Attn. Ms. Noeleen Keavey  
Office of Climate, Licensign and Resource Use,  
PO Box 3000,  
Johnstown Castle Estate,  
Co. Wexford.

4th October 2016  

Re: Kiernan Milling I.P.C. Reg. No. P1026-01  

Dear Noeleen,  

I refer to your correspondence dated 8th October last, and in particular point No. 1, 2 and 10 of same.  

1. The class of activity being carried out is as detailed in the revised site and public notices enclosed.  

2. The finished production capacity/day will be 2,300 – 2,500 tonnes.  

10. Please find enclosed completed AA Screening report.  

Remaining issues to be addressed under separate correspondence.  

If you require any additional information with regard to this correspondence, please do not hesitate to contact me.  

Yours Sincerely,  

Paraic Fay B.Agr.Sc.
"APPLICATION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY FOR A LICENCE"

Site Notice

Notice is hereby given in accordance with the E.P.A. Acts 1992 to 2013 that Kiernan Milling, Granardkille, Granard, Co. Longford intend to apply to the Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.) for a Licence for their premises at Granardkille, Granard, Co. Longford. National Grid Reference E231531 N280440.

This enterprise is classed as:

Activity Class 7.8 (a) The treatment and processing, other than exclusively packaging, of the following raw materials, whether previously processed or unprocessed, intended for the production of food or feed from: (iii) animal and vegetable raw materials, both in combined and separate products, with a finished product production capacity in tonnes per day greater than:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{(I)} \quad \text{75 if } A \text{ is equal to } 10 \text{ or more; or} \\
&\text{(II)} \quad [300-(22.5 \times A)] \text{ in any other case,}
\end{align*}
\]

where ‘A’ is the portion of animal material (in percent of weight) of the finished product production capacity.

A copy of this application for a Licence, and such further information relating to the application as may be furnished to the Agency in the course of the Agency’s consideration of the application, may be inspected on the Agency’s website or inspected at or obtained from the headquarters of the Agency (Tel: Lo-call 1890 33 55 99 or 053-9160600) as soon as is practicable after the receipt by the Agency of the application for the licence.

Signed: [Signature]

(on behalf of applicant)

Paraic Fay B.Agr.Sc.
C/o C.L.W. Environmental Planners Ltd.,
The Mews,
23 Farnham St.,
Cavan.

Date of erection of Site Notice: 5th October 2016
**Public Notices**

*Moorhill House*

Castlenugent, Lisryan, Co. Longford

Opening Hours
1st August - 29th September
9.30am - 1.30pm Daily

Admission Fee €8.00

**What Happens When You Don’t Advertise...**

**Application to the Environmental Protection Agency for a Licence**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with the EPA Acts 1992 to 2013 that Keenan Milling, Grananville, Granard, Co. Longford intend to construct, maintain and operate a food production, cold storage or other food processing facility at Markham, Granard, Co. Longford. The planning application may be inspected at the site of the proposed facility or may be inspected at the Planing Authority during their normal opening hours. A submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the Planing Authority during their normal opening hours or may be submitted in writing to the Planing Authority on the application.

Signed: Mark Barret, EPA Architect.

For and on behalf of Elizabeth and Alan Perea.

**Proposals for Afforestation in Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

The following applications have been received:

- **Contract Number:** C875328
  - **County:** Longford
  - **District Electoral Division:** ABBEYLARA
  - **Townland:** Moorhill House
  - **Area (hectares):** 6.50

Submissions, in writing, within 21 days of the publication of this notice may be made to the AGA at the address above.

Signed: *Your Name*

**Public Notices**

*PROPOSALS FOR AFFORESTATION IN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS*

The following applications have been received:

**Contract Number:** C875328
**County:** Longford
**District Electoral Division:** ABBEYLARA
**Townland:** Moorhill House
**Area (hectares):** 6.50

Submissions, in writing, within 21 days of the publication of this notice may be made to the AGA at the address above.

Signed: *Your Name*

**Public Notices**

*PROPOSALS FOR AFFORESTATION IN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS*

The following applications have been received:

**Contract Number:** C875328
**County:** Longford
**District Electoral Division:** ABBEYLARA
**Townland:** Moorhill House
**Area (hectares):** 6.50

Submissions, in writing, within 21 days of the publication of this notice may be made to the AGA at the address above.

Signed: *Your Name*

**Public Notices**

*PROPOSALS FOR AFFORESTATION IN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS*

The following applications have been received:

**Contract Number:** C875328
**County:** Longford
**District Electoral Division:** ABBEYLARA
**Townland:** Moorhill House
**Area (hectares):** 6.50

Submissions, in writing, within 21 days of the publication of this notice may be made to the AGA at the address above.

Signed: *Your Name*
STATEMENT OF SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT
OF A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT GRANARDKILLE,
GRANARD, CO. LONGFORD

IN LINE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ARTICLE 6(3) OF THE
EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE

Kiernan Milling
c/o Pauric Fay
C.L.W. Environmental Planners Ltd
The Mews
23 Farnham Street

September 2016
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 3
1.1 Background ...................................................................................................................... 3
1.2 Regulatory Context ......................................................................................................... 3

2 METHODOLOGY .................................................................................................................. 7
2.1 Appropriate Assessment .................................................................................................. 7
2.2 Desk Studies .................................................................................................................... 9

3 SCREENING .......................................................................................................................... 10
3.1 Development Description ............................................................................................... 10
3.2 Site Location and Surrounding Environment .................................................................... 11
3.3 Natura 2000 Sites Identified ........................................................................................... 13
3.4 Assessment Criteria ......................................................................................................... 16
3.5 Finding of No Significant Effects ..................................................................................... 18

4 BEST PRACTICE MEASURES ........................................................................................... 19

5 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT CONCLUSION .................................................................... 21
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Article 6 of the EU Habitat’s Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) requires that all plans and projects be screened for potential impacts on Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The aim of this screening process is to establish whether or not a full Appropriate Assessment of the proposed plan or project is necessary.

A comprehensive assessment of the ecological impacts of a proposed development at Granardkille, Granard, Co. Longford was carried out in September 2016 by Noreen McLoughlin, MSc, MCIEEM of Whitehill Environmental. The location of the proposed development is within 10km of sites designated under European Law. As such and in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitat’s Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) regarding Appropriate Assessment, this screening exercise for Appropriate Assessment was carried out in order to identify whether any significant impacts on designated sites are likely. This exercise will also determine the appropriateness of the proposed project, in the context of the conservation status of the designated sites.

This assessment also allowed areas of potential ecological value and potential ecological constraints associated with this proposed development to be identified and it enabled potential ecological impacts associated with the proposed development to be assessed and mitigated for.

1.2 REGULATORY CONTEXT

RELEVANT LEGALISATION

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC) implies that particular protection is given to sites (Special Protection Areas) which support certain bird species listed in Annex I of the Directive and that surveys of development sites should consider the status of such species.

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) gives protection to sites (Special Areas of Conservation) which support particular habitats and species listed in annexes to this directive. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of this Directive call for the undertaking of an Appropriate Assessment for plans and projects likely to have an effect on designated sites. This is explained in greater detail in the following section.

The Wildlife Act 1976 (and its amendment of 2000) provides protection to most wild birds and animals. Interference with such species can only occur under licence. Under the act it is an offence to “wilfully interfere with or destroy the breeding place or resting place of any
protected wild animal". The basic designation for wildlife is the Natural Heritage Area (NHA). This is an area considered important for the habitats present or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. Under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000) NHAs are legally protected from damage. NHAs are not part of the Natura 2000 network and so the Appropriate Assessment process does not apply to them.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC), which came into force in December 2000, establishes a framework for community action in the field of water policy. The WFD was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 722 of 2003). The WFD rationalises and updates existing legislation and provides for water management on the basis of River Basin Districts (RBDs). RBDs are essentially administrative areas for coordinated water management and are comprised of multiple river basins (or catchments), with cross-border basins (i.e. those covering the territory of more than one Member State) assigned to an international RBD. The aim of the WFD is to ensure that waters achieve at least good status by 2015 and that status doesn’t deteriorate in any waters.

**Appropriate Assessment and the Habitats Directive**


Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive sets out the decision-making tests for plans or projects affecting Natura 2000 sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

"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."

Article 6(4) deals with the steps that should be taken when it is determined, as a result of appropriate assessment, that a plan/project will adversely affect a European site. Issues dealing with alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest and compensatory measures need to be addressed in this case.

Article 6(4) states:

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

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest."

**The Appropriate Assessment Process**

The aim of Appropriate Assessment is to assess the implications of a proposal in respect of a site's conservation objectives.

Appropriate Assessment is an assessment of the potential effects of a proposed plan - 'in combination' with other plans and projects - on one or more European sites. The 'Appropriate Assessment' itself is a statement which must be made by the competent authority which says whether the plan affects the integrity of a European site. The actual process of determining whether or not the plan will affect the site is also commonly referred to as 'Appropriate Assessment'.

If adverse impacts on the site cannot be avoided, then mitigation measures should be applied during the Appropriate Assessment process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site remain (European Commission, 2000, 2001).
The conclusions of the appropriate assessment report should enable the competent authority to ascertain whether the proposal would adversely affect the integrity of the site (European Commission, 2000, 2001).

Under the terms of the directive (European Commission, 2000, 2001), consent can only be granted for a project if, as a result of the appropriate assessment either (a) it is concluded that the integrity of the site will not be adversely affected, or (b) where an adverse effect is anticipated, there is shown to be an absence of alternative solutions, and there exists imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project should go ahead.
## Methodology

### 2.1 Appropriate Assessment

This Statement of Screening for Appropriate Assessment (Stage 1) has been prepared with reference to the following:


The EC Guidance sets out a number of principles as to how to approach decision making during the process. The primary one is 'the precautionary principle' which requires that the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 should prevail where there is uncertainty.

When considering the precautionary principle, the emphasis for assessment should be on objectively demonstrating with supporting evidence that:

- There will be no significant effects on a Natura 2000 site;
- There will be no adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site;
- There is an absence of alternatives to the project or plan that is likely to have an adverse effect to the integrity of a Natura 2000 site; and
- There are compensation measures that maintain or enhance the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

This translates into a four stage process to assess the impacts, on a designated site or species, of a policy or proposal.

The EC Guidance states that "each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required". Consequently, the Council may not need to proceed through all four stages in undertaking the Appropriate Assessment.
The four stage process is:

**Stage 1: Screening** – The process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether or not these impacts are likely to be significant;

**Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment** – The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site’s structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts;

**Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions** – The process which examines alternative ways of achieving objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;

**Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain** – An assessment of the compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

In complying with the obligations set out in Articles 6(3) and following the guidelines described above, this screening statement has been structured as a stage by stage approach as follows:

- Description of the proposed project;
- Identification of the Natura 2000 sites close to the proposed development;
- Identification and description of any individual and cumulative impacts on the Natura 2000 sites likely to result from the project;
- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified above on site integrity. Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects;
- Screening statement with conclusions.
2.2 **DESK STUDIES**

Information on the site and the area of the proposed development was studied prior to the completion of this statement. The following data sources were accessed in order to complete a thorough examination of potential impacts:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service - aerial photographs and maps of designated sites, information on habitats and species within these sites and information on protected plant or animal species; conservation objectives, site synopses and standard data forms for relevant designated sites;

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - Information pertaining to water quality, geology and licensed facilities within the area;

- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) – Information pertaining to protected plant and animal species within the study area;

- C.L.W. Environmental Planners Ltd – Information regarding the proposed development including site plans and specifications;

- Longford County Council – Information on planning history in the area;

- Water Matters – Catchment based information.
3 SCREENING

3.1 DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

In July 2015 Kiernan Milling applied to the EPA for a License in respect of their production facility at Granardkille, Granard, Co. Longford. The class of activity pertaining to the site is Class 7.8, namely:

"the treatment and processing, other than exclusively packaging, of the following raw materials, whether previously processed or unprocessed, intended for the production of food or feed from: (iii) animal and vegetable raw materials, both in combined and separate products, with a finished production capacity in tonnes per day greater than: (I) 75 if equal to 10 or more; or (II) [300-(22.5 x A)] in any other case, where A is the portion of animal material (in percent of weight) of the finished product production capacity."

Kiernan Milling was established in 1979 for the production of a wide range of products for the agricultural industry. The production process on site consists of the grinding, blending and mixing of animal feed ingredients (including cereals, cereal by-products, vegetable protein sources, vegetable oils, molasses, pre-mixes and other ingredients) to produce:

- Compound Animal Feeds (Meal and Pellets)
- Course rations

Kiernan Milling have recently been granted planning permission by Longford County Council for a number of developments on the site (Planning Reference Numbers: 15/115, 15/116 and 15/123). Once constructed, these developments will see an increase in production at the facility by 150,000 – 200,000 tonnes per annum from 300,000 – 350,000 tonnes per annum (total capacity 550,000 tonnes/annum).
3.2 **SITE LOCATION AND SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT**

The site in question is located in the townland of Granardkille, on the outskirts of Granard town, approximately 2km south-west of the town centre. Under the current Longford County Development Plan, the area of the site is zoned for business and technology. Access to the site is just off a regional road, the R194. The area of the site is approximately 5 hectares. The main habitats surrounding the site include improved agricultural grassland, amenity grassland, wet grassland, hedgerows, treelines, broadleaved forestry and watercourses. A site location map is shown in Figure 1, whilst an aerial photograph depicting habitats surrounding the site is shown in Figure 2.

![Site Location Map](image)

Figure 1 – Site Location Map

Habitats within the site itself include buildings and artificial surfaces and amenity grassland habitats. These are habitats of low conservation and biodiversity value. Where they exist, the boundaries consist of treelines, hedgerows and a boundary wall along the road.

An examination of the website of the National Biodiversity Data Centre revealed that there are no records for the presence of any notable plant or animal species from within the relevant one km grid square (N3180).
The application site is located within the Shannon River Basin District, the Upper Shannon Hydrometric Area and Catchment and the Camlin Sub-Catchment. There are drains and streams adjacent to the site, the main one being a stream flowing along the western site boundary. The EPA refer to this stream as the Granardkill stream and it flows in a south-westerly direction until its confluence with the River Rhine, approximately 672m downstream of the application site boundary. The Rhine River eventually becomes the River Camlin, which flows through Ballinalee and Longford town, to join the River Shannon near Newtownforbes. The website of the Water Framework Directive in Ireland (watermatters.ie) has classified the Granardkill Stream and the Rhine River as poor ecological status and as being At Risk of not achieving good status as required under the Water Framework Directive. Under the requirements of this directive, this is unsatisfactory and good status must be achieved in these waterbodies by 2021. However, the Camlin River further downstream near Ballinalee is of high ecological status.

Figure 2 – Aerial Photograph of the Site (Outlined in Red) and its Surrounding Habitats. Watercourses are Highlighted in Blue.
3.3 NATURA 2000 SITES IDENTIFIED

In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, a list of Natura 2000 sites within 10km of the proposed development has been identified.

There are four Natura 2000 designated sites within 10km of the application site. These designated areas and their closest points to the proposed development site are summarised in Table 1 and a map showing their locations relative to the application site is shown in Figure 3. A full description of these sites can be read on the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (npws.ie).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name &amp; Code</th>
<th>Distance from Proposed Development</th>
<th>Qualifying Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ardaghullion Bog SAC 002341 | 4.3km south | • Active raised bogs  
• Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration  
• Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion |
| Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA 004061 | 6.2km east | • Pochard Aythya  
• Tufted Duck Aythya fuligula  
• Wetlands & waterbirds |
| Lough Sheelin SPA 004065 | 9.3km east | • Pochard Aythya ferina  
• Tufted Duck Aythya fuligula  
• Wetlands & waterbirds |
| Moneybeg and Clareisland Bog SAC 002340 | 9.3km east | • Active raised bog  
• Degraded raised bog  
• Rhynchosporion vegetation |

Table 1 – Natura 2000 Sites Within 10km of the Proposed Site
The generic conservation objectives of all these sites are:

1. To maintain the favourable conservation status of the qualifying interests (outlined above) of this SAC and SPA.

2. To maintain the extent, species richness and biodiversity of the entire site.

3. To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities.

The favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range and area it covers within that range is stable or increasing and the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future;

- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- The population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;

- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future;

- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.
Figure 4 – The Application Site (Red Dot) in relation to the Natura 2000 Sites
(SACs and SPAs - Red Hatched Areas)
3.4 **Assessment Criteria**

The impacts (if any) of the proposed development on the Natura 2000 sites identified above are described below. This stage of the process will consider Ardagullion Bog SAC more carefully than the other Natura 2000 sites, as this is the closest designated site to the facility and the one most likely to be impacted upon.

**Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on nearby Natura 2000 site:**

The operation of the animal feed processing facility will have **no impacts** upon the integrity or the site structure of the Natura 2000 sites identified. There are no individual elements of the proposed project that are likely to give rise to negative impacts on any Natura 2000 site.

**Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the nearby Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:**

**Size and scale.** Given the small size and scale of the development in relation to the overall size of the Natura 2000 sites identified, the likelihood of any direct, indirect or cumulative impacts upon these sites is low.

**Land-take:** There will be no land-take from any designated site. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any designated site.

**Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site:** The closest Natura 2000 site to the proposed development is the Ardgullion Bog SAC, which is 4.3km south of the application site. This distance is sufficient to ensure that there will be no impacts upon this or any other Natura 2000 site arising from the operation of the facility at Granardkille.

**Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.):** No resources will be taken from any SAC or SPA and there are no resource requirements that will impact upon any SAC or SPA.

**Emissions** Neither the construction nor the operation of the proposed development will result in emissions to any SAC or SPA. Best practice measures will be undertaken during construction and operation of the facility to minimise any run-off to local drains and streams. During operation, only clean surface water run-off will be directed to local drains via a silt trap. There will be no emissions of nitrogen or ammonia to the atmosphere arising from the operation of the facility.

**Excavation requirements:** Excavated material from the construction will be used on site. Any remaining will be disposed of in a responsible manner in a licensed facility away from any designated sites.
Transportation requirements: There will be no additional transportation requirements resulting from the proposed development and associated works that will have any impact upon the Natura 2000 sites identified.

Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc: Once construction begins, it should be complete within one year. The facility will continue to operate on the site for the foreseeable future.

Describe any likely changes to the nearby Natura 2000 sites arising as a result of:

Reduction of habitat area: The proposed development lies outside the boundaries of the Natura 2000 sites identified in Section 3.3. There will be no reduction of designated habitat area. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any designated site.

Disturbance to key species: There will be no direct disturbance to any species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive or Annex II of the Habitats Directive.

Habitat or species fragmentation: There will be no habitat or species fragmentation within any SAC or SPA. No ecological corridors between the proposed site and any SAC or SPA will be damaged or destroyed.

Reduction in species density: There will be no reduction in species density within the SAC and SPA.

Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.): There will be no negative impacts upon surface or ground water quality within any designated site. There will be no negative impacts upon the water quality in any designated site.

Describe any likely impacts on the nearby Natura 2000 sites as a whole in terms of:

Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of the site: It is not considered likely that there will be any impacts on the key relationships that define the structure or function of the Natura 2000 sites identified.

Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:

Loss - Estimated percentage of lost area of habitat: None
Fragmentation: None
Disruption & disturbance: None
Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.): None
3.5 **Finding of No Significant Effects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding of No Significant Effects Report Matrix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of project</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name and location of Natura 2000 site</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of project</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is the project directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are there other projects or plans that together with the project being assessed could affect the site?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Assessment of Significance of Effects**

Describe how the project is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site: Having regard to the location, nature and scale of the proposed development, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects either from the proposed development on its own or in combination with other plans and projects.

Explain why these effects are not considered significant: Not applicable as there is no potential for negative impacts.

Describe how the project is likely to affect species designated under Annex II of the Habitats Directive: No impacts likely.

**Data Collected to Carry out the Assessment**

| Who carried out the assessment | Noreen McLoughlin, MSC, MCIEEM. Consultant Ecologist |
| Sources of data | NPWS, EPA, National Biodiversity Data Centre, Longford County Council |
| Level of assessment completed | Stage1 Appropriate Assessment Screening |
| Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed | Full results included |
BEST PRACTICE MEASURES

Whilst the proposed development will have no impacts upon the integrity of any area that has been designated as a Natura 2000 site, it is usually best practice to undertake certain measures during the construction and operation of any development. These measures will help to protect the local biodiversity of the surrounding area and ensure the protection of local wildlife and water quality. Therefore it is recommended that the following measures are implemented:

- It is vital that there is no deterioration in water quality in the watercourses in the vicinity of the development. This will protect both habitats and species that are sensitive to pollution. Therefore, strict controls of erosion, sediment generation and other pollutants associated with the construction process should be implemented, including the provision of attenuation measures, silt traps or geotextile curtains to reduce and intercept sediment release into any local watercourses. The protection of water quality in this area is vital.

- Post construction surface water run-off from hardcore / concreted / tarmacadum areas should be directed into a soak-pit. If soak-pit disposal is not viable or practical, then surface water run-off from these areas should be treated via serviced sediment and oil interceptor traps, prior to discharge into the local watercourse.

- The applicant must ensure that any excavated soil is used / disposed of responsibly. Its disposal should not lead to the loss or damage of any natural or semi-natural habitats elsewhere. It should not be spread close to any local watercourse as it may result in an increase in the sediment load of that watercourse.

- All works associated with the development should be confined to the proposed development site.

- All site development works should adhere to best practice.

- Fuels, oils, greases and hydraulic fluids must be stored in bunded compounds well away from watercourses. Refuelling of machinery, etc., should be carried out in bunded areas. Stockpile areas for sands and gravel should be kept to a minimum size, well away from any drain or watercourse.

- Any hedgerows that remain should be protected and maintained where possible. They should be carefully cordoned off from the development activities on site. If possible, a natural verge should be allowed to remain along these hedgerows. This will maintain the biodiversity on the site once the development is operational. It is illegal to remove hedgerows and trees during the bird nesting season.

- Any landscaping should involve the planting of native Irish species that are indigenous to the site. The characteristics of newly planted hedgerows should mimic those in the surrounding area.
• Bare soil should be seeded as soon as possible with grass seed. This will minimise erosion into local drains and watercourses. Wildflower mixes should be avoided in a sensitive area such as this, as they can alter the genetic balance of the existing flora.

• Only low level lighting at night should be used. This will minimise disturbances to bats and other nocturnal mammals.
5 **APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded objectively that should this development be granted a License by the EPA, that there will be no impacts upon the integrity or the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site. The habitats and species associated with this site will not be adversely affected. This proposed development does not need to proceed to Stage II of the Appropriate Assessment process.

Noreen McLoughlin, MSc, MCIEEM.
Ecologist.

(PI Insurance details available on request)