ⁷	Brief Description	Connections (Source-Pathway-Receptor)
Clonakilty Bay SPA (004081)	13 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] • Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] • Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>Clonakilty Bay, which is located in west County Cork, is a wetland complex that stretches from the town of Clonakilty to the open sea. It comprises two small estuarine bays, Clonakilty Harbour and Muckcross Strand, separated by Inchydoney Island and its empoldered isthmus. Several small rivers flow into the site, notably the Fealge River. Clonakilty Bay SPA is of high ornithological importance, particularly for its internationally important population of Black-tailed Godwit. In addition, there are three species with populations of national importance. The presence of the E.U. Birds Directive Annex I species, Golden Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Little Egret and Shorteared Owl, is of note.</p>	<p>The proposed development will not lead to a direct loss of SAC habitat.</p> <p>There is no hydrological link to any Natura 2000 site, different catchment</p> <p>There is a potential noise & vibration [Source] – Atmospheric [Pathway] – sensitive bird species [Receptor] link.</p> <p>There is a potential dust [Source] – Atmospheric [Pathway] – sensitive habitats and/or vegetation [Receptor] link.</p>

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2.5. Step 4: Like Significant Effects

There are four potential sources of impact identified as a result of the proposed sand and gravel pit: loss of habitat, pollution of surface and ground waters, noise & vibration, and generation of dust from construction and operation phases of the project.

2.5.1. Bandon River SAC (002171)

This site lies c. 12.1 km upstream from the project site, no hydrological linkage. The features of interest for the site includes habitats such as alluvial forests and water courses. It is also a habitat for Freshwater Pearl Mussel and Brook Lamprey. The conservation objective for this SAC is the maintenance of all these qualifying interests except for Freshwater Pearl Mussel where the conservation objective is to restore their distribution, population and condition of suitable habitat.

The main threats and pressures with impacts of the site are listed as discharges, flooding modifications and sand and gravel quarries (NPWS, 2020). The proposed sand and gravel pit will not result in the loss of any habitat in or near the SAC. This Natura 2000 site is also sufficiently distant from the proposed project site (over 12km upstream) that it will not be affected by any noise, vibration or dust impacts arising from any construction or operational activities. There are no hydraulic linkages to the SAC as it is located upstream of the project site. Therefore, Likely Significant Effects on this SAC can be excluded.

2.5.2. Courtmacsherry Estuary SAC (001230)

This site lies c. 12.2km from the project Site, and is located within a different catchment (no hydrological pathway). The features of interest are comprised of estuarine habitats and species and the conservation objective for this SAC is the maintenance of all these qualifying interests except for Atlantic Salt Meadows where the conservation objective is to restore the favourable conditions by limiting the spread of cordgrass (*Spartina anglica*).

The main threats and pressures with impacts of the site are listed as agriculture and application of fertilizers, and activities which will affect the coastal habitats and floral species such as removal of beach material, disposal of household and recreational facility waste, nautical sports and land reclamation from the sea (NPWS 2021).

The proposed sand and gravel pit will not result in the loss of any habitat in or near the SAC. This Natura 2000 site is also sufficiently distant from the proposed site (over 12 km) that it will not be affected by any noise, vibration or dust impacts arising from any construction or operational activities. There are no hydraulic linkages to the SAC as it is located in a different catchment to the proposed development.

Therefore, Likely Significant Effects on this SAC can be excluded.

2.5.3. Courtmacsherry Bay SPA (004219)

This site lies c. 12.2km from the project site, and is located within a different catchment. The main features of interest are birds and the habitats upon which they rely on for roosting and foraging. The conservation objectives for all of these bird species and the wetland habitat are to maintain them as they are considered to be in favourable condition.

The main threats and pressures with impacts of the site are listed as grazing from domestic animals, disposal of household and recreational facility waste, and human disturbance from nautical sports (NPWS 2018). The proposed sand and gravel pit will not result in the loss of any habitat in or near the SPA. This Natura 2000 site is also sufficiently distant from the proposed site (over 12 km) that the bird species present will not be affected by any noise, vibration or dust impacts arising from any construction or operational activities. There are no hydraulic linkages to the SAC as it is located in a different catchment to the proposed development. Therefore, Likely Significant Effects on this SPA can be excluded.

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2.5.4. Clonakilty Bay SAC (000091)

This site lies c. 13km from the project site, and is located within a different catchment. The features of interest for the site includes habitats such as mudflats and sandflat, annual vegetation of drift lines, embryonic shifting dunes, coastal dunes and Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes. The conservation objective for this SAC is the maintenance of all these qualifying interests except for fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (2130) where the objectives are to restore favourable conditions.

The main threats and pressures to this site are bait digging collection, accumulation of organic material and walking, horse-riding and non-motorised vehicles (NPWS, 2020). The proposed sand and gravel pit will not result in the loss of any habitat in or near the SAC. This Natura 2000 site is also sufficiently distant from the proposed site (over 13 km) that it will not be affected by any noise, vibration or dust impacts arising from any construction or operational activities. There are no hydraulic linkages to the SAC as it is located in a different catchment to the proposed development. Therefore, Likely Significant Effects on this SAC can be excluded.

2.5.5. Clonakilty Bay SPA (004081)

This site lies c. 13 km from the project site, and is located within a different catchment. The main features of interest are birds and the habitats upon which they rely on for roosting and foraging. The conservation objectives for all of these bird species and the wetland habitat are to maintain them as they are considered to be in favourable condition.

The main threats and pressures with impacts of the site are listed as grazing from domestic animals, disposal of household and recreational facility waste, and human disturbance from nautical sports (NPWS 2020). The proposed sand and gravel pit will not result in the loss of any habitat in or near the SPA. This Natura 2000 site is also sufficiently distant from the proposed site (over 13 km) that the bird species present will not be affected by any noise, vibration or dust impacts arising from any construction or operational activities. There are no hydraulic linkages to the SAC as it is located in a different catchment to the proposed development. Therefore, Likely Significant Effects on this SPA can be excluded.

2.6. Step 5: In-combination Effects

Cumulative effects can result from individually insignificant but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time or concentrated in a location. Cumulative effects can occur where a proposed development results in individually insignificant impacts that, when considered in-combination with impacts of other proposed or permitted plans and projects, can result in significant effects (CIEEM, 2018).

There are no effects on Natura 2000 sites predicted to occur as a result of the proposed development. Therefore, there are no pathways for the project to act in-combination with other plans or projects. Cumulative effects on the Natura 2000 sites will not occur as a result of the proposed sand and gravel pit at Murragh, Enniskeane, Co. Cork.

2.7. Step 6: Consideration of Findings

This screening report, based on the available information and project details, demonstrates beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that the proposed development does not pose a risk of likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites.

We therefore submit that the competent authority, in this case Cork County Council, can determine that appropriate assessment is not required, as the proposed project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 sites.

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3.0 REFERENCES

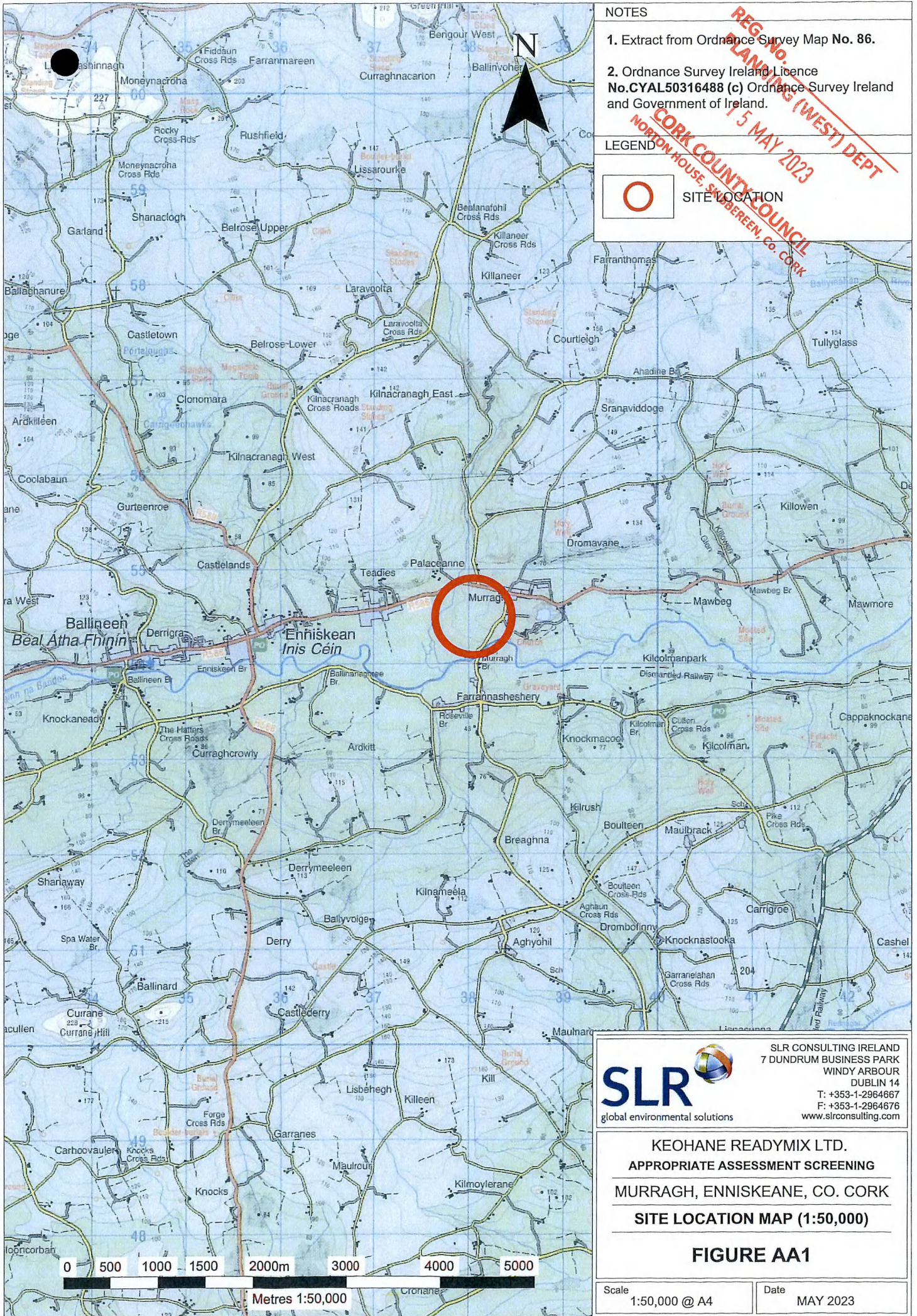
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FIGURES

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NOTES

1. Extract from Ordnance Survey Map No. 86.
2. Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. CYAL50316488 (c) Ordnance Survey Ireland and Government of Ireland.

LEGEND

 SITE LOCATION

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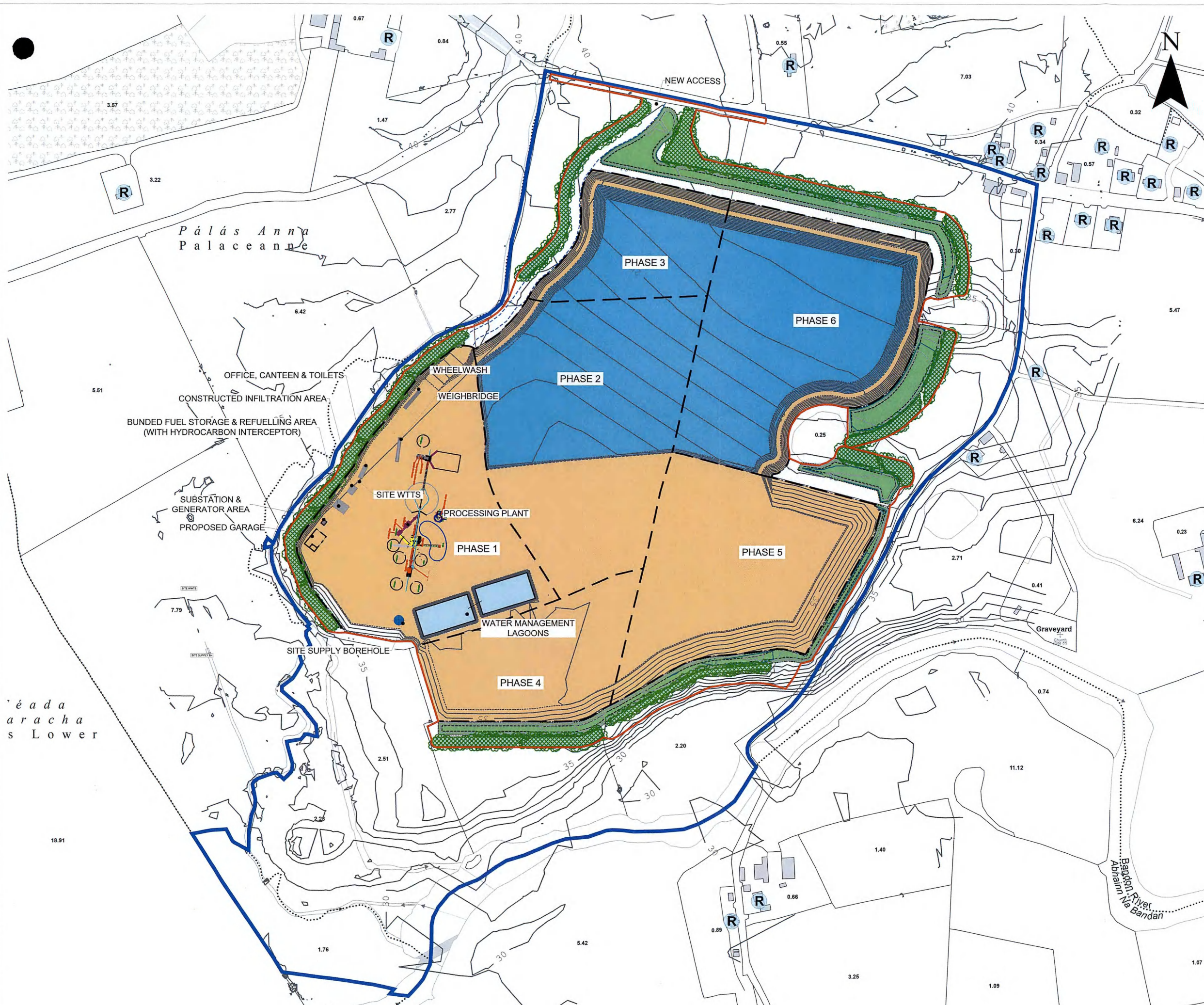
KEOHANE READYMIX LTD.
APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING
MURRAGH, ENNISKEANE, CO. CORK
SITE LOCATION MAP (1:50,000)

FIGURE AA1

Scale 1:50,000 @ A4

Date MAY 2023

J033...FIG



NOTES

1. Extract from 2500 Scale Ordnance Survey Map Series 6574, 6604, & 6604-A.
2. Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. CYAL50316488(c) Ordnance Survey Ireland and Government of Ireland.

- LEGEND**
- KEOHANE READYMIX LTD. LAND INTEREST - FOLIO CK16736 (c.50.0ha)
 - APPLICATION AREA (c.32.0ha)
 - PROPOSED EXTRACTION AREA (c.25.9ha)
 - PHASED EXTRACTION AREAS
 - RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY LOCATION
 - DRY WORKING AREA
 - WET WORKING AREA
 - CROSS SECTION LOCATION
 - PROPOSED OVERBURDEN STORAGE / SCREENING BERMS
 - PROPOSED NATIVE SHRUB / TREE PLANTING

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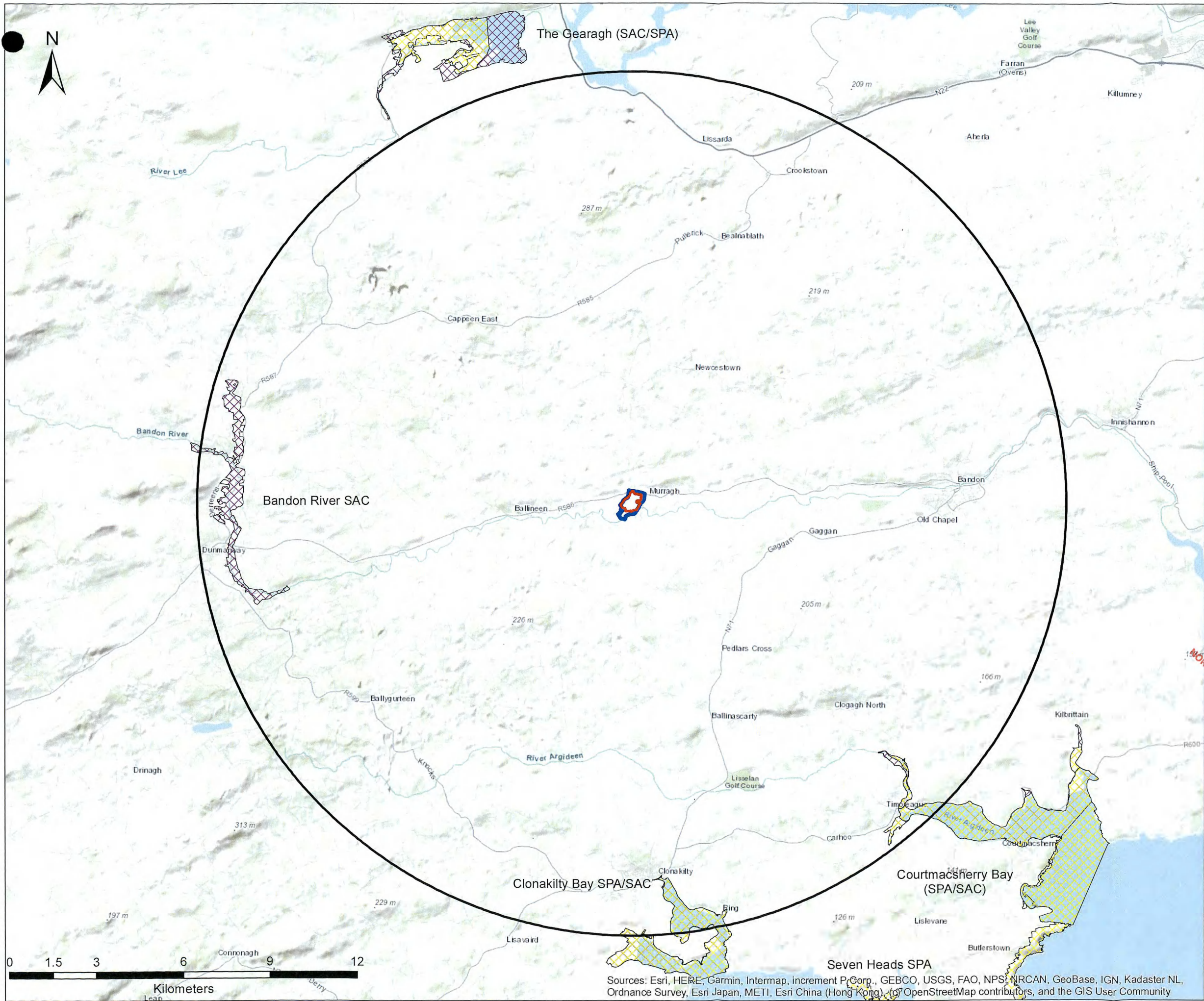
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APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING
MURRAGH, ENNISKEANE, Co. CORK
PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT

FIGURE AA2

Scale 1:4,000 @ A3 Date MAY 2023

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LEGEND

- Planning Application Boundary
- Land Interest Boundary
- 15km Boundary
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

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 AA SCREENING REPORT

MURRAGH, ENNISKEANE, CO. CORK

NATURA 2000 SITES

FIGURE AA3

Scale: 1:125,000 @ A3 Date: MAY 2023

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community