

Draft Gorey Town and Environs
Local Area Plan 2017-2023

Appendix 6

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Part 1

Determination as to whether or not the Draft
Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-
2023 would adversely affect the integrity of a
European site

**Wexford County Council
September 2016**

Determination

RPS, on behalf of Wexford County Council, carried out a formal screening process of the Draft Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023 to determine whether appropriate assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive was required.

The screening exercise was carried out in accordance with:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009);
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, referred to as MN2000, European Commission 2000; and
- 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 (EC2000).
- Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the ‘Habitats Directive’ 92/43/EEC- Clarification of the concepts of : alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission.

A Screening Report was prepared and is contained in Part 2 of this document. The Screening Report concludes that the proposed Draft Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023 would not adversely affect the integrity of a European site and accordingly an Appropriate Assessment was not required.

Wexford County Council determined that an appropriate assessment of the Draft Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023 was not required having regard to:

- The report of RPS contained in Part 2 of this document;
- The characteristics of the plan;
- The objectives of the plan to protect Natura 2000 sites and biodiversity; and
- The Strategic Environmental Assessment Environment Report prepared by CAAS Ltd on behalf of Wexford County Council.

Part 2

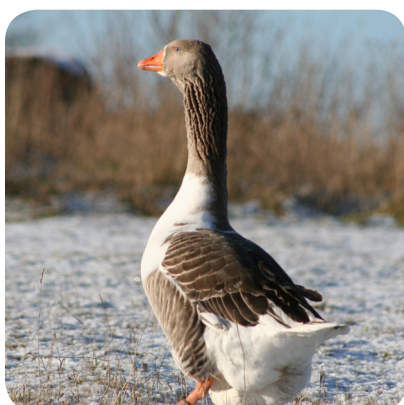
Appropriate Assessment Screening Report
prepared by RPS Consultants



Gorey Town and Environs LAP 2017-2023

Screening for Appropriate Assessment

September 2016





Gorey Town and Environs LAP 2017-2023

Screening for Appropriate Assessment

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1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of an exercise undertaken to screen for Appropriate Assessment the draft Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023, in line with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2015 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011) as amended.

1.1 PURPOSE TO THE DRAFT GOREY LOCAL AREA PLAN 2017-2023

Developing sustainable communities is identified as lying at the heart of the draft Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023 (hereafter referred to as the draft LAP). While the main purpose of the draft LAP is described as planning for future growth and development of the plan area and setting out the objectives which will guide and regulate this development, it notes that it also focuses on identifying and meeting the needs of the local community. The draft LAP aims to deliver safe, accessible, age friendly and socially inclusive places which are well planned and designed, are people friendly and easy and efficient to get around.

1.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

1.2.1 Council Directive 92/43/EEC

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as ~~the~~ ^{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 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/ECC) as codified by Directive 2009/147/EC.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making requirements for plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on or to

adversely affect the integrity of European Sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA):

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [European] 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.

Article 6(4) states:

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the [European] site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

These provisions of Article 6 mean that where the implementation of a draft LAP is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, the relevant Local Authority (Wexford County Council in this case) must ensure that an appropriate assessment is carried out with reference to that site's conservation objectives. The draft LAP can be approved by the Planning Authority only if it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European Site(s) concerned, or in the case of a negative assessment for implications for the site and where there are no alternative solutions, the scheme can only be approved for imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

1.2.2 European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011)

Article 42 (of Part 5) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 relates to the need to undertake screening for appropriate assessment. Section 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.”

1.3 STAGES OF THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

Both EU and national guidance exists to assist Member States in fulfilling their responsibilities under the EU Habitats Directive, with particular reference to Article 6(3) and 6(4) of that Directive, and with Article 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. The methodology followed in relation to this screening for AA has had regard to the following guidance:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities.* Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
<http://www.npws.ie>
- *Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, referred to as MN2000, European Commission 2000;
<http://ec.europa.eu>
- *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 (EC2000)”; <http://ec.europa.eu>

- *Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC .*
Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission. <http://ec.europa.eu>.

This screening for AA has been structured on a stage-by-stage approach as follows:

Screening Stage

- Description of the draft LAP;
- Identification of European Sites potentially affected by the draft LAP;
- Identification and description of individual and cumulative impacts likely to result from the draft LAP;
- Assessment of the significance of effects on European Sites; and
- Screening conclusion.

2 SCREENING

2.1 DESCRIPTION OF DRAFT LOCAL AREA PLAN

Gorey Town is the third largest town in County Wexford and is the principle town in North Wexford. The town is strategically located with immediate access to the M11 motorway network. This network connects Gorey to Enniscorthy Town, Wexford Town, Rosslare Europort and to Dublin and other strategic urban centres along the east coast. According to the 2011 census, the population of the town and environs area was 9,114 persons. The area has become a commuter town for people working in the Greater Dublin area.

The draft LAP is a land use plan with land use zoning that sets out objectives which will guide development over a six year period and ensure that it is consistent with the objectives of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019.

The draft LAP has been prepared in accordance with Sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000-2015. The following sections describe the main provisions of the draft LAP under a number of key headings.

2.1.1 Vision and Principles

The vision of the draft LAP is that:

By 2023 Gorey Town will be a high quality, green, well connected town with a compact, walkable urban form. It will have a network of sustainable neighbourhoods that are socially inclusive and desirable places to live. Gorey Town will have high quality sustainable jobs and it will be an attractive place to live in, to visit and to enjoy its high quality public realm, its vibrant arts and culture and its bustling town centre and premier retailing services.

2.1.2 Appropriate Assessment

The Council is committed to protecting and conserving the biodiversity of Gorey Town and Environs, and have included a specific overarching objective in Section 1 to ensure the protection and enhancement of European Sites. Objective AA01 states:

The Council will ensure that any plan/project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment to ensure there are no likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied.

Where a plan/project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site or there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The plan/project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan/project is deemed by the competent authority imperative for reasons of overriding public interest.

2.1.3 Population and Housing

The draft LAP notes that the plan area has undergone significant change in its population and demographic profile since 2002. According to the 2002 Census, the population was 5,282 persons. This increased to 7,193 persons in the 2006 Census, and increased again to 9,114 persons in the 2011 Census. The significant increase in population between 2002 and 2011 is largely attributed to the area becoming a popular commuter town for Wicklow and Dublin. The Core Strategy in the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019, allocates a population of 11,883 persons to Gorey by the year 2022. The draft LAP provides for a population allocation of 2,991 persons between the years 2011 and 2023, making a total population allocation of 12,105 people for the year 2023.

The increasing population and associated in-migration has resulted in a relatively young population, and the draft LAP recognises the need to ensure that sufficient

housing, childcare, primary and post primary education and recreation facilities will be available. The draft LAP aims to facilitate new residential development and to require physical, social and community infrastructure to be provided either prior to or in tandem with this new residential development.

The Core Strategy population allocation equates to an additional 1,372 no. households/residential units. Between April 2011 (Census 2011) and the end of 2015 it is estimated that 50 residential units were constructed in the plan area which reduces the required figure to 1,320 units. There is a limited amount of vacant residential properties in the plan area. The number of necessary new units translates to a requirement for 66ha of residential zoned land. The Regional Planning Guidelines recommend an over zoning of 75% to allow for market choice and land potentially not becoming available. This overzoning increases the residential zoned land requirement to 115.5ha. The draft LAP proposes approximately 119ha of Residential zoned land for development during the lifetime of the Plan, and a further 16ha of Long-Term Residential land which is reserved for future residential development beyond the period of this plan. It is the stated intention of the Council in the draft LAP to identify vacant sites in the plan area and enter such sites on the Vacant Site Register as a means of incentivising the release of these lands for housing.

2.1.4 Urban Design Strategy

Gorey has a distinctive urban character, which is derived from both natural and man-made determinants. The surrounding topography and landscape have played an important role in the development of the town. Gorey is ringed by low hills (notably Gorey Hill, Creagh and Clonattin) to the west, north and east. In contrast the southern environs of the town are relatively level. The Banoge River is the principal watercourse flowing from north to south adjacent to the eastern fringe of the town centre. It has a number of significant tributaries along its course that connect it to other parts of the town and the surrounding landscape. It is a relatively small watercourse, contained within narrow banks and it has been realigned and covered in a number of locations in the town. The surrounding landscape is characterised by fields enclosed by hedgerows, tree lines and tree groups.

The urban design strategy of the draft LAP is described as being based on a ~~place~~ concept which seeks to reinforce the role of the town centre and to establish new and improved roles for existing and new places around the town. It is supported by a ~~route~~ concept to secure an accessible and functional town and a ~~landscape~~ concept to provide a coherent network of green routes and spaces for amenity, recreation, and biodiversity and water management. The overall landscape concept envisages improvements to the existing landscape structure through the enhancement of hubs and the creation of extended and coherent corridors. Key corridor elements in the draft LAP area are the Banoge River and its tributaries, the country roads and the main streets and roads in the town. These corridors can provide protection and enhancement of biodiversity and water management. The draft LAP recognises that biodiversity can be enhanced by providing and rehabilitating corridors of natural vegetation for the migration of flora and fauna. The urban design strategy will allow for water management by facilitating connections to sustainable urban drainage systems in new developments and potential for managed floodplains along watercourses.

The Urban Design Guidelines: Landscape (Appendix 1 of the draft LAP) includes the requirement that:

‘Watercourses of the town must be rehabilitated to provide important corridors for amenity, biodiversity, local access and water management’.

Further, the Neighbourhood Framework Plans (NFPs) for the Creagh and Clonattin areas of the draft LAP include objectives (see Appendix 1 of the draft LAP) to ~~provide a new, connected green infrastructure of local corridors and hubs, to provide for improved quality and connectivity of biodiversity, amenity and local water management’.~~ This objective is expanded for the Ballytegan area to include an objective to ~~protect and enhance the Banoge River and tributary corridors’;~~ and the ~~development of the Banoge River and tributary corridor as green infrastructure corridors’.~~ Similarly, the NFP for Gorey South includes the objective to ~~provide a new connected green infrastructure of local corridors and hubs, especially along the Banoge River’.~~

The NFPs for Creagh, Ballytegan, Clonattin and Gorey South also include the objective to *respect locally distinctive landscape features such as tree lines and field boundaries in the new urban structure and to enhance these as part of an improved and integrated green infrastructure network*.

2.1.5 Access and Movement Strategy

According to the draft LAP there has been significant investment in road and pedestrian infrastructure in Gorey during the last 10 years. The completion of the M11 motorway, which is located to the east, southeast and northeast of the town, has made Gorey a highly accessible and strategically located town. The access and movement strategy of the draft LAP is focused on:

- *Providing optimum levels of accessibility, connectivity and permeability, particularly for pedestrian and cyclists. In general every street should lead to a street.*
- *Providing new connections between existing and new developments in selected locations to address issues of local level access and permeability.*
- *Improving the existing route structure within and around the town and the addition of new routes.*
- *The creation or improvement of orbital connections between existing radial routes*
- *Increasing and enhancing public transport usage for all users.*
- *Ensuring the provision of footpath and cycle paths in new developments and developing new and improved accessible routes.*
- *The development of new strategic railway crossings to coincide with new development.*

- *Ensuring new development complies with the requirements of Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DOT, 2013).*

2.1.6 Open Space, Recreation and Green Infrastructure Strategy

Gorey has a variety of open space and recreation areas ranging from open spaces within residential estates, the Town Park and sports and leisure facilities, to natural amenities in the vicinity such as a blue flag beach and woods in Courtown, Ballymoney beach and Tara Hill. The existing open space provision in the plan area is described in the Urban Design Strategy under Landscape Structure the main elements of which are:

- *Gorey Town Park and Showgrounds*
- *Ramsfortpark Forest*
- *The Banoge River and its tributaries*
- *Existing sporting facilities and playing pitches*
- *Local level open spaces*
- *Radial routes and country roads*

Greener Gorey 2023 is described in the draft LAP as an open space, recreation and Green Infrastructure (GI) strategy for the plan area and it is focused on developing a hierarchy of accessible open spaces which can be used by all members of the local community. The strategy is focused on the following hierarchy of spaces:

1. *Hub Open Spaces*
2. *Neighbourhood Parks*
3. *Pocket Spaces*
4. *Education Spaces and Sporting Facilities*
5. *Amenity Walks, Green Corridors and River Corridors*

2.1.6.1 Green Corridors and River Corridors

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive refers to features of the landscape outside designated sites which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna, as follows:

'Member States shall endeavour, where they consider it necessary, in their land-use planning and development policies and, in particular, with a view to improving the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network, to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora.'

'Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems for marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species'.

The draft LAP considers linear and continuous structures, or green corridors in several sections. As noted in **Section 2.1.4** of this report, the concept of green corridors is integrated into the Urban Design Guidelines and the NFPs for the Creagh, Ballytegan, Clonattin and Gorey South areas within the draft LAP area. Green corridors and river corridors are considered in more detail in Section 5.3.7 of the draft LAP. The GI Strategy of the draft LAP aims to enhance biodiversity by:

- *providing a new, connected green infrastructure of corridors and hubs to provide for improved quality and connectivity of biodiversity, amenity and local water management; and*
- *respecting locally distinctive landscape features such as tree lines and field boundaries in the new urban structure and to enhance these as part of an improved and integrated green infrastructure network.*

Specific Open Space objectives include:

Objective OS03: *To have regard to the 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment Guidelines' (Shannon Regional Fisheries Board) when considering development proposals in the vicinity of rivers and streams within and adjoining the plan area.*

Objective OS04: *To ensure riparian buffer zones, a minimum of 10m in width (in some cases buffers zones up to 50m may be appropriate), are created between all watercourses and any future development. In considering the appropriate width, the Council will have regard to 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment Guidelines' (Shannon Regional Fisheries Board).*

Objective OS05: *To only consider proposals for culverting/piping of streams and watercourses where these works are deemed absolutely necessary and appropriate. Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Office of Public Works (OPW) will be consulted, where appropriate.*

The inclusion of these objectives will have indirect positive impacts on the Natura 2000 network as ecological connectivity within the draft LAP area will be maintained or improved, which will in turn improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 network.

2.1.7 Economic Development Strategy

Gorey is a commuter town for Wicklow and Dublin and the draft LAP recognises that as such the town's residents have become highly dependent on jobs located outside of the county. In order to make the town more self-sufficient and to improve the quality of life of the town's residents, it is critical that the number of jobs, both locally and in the county, is increased. The strategic aim for the draft LAP is to protect existing employment in the town and to create new employment opportunities, improve the quality of employment, preferably locally, in order to reduce the unsustainable level of commuting and to reduce unemployment. The economic strategy of the draft LAP is to promote the successful economic development and growth in employment in the plan area.

Gorey's proximity to the popular coastal villages and beaches of Courtown, Ballymoney and Morriscastle offers significant opportunities to further develop and

generate employment from tourism. The promotion and development of tourism in Gorey Town and the wider North Wexford area will be supported by the Council.

2.1.8 Built and Natural Heritage

2.1.8.1 Built Heritage

There are many buildings throughout the plan area which have character, special interest and cultural significance for various reasons, from its quaint terraces to large country homes. The town streetscape form and its planned gridlike street structure have significant architectural and heritage value. The draft LAP affirms that the Council is committed to the protection, appreciation and appropriate re-use of this built heritage.

The draft LAP advises that the Council will protect the architectural heritage of Gorey Town through the prevention of any works to protected structures which would cause loss of, or damage to, the character and special interest of the structure and loss of, or damage to structures of heritage value. Further, the Council will retain and reinforce the existing street layouts, historic building lines and traditional plot widths which derive from the town's historical development.

2.1.8.2 Natural Heritage

Natural heritage, often referred to as biodiversity, is important for many things including food, fertile soils and clean air and water. It can be threatened by the development of land and human activity. Therefore, it is important that the development objectives in the draft LAP are balanced with conservation measures and objectives which ensure that the area's natural heritage is protected, conserved and enhanced.

While there are no European Sites within or immediately adjoining the plan area, there are a number of these sites within 15km. These sites include the Slaney River Valley SAC, located approximately 1.2km to the west; Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC located approximately 7.9km to the northeast and the Cahore Polders and Dunes SAC and the Cahore Marshes SPA, located approximately 13.2km southeast. The draft LAP records that the Council is committed to protecting and conserving the

biodiversity of Gorey Town and Environs. As noted in **Section 2.1.2** of this report, there is an overarching objective (objective AA01) in the introduction to the draft LAP which confirms that:

The Council will ensure that any plan/project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment to ensure there are no likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied.

Where a plan/project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site or there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The plan/project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan/project is deemed by the competent authority imperative for reasons of overriding public interest.

Objective AA01 is also included in Section 9.4 (Natural Heritage) of the draft LAP.

It is an objective of the draft LAP to:

Objective NH01: To protect existing ecological networks and wildlife corridors and provide for new and enhanced connections, where necessary, between fragmented areas. In this regard, the Council will carry out an ecological survey of the plan area and map the identified ecological networks and wildlife and any gaps therein.

The requirements of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, referred to in **section 2.1.6.1** above, are not specifically considered under Appropriate Assessment (except in so far as they support a qualifying feature). However, the inclusion of objectives that ensure the protection and enhancement of wildlife corridors will have indirect positive impacts on the Natura 2000 network, as they will assist in ecological connectivity within the draft LAP area being maintained or improved, which will in turn improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 network.

Further, Table 20 of the draft LAP sets out some of the relevant sections and objectives of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 that will relate specifically to heritage and associated developments in the draft LAP area. Those which relate to natural heritage specifically are:

- NH01, NH02 (conservation and protection of designated sites);
- NH04, NH05 (ecological corridors);
- NH06, NH07 (trees/ woodland and hedgerows);
- NH08 (ensure an appropriate buffer zone is provided between a development and a feature of ecological importance);
- GI04, GI05, GI06, GI07 (ensure the principles of GI and the County GI Strategy inform the design and layout of developments).

2.1.8.3 Invasive Species

Invasive non- native plant and animal species can represent a major threat to local biodiversity. They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. The draft LAP includes the following objectives:

Objective NH02: *To promote best practice in the control of invasive species and support measures for the prevention and/or eradication of invasive species as appropriate and as opportunities and resources allow.*

Objective NH03: *To raise awareness in relation to invasive species, including making landowners and developers aware of best practice guidance in relation to the control of invasive species and encouraging them to adhere to same and, to ensure, in so far as possible, that proposals for development do not lead to the spread of invasive species.*

Objective NH04: *To ensure that proposals for development do not lead to the spread or introduction of invasive species. If developments are proposed on sites where invasive species are or were previously present, the applicants will be required to submit a control and management program for the particular invasive species as part of the planning process.*

2.1.9 Flood Risk Management

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) of the LAP area has been carried out, and was informed by Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management flood mapping. The SFRA identified that there are potential flood risk issues along the rivers and streams in the plan area. The Banoge River is the principal river that flows through the plan area and its main tributaries are the Ballyowen River and the Clonattin Upper River. There is a history of flood events along the Banoge River at Gorey Bridge, Esmonde Street and Garden City. The Council has implemented measures including the installation of piping systems and improved drainage systems which have assisted in alleviating the flooding issue.

It is an objective of the Council stated in the draft LAP to:

Objective FRM01: *To ensure that all development proposals in the plan area comply with the requirements of 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Office of Public Works, 2009), as amended by Circular PL2/2014', and any subsequent review or other future update to the Guidelines.*

Objective FRM02: *To have regard to the flood maps and the Flood Risk Management Plan prepared for Gorey Town and Environs as part of the South-East Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (CFRAM) and to ensure that development proposals comply with any relevant requirements set out therein.*

Objective FRM03: *To require planning applications for development proposals within, incorporating or adjoining areas at moderate (Flood Zone B) to high (Flood Zone A) risk of fluvial flooding to carry out a site-specific and appropriately detailed flood risk assessment. The site-specified flood risk assessment shall be carried out*

by a suitably qualified and indemnified professional and in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, OPW 2009).

Objective FRM04: To ensure riparian buffer zones are created between all watercourses and any development for a minimum of 10m to mitigate against flood risk. The extent of these buffer zones shall be determined in consultation with a qualified ecologist and following a Flood Risk Assessment. Any hard landscaping proposals shall be located outside of these buffer zones. In considering the appropriate width, the Council will have regard to 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment Guidelines' (Shannon Regional Fisheries Board).

2.1.10 Water and Waste Water

Irish Water has been responsible for the delivery of water and waste water infrastructure in Ireland since the 1st of January 2014.

Gorey Town and Environs is served by the Gorey Town Water Supply System (WSS) which is supplied by Water Treatment Plants at Creagh and Barnadown and also smaller boreholes at Balykale and Coolishall. The draft LAP notes that at present the Gorey Town Water Supply System has limited headroom to meet future needs.

The Gorey Regional Water Supply Scheme is included in Irish Water's Capital Investment Programme (2014- 2016). It is proposed that the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) at Barnadown will be replaced with a new WTP with a design capacity of 8MLD. This will provide headroom in the Gorey Town Water Supply System of 3.55 MLD (approximately 28,400 Population Equivalent PE) based on an estimated 125 litres/person/day) for the whole WSS area. The existing Creagh WTP will reduce its production to operate within its 2.5MLD design capacity.

Gorey Town and Environs is currently served by the Gorey Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and the Courtown WWTP. The combined design capacity of both treatment plants is 16,500 PE with a current combined load of 17,708 PE and therefore demand/load exceeds current design capacities. An upgrade of the

Courtown Waste Water Treatment Plant to a design capacity of 35,000 PE commenced in December 2014 and is due for completion by the third quarter of 2016. The existing WWTP at Gorey will be decommissioned and converted to Storm Water Holding only and the upgraded Courtown WWTP will serve both Gorey and Courtown.

The upgrades to the WTP and the WWTP will ensure a sufficient supply of water and waste water infrastructure to serve new development in the plan area. Such infrastructure will be required to be put in place prior to significant development taking place.

It is an objective of the Council to:

Objective WW01: To promote and facilitate the provision by Irish Water of adequate water and waste water treatment infrastructure to serve the needs of the existing and future population of the plan area and ensure that such infrastructure is provided prior to, or in tandem with, new development.

Objective WW02: To encourage the decommissioning of existing on-site private waste water treatment facilities and the connection of the subject properties to the public waste water treatment system subject to the compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the standards and requirements set out in EU and national legislation and guidance.

2.1.11 Land Use Zoning

The draft LAP explains that land use zoning objectives have been developed having regard to the protection of the environment and biodiversity and flood risk management; and the existing and future provision of essential infrastructure (water, sewerage and roads) and the need to ensure the efficient use of this infrastructure (see Section 11 of the draft LAP).

2.2 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE EUROPEAN SITES

This section of the screening process describes the European Sites within a 15km radius of the LAP boundary. A 15km buffer zone has been chosen as a precautionary measure, to ensure that all potentially affected European Sites are considered and assessed in the screening process. This approach is in line with, *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*, produced by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. In addition, potential connectivity between designated sites, such as via river catchments, groundwater aquifer zones and wildlife migratory paths were also reviewed to identify potential interactions with the plan area and designated sites outside the 15km zone.

Table 2.1 lists the SACs and **Table 2.2** lists the SPAs that are within 15km of the draft LAP boundary. **Figure 2.1** shows their locations in relation to the draft LAP area. **Table 2.3** provides an overview of any waterbodies within the draft LAP area that maybe connected to these European Sites

The integrity of a European Site (referred to in Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive) is determined based on the conservation status of the qualifying features of the SAC or SPA. The qualifying features for each SAC and SPA site are identified in the Conservation Objectives reports available from the NPWS. Detailed conservation objectives have been prepared for the Slaney River Valley SAC.

Table 2-1: SACs within 15km of the Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023

Site Code	Site Name	Distance from Town Boundary (km)	Qualifying Habitats	Conservation Status	Qualifying Species	Conservation Status ¹
000781	Slaney River Valley SAC	1.169715	Estuaries [1130]; Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]; Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260]; Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles [91A0]; and Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0].	Good Good Good Good	Freshwater pearl mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>) [1029]; Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) [1095]; Brook lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>) [1096]; River lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) [1099]; Twaite shad (<i>Alosa fallax fallax</i>) [1103]; Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106]; Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355]; and	Good Good Good Good Good Excellent

¹Extracted from the Natura 2000 Standard Data Forms (in June 2016) on the NPWS website <http://www.npws.ie/protectedsites/>. This information provides specific details on the conservation status of each habitat and species within the SAC and SPA rather than status of the habitats which is available in The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland.

Site Code	Site Name	Distance from Town Boundary (km)	Qualifying Habitats	Conservation Status	Qualifying Species	Conservation Status ¹
				Good	Harbour Seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) [1365].	Good
001742	Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC	7.888042	Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210];	Good	-	-
			Embryonic shifting dunes [2110];	Good		
			Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120];	Good		
			Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130];	Good		
			Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea) [2150].	Good		
000700	Cahore Polder and Dunes SAC	13.13561	Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210];	Good	-	-
			Embryonic shifting dunes [2110];	Good		
			Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120];	Good		

Site Code	Site Name	Distance from Town Boundary (km)	Qualifying Habitats	Conservation Status	Qualifying Species	Conservation Status ¹
			Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130].	Good		

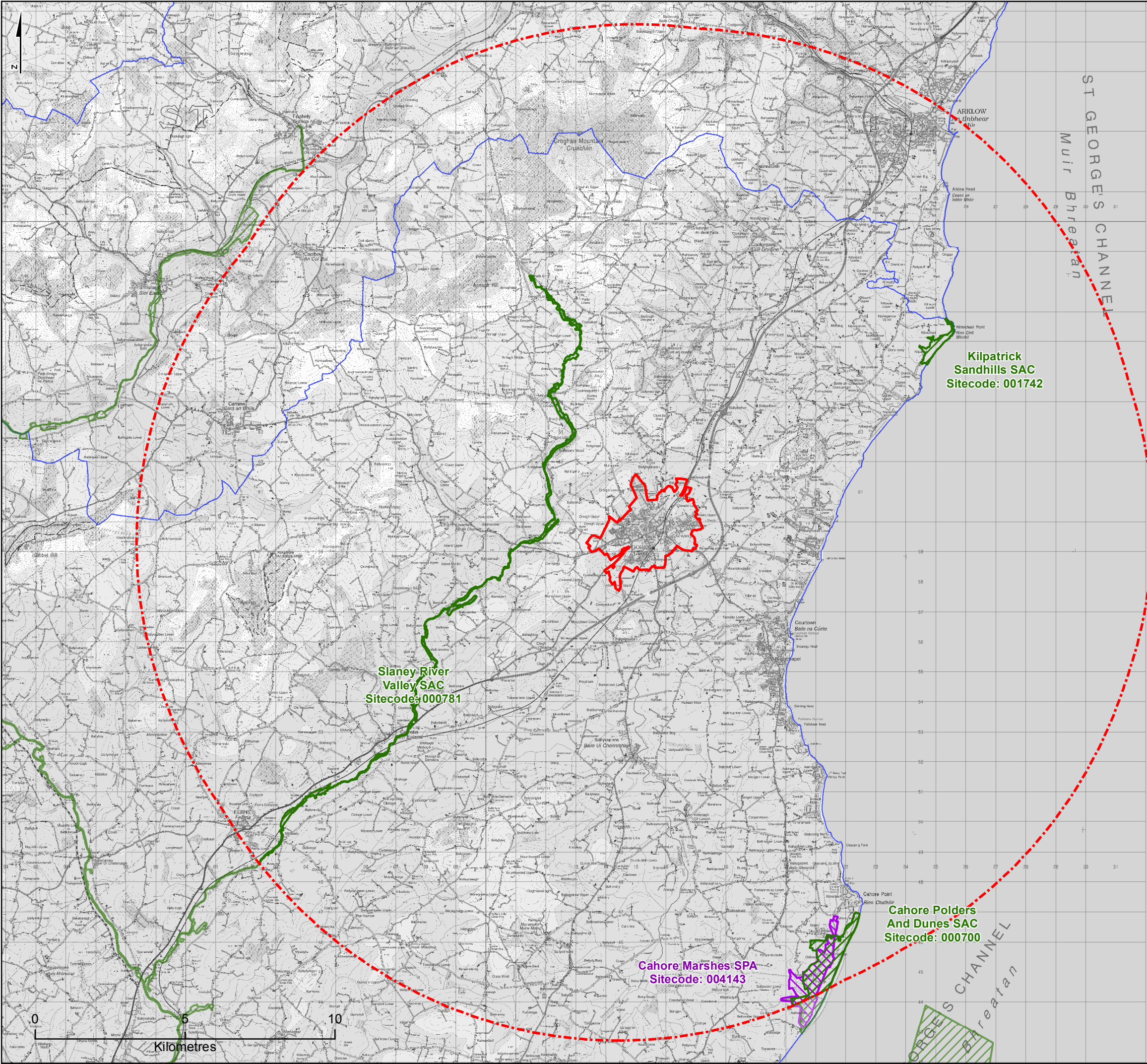
Table 2-2: SPAs within 15km of the Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023

Site Code	Site Name	Distance from Town boundary (Km)	Qualifying Feature Annex I Species	Conservation Status
004143	Cahore Marshes SPA	12.907978	Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050]; Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]; Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]; Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]; and Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999].	Excellent Excellent Excellent Excellent Unknown

Table 2-3: Connectivity of Rivers within the Plan Area to European Sites²

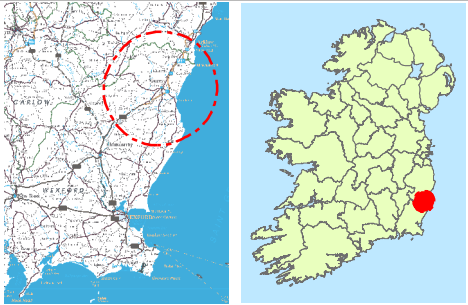
Local Area Plan	Hydrometric Area	WFD Catchment	River Sub Basin	Hydrologically Connected to Designated Sites	Approximate Distance To Down Gradient Site
Gorey	11 Owenavorragh	Owenavorragh	Northern portion is in the Banoge 10 sub basin; southern portion is in the Banoge 20 sub basin; small portion in the south-west is in the Banoge 30 sub basin.	There are no designated sites hydrologically linked downstream of the plan area.	Not applicable.

² Data from <http://gis.epa.ie/Envision>, accessed in June 2016



Legend

-  Proposed LAP 2017-2023
-  15km Buffer on Proposed LAP
-  Special Area of Conservation
-  Special Protection Area



Client

Wexford County Council



Project

**Appropriate Assessment for
Gorey Local Area Plan**

Title

European Sites

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NOTE:

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2.3 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

The following potential impacts on European Sites owing to the implementation of the draft LAP have been identified.

2.3.1 Direct Impacts on Habitats and Species

The construction of new residential and other development within Gorey Town and Environs has no potential to impact directly on the habitats or species listed as Qualifying Interests of the aforementioned European Sites in light of their conservation objectives as there are no European Sites located within the draft LAP area.

2.3.2 Indirect Damage / Degradation of Habitats and Disturbance to Species

The construction of new residential and other development within Gorey Town and Environs has no potential to impact indirectly on the habitats listed as Qualifying Interests of the aforementioned European Sites in light of their conservation objectives, or result in disturbance to species as they are all a significant distance from the draft LAP area (i.e. in excess of 1.2kms away), with no hydrologically connecting pathways (i.e. rivers or streams). The Gorey LAP is located within the Owenvorragh River Catchment and is situated outside the Slaney River Catchment (see **Table 2.3**).

2.3.3 Resource Requirements (e.g. Drinking Water Abstractions)

The construction of new residential and other development within Gorey Town and Environs will require additional water resources. However, the proposed replacement of the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) at Barnadown will ensure a sufficient supply of water to serve new development in the draft LAP area. Such infrastructure will be required to be put in place prior to significant development taking place. The proposed WTP works will not impact on the habitats and species listed as Qualifying Interests of the aforementioned European Sites as they are all a significant distance from the draft LAP area (i.e. no groundwater dependent ecosystems will be impacted).

2.3.4 Emissions (e.g. Disposal to Lands, Water Air)

The construction of new residential and other development within Gorey Town and Environs has the potential to result in a reduction in the water quality in the receiving waterbodies through an increase in the waste water discharged. However, it is not envisaged that the implementation of the Plan will have any negative impacts on water quality. The upgrade to the Courtown WWTP will have positive impacts for water quality and will ensure sufficient waste water infrastructure is in place to serve new development in the draft LAP area. Such infrastructure will be required to be put in place prior to significant development taking place. There are no hydrological pathways or linkages from the draft LAP area to surrounding European Sites.

2.3.5 Excavation Requirements

There are no significant excavations requirements proposed as part of the draft LAP, therefore, there is no potential to impact on the habitats and species listed as Qualifying Interests of the aforementioned European Sites.

2.3.6 Invasive Species

The potential exists for the introduction and spread of invasive species with all forms of development, should such species become established.

However, the Council is committed to assist in controlling invasive species, and to this end has included objectives NH02, NH03 and NH04 to promote best practice in the control of invasive species; to raise awareness in relation to invasive species; and to ensure, in so far as possible, that proposals for development do not lead to the spread of invasive species.

Therefore, no significant effects on European Sites with regard to invasive species are anticipated.

2.3.7 Flood Zones

In general, undeveloped lands within the LAP area with an identified flood risk are either not proposed to be zoned for development or are proposed to be zoned for

compatible uses under the land use zoning objective Open Space and Amenity or Leisure and Amenity. There are some brownfield lands that are identified as being at risk of flooding, which are proposed to be zoned for town centre and residential uses. According to the provisions of the draft LAP the Council will ensure that future planning applications on these lands demonstrate that flood risk can be appropriately managed and mitigated. The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be required in all new developments according to the draft LAP. Given the distance to the nearest SAC or SPA and the absence of hydrological pathways (**Table 2.3**) no impacts on the Qualifying Interests of the SACs or SPA are anticipated. Furthermore, the draft LAP has been prepared with reference to the requirements and provisions of the *'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management'* Guidelines³.

2.4 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

The following sections identify elements of the draft LAP that, in the absence of protective measures, have the potential to impact on the Natura 2000 network.

2.4.1 Direct Impacts on Habitats and Species

Tables 2.1 and **2.2** list the European Sites within 15 km of the draft LAP area. There are four sites in all, three SACs and one SPA.

The Gorey Town and Environs LAP area is not situated within any SACs or SPAs, therefore no direct impacts to European Sites will occur through land take or fragmentation of habitats associated with zonings, objectives, residential and other developments. The nearest European Sites to Gorey are the Slaney River Valley SAC, located approximately 1.2km to the west; Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC located approximately 7.9km to the northeast and the Cahore Polders and Dunes SAC and the Cahore Marshes SPA, located approximately 13.2km southeast.

2.4.2 Indirect or Secondary Impacts on Habitats and Species

It is the aim of the draft LAP to protect, conserve and enhance the natural heritage and biodiversity within and adjacent to Gorey Town and Environs. The Council is

³ DOEHLG & OPW (2009) The Planning System and Flood Risk Management- Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DOEHLG & OPW) as amended by Circular PL2/2014

committed to protecting and enhancing sites designated or proposed for designation under European and national legislation. It is a stated objective of the Council in the draft LAP to ensure that all plans and projects which could, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects have significant effects on a European Site(s) be subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment (Objective AA01).

Increased development and construction of residential and commercial units will lead to increased demand for potable water and increased pressure on existing and future waste water treatment systems. The upgrades to the WTP and the WWTP will ensure a sufficient supply of water and waste water infrastructure to serve new development in the plan area. Such infrastructure will be required to be put in place prior to development taking place. It is not envisaged that the implementation of the draft LAP will have any negative impacts on water quality. The upgrade to the WWTP will have positive impacts for water quality and all new development will be subject to appropriate infrastructure being in place.

The Council is committed to ensuring that adequate wastewater treatment facilities are in place to serve the existing and future population of the plan area (e.g. Objectives WW01 / WW02). Such wastewater objectives will ensure that sewage will be treated to an appropriate standard such that it will not impact on receiving waters, and therefore, will not result in any indirect impacts on European Sites.

There are a number of watercourses within and adjacent to the draft LAP area. The Banoge River is the principle river that flows through the plan area; its main tributaries are the Ballyowen River and the Clonattin Upper River. The Council is committed to protecting these water resources, and in this regard there are a number of objectives within the draft LAP which focus on maintaining and protecting the natural character and water quality of these waterbodies (e.g. Urban Design Guidelines/ NFPs for Creagh, Ballytegan, Clonattin and Gorey South areas/ OS03/ OS04/ OS05/ FRM04/ WW01/ WW02). Under the provisions of the draft LAP, development proposals within the plan area will be required to provide a buffer zone a minimum of 10m each side of the water's edge (e.g. Objective FRM04).

The management of surface and storm water is important so as to avoid increased flood or pollution risk in the storm water network, rivers and streams. New development can exacerbate the problems of flooding by accelerating and increasing surface water run-off. Under the draft LAP, the Council will require the application of Sustainable (urban) Drainage Systems (SuDS) in new developments. Reducing the extent of hard surfacing and using permeable pavements will aid in minimising the risk of flooding and contamination, and protect the environmental and water resources.

These water quality objectives will ensure that the receiving waterbodies are protected. In view of the aforementioned objectives, and taking into account the lack of hydrological connectivity between the draft LAP area and European Sites, no significant effects on water dependant Qualifying Interests of European Sites are anticipated to arise from the draft LAP.

Invasive non-native plant and animal species (Invasive Alien Species) can represent a major threat to national, regional and local biodiversity, including the integrity of European Sites. Under the provisions of the draft LAP the Council is committed to assist in controlling invasive species, and to this end has included objectives NH02, NH03 and NH04 relating to invasive species. In view of these protective objectives, the significant distance and the lack of hydrological connectivity between the draft LAP area and European Sites, no significant effects on European Sites with regard to invasive species are anticipated.

The inclusion in the draft LAP of objectives that ensure the protection and enhancement of wildlife corridors will have indirect positive impacts on the Natura 2000 network as ecological connectivity within the draft LAP area is maintained or improved, which will in turn improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 network. There are a number of objectives within the draft LAP that focus on wildlife corridors, including the NFPs for Creagh, Clonattin, Ballytegan and Gorey South/ OS03/ OS04/ OS05/ NH01 and FRM04.

This AA Screening has examined each objective within the draft LAP and has determined that there is no potential for significant effects on the Slaney River Valley

SAC, Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC and the Cahore Polders and Dunes SAC and the Cahore Marshes SPA.

2.4.3 Cumulative and In Combination Impacts

This step aims to identify at this early stage any possible significant in-combination or cumulative effects/impacts of the proposed draft LAP with other such plans and projects on the Natura 2000 network. Other plans and projects specific to the relevant European Sites are the following:

- Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022 (or subsequent Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy);
- South-East River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 (or subsequent Plan);
- National Spatial Strategy 2002- 2020 (or subsequent National Planning Framework);
- County Wexford Biodiversity Plan 2013-2018;
- Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019;
- IPPC Programme;
- Groundwater Pollution Reduction Programmes;
- Surface Water Pollution Reduction Programmes;
- Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study;
- Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans;
- WTP replacement at Barnadown; and

- WWTP upgrade at Courtown.

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022 provides the framework within which development plans for the region are to be prepared. Section 8 of this document (Heritage & Environment) sets a policy (PPO 8.6) to *Ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory mitigation, on plant, animal and bird species and habitats protected by law and that developments affecting Natura 2000 sites are assessed in compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.* There is also a policy (PPO 8.10) that *Local Authorities should, where possible, promote awareness of invasive species in collaboration with other relevant agencies and take appropriate measures for their management and control.*

The County Development Plan and other plans and programmes identified above all include numerous policies and objectives aimed at protecting the natural environment, including European Sites. Explicit reference to Screening for Appropriate Assessment for plans and projects are made in these plans, and the plans themselves have been subject to Appropriate Assessment, with findings of no significant adverse effects.

No other pathway has been identified by which any of the plans and programmes identified could have a significant ~~in combination~~ effect on any of the European Sites identified.

3 SCREENING CONCLUSION AND STATEMENT

The likely impacts that will arise from the draft LAP alone and in combination with other plans and programmes have been examined in the context of a number of factors that could potentially have a significant effect on the Natura 2000 network. No European Site will be adversely affected. A Finding of No Significant Effects Matrix has been completed and is presented in **Section 4** of this Screening Statement.

On the basis of the findings of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment of European Sites, it is concluded that the proposed draft Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2013 will not have a significant effect on the Natura 2000 network and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

4 FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS REPORT MATRIX

Name of project or Plan	Draft Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023
Name and location of European Site	Slaney River Valley SAC; Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC; Cahore Polder and Dunes SAC; and Cahore Marshes SPA.
Description of the project or Plan	<p>Gorey Town is the third largest town in County Wexford and is the principle town in North Wexford. The town is strategically located with immediate access to the M11 motorway network. This network connects Gorey to Enniscorthy Town, Wexford Town and Rosslare Europort and to Dublin and other strategic urban centres along the east coast. According to the 2011 census, the population of the town and environs area was 9,114 persons. The area has become a commuter town for people working in the Greater Dublin area.</p> <p>The draft LAP is a land use plan with land use zoning that sets out objectives which will guide development over a six year period and ensure that it is consistent with the objectives of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019. The draft LAP has been prepared in accordance with Sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000-2015.</p> <p>The vision of the draft LAP is that:</p> <p>By 2023 Gorey Town will be a high quality, green, well connected town with a compact, walkable urban form. It will have a network of sustainable neighbourhoods that are socially inclusive and desirable places to live. Gorey Town will have high quality sustainable jobs and it will be an attractive place to live in, to work in sustainable jobs and to visit and to enjoy its high quality public realm, its vibrant arts and culture and its bustling town centre and premier retailing services.</p>
Is the project or Plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (provide details)?	No
Are there other projects or Plans that together with the project or Plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)?	<p>Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022 (or subsequent Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy);</p> <p>South-East River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 (or subsequent Plan);</p> <p>National Spatial Strategy 2002- 2020 (or subsequent</p>

	<p>National Planning Framework); County Wexford Biodiversity Plan 2013-2018; Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019; IPPC Programme; Groundwater Pollution Reduction Programmes; Surface Water Pollution Reduction Programmes; Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study; Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans; WTP replacement at Barnadown; and WWTP upgrade at Courtown.</p>
The Assessment of Significance of Effects	
Describe how the project or Plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the European Site.	<p>The following potential impacts on European Sites owing to the implementation of the draft LAP have been identified.</p> <p>Direct Impacts on Habitats and Species</p> <p>The construction of new residential and other development within Gorey Town and Environs has no potential to impact directly on the habitats or species listed as Qualifying Interests of the aforementioned European Sites in light of their conservation objectives as there are no European Sites located within the draft LAP area.</p> <p>Indirect Damage / Degradation of Habitats and Disturbance to Species</p> <p>The construction of new residential and other development within Gorey Town and Environs has no potential to impact indirectly on the habitats listed as Qualifying Interests of the aforementioned European Sites in light of their conservation objectives, or result in disturbance to species as they are all a significant distance from the draft LAP area (i.e. in excess of 1.2kms away), with no hydrologically connecting pathways (i.e. rivers or streams). The Gorey LAP is located within the Owenvorragh River Catchment and is situated outside the Slaney River Catchment.</p> <p>Resource Requirements (e.g. Drinking Water Abstractions)</p> <p>The construction of new residential and other development within Gorey Town and Environs will require additional water resources. However, the proposed replacement of the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) at Barnadown will ensure a sufficient supply of water to serve new development in the draft LAP area. Such infrastructure will be required to be put in place prior to significant development taking place. The</p>

	<p>proposed WTP works will not impact on the habitats and species listed as Qualifying Interests of the aforementioned European Sites in light of their conservation objectives as they are all a significant distance from the draft LAP area (i.e. no groundwater dependent ecosystems will be impacted).</p> <p>Emissions (e.g. Disposal to Lands, Water Air)</p> <p>The construction of new residential and other development within Gorey Town and Environs has the potential to result in a reduction in the water quality in the receiving waterbodies through an increase in the waste water discharged. However, it is not envisaged that the implementation of the Plan will have any negative impacts on water quality. The upgrade to the Courtown WWTP will have positive impacts for water quality and will ensure sufficient waste water infrastructure is in place to serve new development in the draft LAP area. Such infrastructure will be required to be put in place prior to significant development taking place. There are no hydrological pathways or linkages from the draft LAP area to surrounding European Sites.</p> <p>Excavation Requirements</p> <p>There are no significant excavations requirements proposed as part of the draft LAP, therefore, there is no potential to impact on the habitats and species listed as Qualifying Interests of the aforementioned European Sites.</p> <p>Invasive Species</p> <p>The potential exists for the introduction and spread of invasive species with all forms of development, should such species become established.</p> <p>However, The Council is committed to assist in controlling invasive species, and to this end has included objectives NH02, NH03 and NH04 to promote best practice in the control of invasive species; to raise awareness in relation to invasive species; and to ensure, in so far as possible, that proposals for development do not lead to the spread of invasive species.</p> <p>Therefore, no significant effects on European Sites with regard to invasive species are anticipated.</p> <p>Flood Zones</p> <p>In general, undeveloped lands within the LAP area with an identified flood risk are either not proposed to be zoned for development zoned for compatible uses under the land use zoning objective Open Space and</p>
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	<p>Amenity or 'Leisure and Amenity'. There are some brownfield lands that are identified as being at risk of flooding, which are proposed to be zoned for town centre and residential uses. According to the provisions of the draft LAP the Council will ensure that future planning applications on these lands demonstrate that flood risk can be appropriately managed and mitigated. The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be required in all new developments according to the draft LAP. Given the distance to the nearest SAC or SPA and the absence of hydrological pathways no impacts on the Qualifying Interests of the SACs or SPA are anticipated. Furthermore, the draft LAP has been prepared with reference to the requirements and provisions of the <i>'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management'</i> Guidelines.</p>
<p>Explain why these effects are not considered significant.</p>	<p>It is the aim of the draft LAP to protect, conserve and enhance the natural heritage and biodiversity within and adjacent to Gorey Town and Environs. The Council is committed to protecting and enhancing sites designated or proposed for designation under European and national legislation. It is a stated objective of the Council in the draft LAP to ensure that all plans and projects which could, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects have significant effects on a European Site(s) be subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment (Objective AA01).</p> <p>Increased development and construction of residential and commercial units will lead to increased demand for potable water and increased pressure on existing and future waste water treatment systems. The upgrades to the WTP and the WWTP will ensure a sufficient supply of water and waste water infrastructure to serve new development in the plan area. Such infrastructure will be required to be put in place prior to development taking place. It is not envisaged that the implementation of the draft LAP will have any negative impacts on water quality. The upgrade to the WWTP will have positive impacts for water quality and all new development will be subject to appropriate infrastructure being in place.</p> <p>The Council is committed to ensuring that adequate wastewater treatment facilities are in place to serve the existing and future population of the plan area (e.g. Objectives WW01 / WW02). Such wastewater objectives will ensure that sewage will be treated to an appropriate standard such that it will not impact on receiving waters, and therefore, will not result in any indirect impacts on European Sites.</p> <p>There are a number of watercourses within and adjacent to the draft LAP area. The Banoge River is</p>

	<p>the principle river that flows through the plan area; its main tributaries are the Ballyowen River and the Clonattin Upper River. The Council is committed to protecting these water resources, and in this regard there are a number of objectives within the draft LAP which focus on maintaining and protecting the natural character and water quality of these waterbodies (e.g. Urban Design Guidelines/ NFPs for Creagh, Ballytegan, Clonattin and Gorey South areas/ OS03/ OS04/ OS05/ FRM04/ WW01/ WW02). Under the provisions of the draft LAP, development proposals within the plan area will be required to provide a buffer zone a minimum of 10m each side of the water edge (e.g. Objective FRM04).</p> <p>The management of surface and storm water is important so as to avoid increased flood or pollution risk in the storm water network, rivers and streams. New development can exacerbate the problems of flooding by accelerating and increasing surface water run-off. Under the draft LAP, the Council will require the application of Sustainable (urban) Drainage Systems (SuDS) in new developments. Reducing the extent of hard surfacing and using permeable pavements will aid in minimising the risk of flooding and contamination, and protect the environmental and water resources.</p> <p>These water quality objectives will ensure that the receiving waterbodies are protected. In view of the aforementioned objectives, and taking into account the lack of hydrological connectivity between the draft LAP area and European Sites, no significant effects on water dependant Qualifying Interests of European Sites are anticipated to arise from the draft LAP.</p> <p>Invasive non-native plant and animal species (Invasive Alien Species) can represent a major threat to national, regional and local biodiversity, including the integrity of European Sites. Under the provisions of the draft LAP the Council is committed to assist in controlling invasive species, and to this end has included objectives NH02, NH03 and NH04 relating to invasive species. In view of these protective objectives, the significant distance and the lack of hydrological connectivity between the draft LAP area and European Sites, no significant effects on European Sites with regard to invasive species are anticipated.</p> <p>The inclusion in the draft LAP of objectives that ensure the protection and enhancement of wildlife corridors will have indirect positive impacts on the Natura 2000 network as ecological connectivity within the draft LAP area is maintained or improved, which will in turn improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 network. There are a number of objectives within the draft LAP that focus on wildlife corridors, including the NFPs for</p>
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	<p>Creagh, Clonattin, Ballytegan and Gorey South/ OS03/ OS04/ OS05/ NH01 and FRM04.</p> <p>This AA has examined each objective within the draft LAP and has determined that there is no potential for significant effects on the Slaney River Valley SAC, Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC and the Cahore Polders and Dunes SAC and the Cahore Marshes SPA.</p>
List of agencies consulted: provide contact name and telephone or e-mail address.	<p>IFI: Mr. Donnachadh Byrne</p> <p>15A Main Street, Blackrock, County Dublin, IRELAND</p>
Response to consultation.	None to date
Data Collected to Carry Out the Assessment	
Who carried out the assessment?	RPS
Sources of data	<p>NPWS database</p> <p>Information from Wexford County Council</p>
Level of assessment completed	Desktop
Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed?	Wexford County Council Planning Department
Overall Conclusion	<p>Stage 1 Screening indicates that the draft Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023 alone and in combination with other plans and programmes will not have a significant negative impact on the Natura 2000 network. Therefore, a Stage 2 'Appropriate Assessment' under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC is not required.</p>